

Ramsey County Workforce Investment Board
Youth Council Meeting

April 24, 2008

Members Present

Billy Collins
Abe Hassan
Lee Helgen
Becky Johnson
Dale Maristuen
Rick Polanski
Dean Shawbold
Jody Yungers

Members Absent

Andrew Freeberg
Kirk Hayes
Bernie Hesse
Doug Hubbard
Sheldon Jensen
Peter Jessen-Howard EA
David MacKenzie EA
Rick Vazquez

Staff/Guests Present

Mary Jo Gardner, WIB Staff
Allan Ige, Workforce Solutions
Kate Raleigh, WIB Staff
Matt Reinartz, City of Saint Paul
Terry Zurn, Workforce Solutions

Call to Order

Dean Shawbold, Acting Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m.

Approve Minutes

Motion made by Rick Polanski with second by Jody Yungers to approve the February 28th minutes as presented.

Motion carried.

Approve Youth Council Applicant

Matt Reinartz from the City of Saint Paul's Youth Job Corps has applied to the Youth Council. If Matt is approved by the Youth Council, his application will go to the Executive Committee for approval and to the County Board for ratification. Jody Yungers commented that it is great to have the City's Youth Job Corps as a partner.

Motion made by Lee Helgen with second by Dale Maristuen to approve the Youth Council applicant.

Motion carried.

Update on Joint Powers Agreement

Mary Jo gave an update on the Joint Powers Agreement between the City and the County. Both entities have passed resolutions to reduce the WIB size from 50 to 33 members. Vacancies are being filled for the Rehabilitation Services representative and the City's Economic Development position, at which point the board will have all positions filled.

The group of members that are affected by this reduction are the Education representatives, going from six education spots on the board to two. One of the education spots is required to be filled by Job Corps, leaving only one education space to fill. The WIB has excellent education representatives and it is important to maintain the expertise they bring to the table. To accommodate this, the WIB is brainstorming ideas to keep the representatives involved. All citizens are welcome to come to any WIB meeting, but only members will have voting ability. The Youth Council will also maintain their education representatives and can add more as appropriate. Members expressed a desire to again have Saint Paul Public Schools represented on the Youth Council. Another way education representatives can stay involved may be to have an ad hoc made up of these individuals that can be called together to help solve issues that come up and need education input. There is an idea that this ad hoc could elect a Chair and have this individual serve as the other education representative on the WIB. Dean Shawbold, a representative of secondary education, expressed that it made sense for the WIB to select a post-secondary representative and the Youth Council to have secondary representatives.

Oversight Committee Update

The Oversight Committee of the Youth Council met on Wednesday, April 23 and reviewed the outcomes of the YouthLEAD program. Terry Zurn reviewed this information with the Youth Council.

The Council normally reviews the outcomes of the program as a whole related to the goals set with the state. For the first time, the reports are able to be separated by vendor, showing the outcomes each vendor realized. This information will be helpful when considering future partnership with current vendors. Additionally, the vendors are now able to see their individual performance amongst the group and adjust their strategy as necessary.

The performance measures required by the state are divided by Younger Youth and Older Youth, and the program is meeting at least 80% (the percentage required by the state for successful attainment of goals) of all seven goals, with five goals met at or above 100%. Terry also presented the ten WIA elements offered to participants, showing the number of participants utilizing each element. There was a question on separating out the number of youth in work experience who are obtaining paid and unpaid experience, and whether the paid experiences are subsidized or unsubsidized. It was explained that this is not possible to determine at this time. It was also clarified that some vendors who appear to have low performance could be a result of the difficult populations they are serving.

Also new to reporting outcomes was a chart that showed the number of youth served each year in comparison with the funding received each year. The program is currently serving youth very efficiently in comparison with past years. This fact could reveal that the current model of serving youth through community organizations, and leveraging their funds and resources, could be an efficient way to serve youth. Workforce Solutions and their vendors were commended on their work with youth, particularly with the difficult populations they target, such as youth offenders and youth transitioning out of foster care.

Additional Youth Funding

Ramsey County received an increase of \$218k in WIA funding this year. Workforce Solutions youth staff has come up with several ways to spend these extra funds and would like the Youth Council to recommend a plan for spending. The two projects presented to the Youth Council were (1) dividing the extra funding amongst the service providers, asking them to serve more clients or (2) running the Building Lives program for a small group of youth, age 18-21, coming out of incarceration.

Members also discussed the possibility of increasing work done with youth transitioning out of foster care. Ramsey County received a grant to better align services for youth coming out of foster care, and the County is holding a meeting about this on April 29th at the Ramsey County Juvenile Center.

In discussing the possibility of running the Building Lives program, it was expressed that it is key to get these individuals coming out of incarceration into a training program that leads to meaningful employment. If Building Lives was started again, a staff person would be hired to coordinate the program.

Motion made by Jody Yungers with second by Rick Polanski to allocate the additional \$218k of WIA funding to restart the Building Lives program, working with 18-21 year old ex-offenders.

Friendly amendment made by Lee Helgen, and accepted by Jody Yungers and Rick Polanski, to state that \$218k be allocated to the Building Lives program, not stating where the funds come from to keep spending fluid between WIA and MYP.

There was discussion on the need for a youth job developer to fund meaningful career opportunities for youth. The City and County have discussed the possibility of hiring a person for this position and sharing the costs, having the individual work with YouthLEAD and the First Place program. It was suggested that \$18k be dedicated to this initiative, with the remainder going to Building Lives. An agreement on sharing this staff person between the City and County is in development.

Friendly amendment made by Lee Helgen, and accepted by Jody Yungers and Rick Polanski, to recommend that \$200k of incremental funding be dedicated to the Building Lives program and \$18k go to the Youth Job Developer position with the City and County.

Motion carried.

Update on Building Lives

The Building Lives ad hoc discussed their work since last meeting in October. Meetings were held with various legislators and Commissioners, including Representative Paymar, Commissioner Fabian, Commissioner McElroy, Representative Ellison, and Senator Moua. The group will meet with Nick Riley, Ramsey County Lobbyist, at the end of May to address how to secure funding in the '09 legislative session. Additionally, the group is going to look for bridge grants from foundations to continue program operations. The \$200k from the additional WIA funds could assist in this effort, showing foundations that Ramsey County is willing to invest in this project. There is a concern that funding requests from foundations may be difficult because there are not many resources given to youth of this age group- the majority of youth funding is dedicated to younger youth.

First Place Program

Matt Reinartz presented the Youth Council with basic information on the City of Saint Paul's two summer youth programs- the Youth Job Corps and the First Place program. The Youth Job Corps provides work experience for youth within the City of Saint Paul during the summer. The First Place program is similar to Minneapolis' "Step Up" program, which assists youth in securing unsubsidized employment. The youth in the First Place program fill out the regular Youth Job Corps application, but also include a resume, essays answering two questions and a letter of recommendation. These individuals will also receive additional training. There are currently 15 First Place applicants. There are many Youth Job Corps applications- Saint Paul residents, aged 14-21 who are at or below 80% of the city's median income are eligible for the program.

There was discussion on the First Place program. It was stated that employers, or mentors, at the youth's place of employment need to know about the program and connect with the youth. There was discussion on the local organizations the program can connect to when looking for employers, such as the Port Authority and Chamber of Commerce. The Mayor also wants to connect with Richard Davies from U.S. Bank because he has been very supportive of the Minneapolis program. Developing good relationships with employers will be instrumental to the success of the First Place program.

Update from Committees

Workforce Solutions is contacting each secondary school in Ramsey County and finding out what the school is doing for career development with their students. This information will be shared with the Youth Council when collected.

Other

The YouthLEAD Annual Recognition Event is on June 17th and the Friends of the WIB will be accepting monetary donations on behalf of Workforce Solutions to offset costs associated with the event. The event starts at 5:30 and will take place at the Harriet Island Pavilion; all Youth Council members are invited to attend. Tubby Smith, Head U of MN Men's Basketball Coach will speak at the event where about 55 youth will be recognized.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned upon completion of the agenda at 5:01p.m.

Next Meeting: June 26, Ramsey County Workforce Center- Saint Paul