



Bay Area Workforce Development Board

317 West Walnut Street
Green Bay, WI 54303
(920) 431-4100
fax (920) 431-4101

JOB CENTER DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE of the Bay Area Workforce Development Board

MEETING SUMMARY

April 15, 2004

Committee Members: Joe Hilke (Chair), Rod Cotillier, Larry Harkness, Reggie Phillips

Staff: Jim Golembeski

WDB Members: Larry Bergner, Don McAdams, Pat Simonar, Michael Van Dyke, Kris Parkansky, Dee Olsen, Dennis Ladwig

Job Center Staff: John Germanis, Penny Helmle, Connie Hendries, Jody Madden, Cheryl Neuens, Brian Pelon, Heidi Schaible

There was initial discussion about the membership of the committee. The job center representatives preferred not to designate four members to be official committee members at this time, but wished to have a broader conversation with the WDB members of the committee. One option would be to designate a single spokesperson. Members agreed to allow the committee to explore the best way to promote committee values between the WDB and the job centers.

Mr. Nitschke spoke about how this process connects to the Baldrige Assessment Project and its implementation. He said that this committee was charged with focusing on leadership and strategic planning aimed at improving services to employer and job seeker customers. The important task was to foster communication between the WDB members and the job center leaders in order to make things happen both at the job center level and at higher administrative levels. He noted that the Baldrige Study had demonstrated that everyone in the One-Stop system is working harder, but all are experiencing more frustration because the system is dysfunctional at many levels. Clarifying the respective roles of the partner programs, the management teams, the WDB, as well as the roles of higher administrative entities such as the state Council on Workforce Investment and the Department of Workforce Development was the first step in addressing the serious problems that prevented the system from providing better quality customer service.

The job center representatives spoke of several ways in which the WDB could contribute to creating a better job center system. Among these were: 1) advocacy, 2) visits to create familiarity with the job centers, 3) identifying resources to support the system over and above the constituent program funding, 4) define consistent services and expectations across the ten-county area.

Job center reps asked what the board wants of them, and members noted that programs in the job centers are not coordinated. Mr. Golembeski summarized the WDB's strategy in devolving

The vision of the Bay Area Workforce Development Board is that job skills and educational levels are increased, quality of life for all individuals is enhanced, while employers' needs are met.

authority to the job center management teams for decisions about the use of WIA funds in the local area. Management teams had the authority to create a balance between WIA intensive and core services, as well as determining who the service providers will be. He asked whether that was a good strategy from the job center reps' point of view, or whether the WDB should look at other approaches. Ms. Schaible stated her opinion that some of the management teams were not ready to handle that level of responsibility, but that the teams were evolving to the point at which they could do so. In general, the job center reps favored the WDB continuing to use this strategy. Mr. Golembeski wondered whether other programs could make funds available to the management teams in a similar fashion. If nothing else, each partner program could provide greater input into the planning process for each of the constituent programs. There might be some productive discussion around how to make this happen, and this would give the management teams more authority over the development of their job centers. The job center reps agreed that a central pot of money designated for general job center operation would be of real value.

The WDB can also play an important role by supporting the authority of the job center management teams, as well as supporting the continuation of the One-Stop system at the state and federal levels. Mr. Golembeski noted that some versions of WIA reauthorization create a funding stream for the One-Stop system by taking a small percentage off from all the partner programs. Job centers reps wanted the WDB members to understand that they are very committed to the job center model and doing what they have to do to make it work. Ms. Neuens voiced her concern for the small centers that have few partners and rely on the funding from only a few funding streams.

The report on the job centers issued in March by the Center on Wisconsin Strategy (COWS) was an important means through which the WDBs throughout the state called attention to the financial struggles of the job centers. Mr. Linzmeyer had played a key role in getting the 11 WDBs to complete the surveys and return them within a very short time frame. Even though some of the information in the report was incomplete, the COWS report did get a significant amount of publicity and call attention to the job centers' important role in Wisconsin. In addition, the COWS report is high on the agenda of the state Council on Workforce Investment which Mr. Linzmeyer chairs. Job center reps were pleased overall with the COWS report and the attention it called to the difficulties they are experiencing.

Overall, WDB members and job center reps wanted to strengthen the role and authority of the job center management teams. This can be accomplished by 1) having the WDB articulate the role and authority of the management teams and communicate that to DWD; 2) having the management teams step up and use the authority they have to develop the capacity of the job centers; 3) develop capacity to provide core services at the job centers. This last item could be accomplished by finding additional resources for core services and by better measurement of what is being provided to non-program customers.

Suggestions for further activity:

1. Draft wording specifying the respective roles of the WDB, the management teams, and the partner programs in the planning and operation of the job centers.
2. Specify the means of promoting action on the part of the state Council and DWD to respond to the findings of the COWS report and identify additional resources for core services in the job centers.

The vision of the Bay Area Workforce Development Board is that job skills and educational levels are increased, quality of life for all individuals is enhanced, while employers' needs are met.

3. Develop means of measuring the provision of core services in the job centers (i.e., number of unduplicated individuals served, kind and frequency of specific services).
4. Plan and schedule regional tours of the job centers for WDB members, probably during the summer months.
5. Develop capacity and a plan to have the management teams provide greater input into the program planning process of the partner agencies.

The vision of the Bay Area Workforce Development Board is that job skills and educational levels are increased, quality of life for all individuals is enhanced, while employers' needs are met.