

Ramsey County Workforce Investment Board
Youth Council Meeting

March 10, 2009

Members Present

Billy Collins
Kirk Hayes
David MacKenzie
Dale Maristuen
Rick Polanski
Dean Shawbold
Jody Yungers

Members Absent

Abe Hassan
Doug Hubbard EA
Sheldon Jensen
Peter Jessen-Howard EA
Becky Johnson EA

Staff/Guests Present

Mary Jo Gardner, WIB Staff
Dwayne Green, Workforce Solutions
Allan Ige, Workforce Solutions
Kate Raleigh, WIB Staff
Carli Stark, WIB VISTA
Terry Zurn, Workforce Solutions

Call to Order

Kirk Hayes, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:34 pm.

Approve Minutes

Motion made by David MacKenzie with second by Dean Shawbold to approve the January minutes as presented.

Motion carried.

Approve WIA Youth Plan

Terry Zurn presented the updated WIA Youth Plan for approval. A group of Youth Council members met with Workforce Solutions staff and made recommendations on plan changes. Updates to the plan include a focus on Native American Youth outreach and new assessment tests for participants entering the program. The youth programs' budget has not been set, as the MN Youth Program funding is not yet finalized in the Governor's budget. These numbers are expected in May and will be inserted into the updated plan.

This year is the last year of the three year contract with youth program vendors EAC, YWCA of St. Paul, Guadalupe Alternative Program and HIRED. It is Workforce Solutions' recommendation to continue the contracts for another year. The committee discussed the vendors' performance over the past year and would like to review these outcomes next year prior to making a decision on vendor contracts, by December of 2009. The Youth Council would like to see that Workforce Solutions discusses a corrective action plan with any low-performing vendors. The Council would also like quarterly performance updates on the vendors, including anecdotal information.

Motion made by Jody Yungers with second by Dale Maristuen to extend EAC's contract with a caveat that staff monitor their performance and report back to the Youth Council on a quarterly basis, as well as present a corrective action plan.

Motion carried.

Motion made by David MacKenzie with second by Jody Yungers to accept the Youth Plan Update.

Motion Carried.

WIA Funds through Stimulus Package

It was announced that Minnesota will receive approximately \$17 million in additional WIA funding through the Stimulus package, with \$1.7 million allocated to Ramsey County. The funds will be available

for two years, but are considered part of the PY08 plan and will need to be obligated and/or spent by June 30, 2010.

Workforce Solutions' recommendations on using these funds are as follows:

- Place 500-700 youth in summer employment in city and suburban area Ramsey County,
- Increase year-round allocations to existing vendors to serve more youth at higher cost per participant (the higher cost including a drastic increase in "work experience" activities and support services),
- Continue funding the re-entry project for adjudicated youth, as well as expanding the current program to younger youth.

To get the money out quickly, WS proposes to use their existing vendors that already have structure for these programs in place.

The Council discussed the importance of reaching the suburbs, as well as the city, with these incremental funds. Workforce Solutions has had preliminary discussions with current vendors on the use of stimulus funds. The Youth Council requested Workforce Solutions create a more definitive plan to spend these funds, including a budget breakdown, numbers of youth who will be served, and definitions of broad criteria like "work readiness" and "work experience" to present at the March 26th meeting.

The stimulus money will have a larger target group than regular WIA dollars, extending the age from 14-21 years old to 14-24 years old. Questions were raised about how to reach older youth, and how best to work with them.

Update on Building Lives

Mary Jo Gardner gave an update on the legislative effort to secure sustainable funding for Building Lives. There was a meeting with the Senate's Economic Development and Housing Budget Division on February 16 where Senator Moua introduced a bill to support Building Lives (S.F. 0411). Representatives Johnson, Lesch, Mahoney, E. Murphy, and Rukavina introduced a companion bill in the House (H.F. 0315)

Ramsey County is requesting an earmark from Representative McCollum and Senator Klobuchar to support Building Lives in 2010.

Other

Allan Ige stated that the Youth Council historically has looked at the populations they are serving and adjusts the strategic priorities according to the needs of the populations. The Youth Council requests that Workforce Solutions provides the information needed and a timeline of how often the assessment should be done.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned upon completion of the agenda at 5:08 p.m.

Next Meeting: March 26- Boys Totem Town