



Bay Area Workforce Development Board

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STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE
of the Bay Area Workforce Development Board
Meeting Summary
January 18, 2007

Present: Joe Hilke, Larry Harkness, Heidi Schaible, Patty Nagle, Brian Ognacevic, Mike Troyer
Others: Betty Gregory-Paasch, Karen Flood, Ann Franz, Jim Golembeski, Dave Nass, Meg Dallapiazza, Barbara Bauer

Mr. Hilke called the meeting to order at 11:00 AM at the NWTC Center for Business and Industry. Members welcomed Brian Ognacevic who will replace Liz Mahloch as a job center representative.

With “**Job Center Regionalization**” first on the agenda, members heard from Meg Dallapiazza (Florence County UW-Extension and a Youth Council member), and Barbara Bauer (Florence County Aging Office) about their concerns with the Bay Area WDB plan to regionalize job center services at the NWTC Regional learning Center in Niagara. This would pull WIA staff out of the City of Florence and perhaps some services as well, requiring Florence residents to travel to Niagara. This would be a significant loss to the residents of Florence County in her estimation. Ms. Dallapiazza pointed out that there does not seem to be any actual cost savings in this move, a question that had come up previously in this committee. Staff and job center members discussed the advantages of a closer partnership with NWTC and the larger geographical area that would be served. NWTC would provide a resource room and reception staff in addition to access to their training opportunities. Ms. Schaible pointed out the need to serve non-program job seekers (“the universal customer”) and that in the past there had been little demand for job seeking workshops and other services of that kind in Florence. Mr. Golembeski pointed out that Florence County population is just a little more than a half of a percent of the population of the Bay Area, and taking a regional approach to serve more people is indeed cost effective. Ms. Dallapiazza and Ms. Bauer questioned whether the joint Management Team for Florence and Marinette had actually come to consensus around moving to the Niagara site and asked whether the Hillcrest School location in Aurora had been explored as a possible job center site. They both stressed the need to keep services in Florence. Mr. Golembeski spoke of the board’s plan to provide more services through a single Bay Area Job Center Website and indicated that he had some preliminary discussion with the School Superintendent, Fred Stieg, about making that available at the high school library. In addition, directives from the US Department of Labor and the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development require the Bay Area WDB to focus on employers’ needs and direct training funds toward higher paying jobs.

Staff indicated that the plan to renovate the NWTC Niagara site is moving ahead, as are similar efforts in Kewaunee and Oconto Counties. Mr. Hilke thanked the guests for expressing their concerns and providing input into the discussion. Mr. Golembeski indicated that decisions will not be final until PY 2007 WIA allocations are received, but that decreases in available funding could be even more drastic than anticipated.

Members asked that the current status of the Shawano Job Center be reviewed at the next Committee meeting.

A regional **Business Services Team** met on January 17 and plans to continue to work together on issues such as marketing and fee for service strategies. There is a real value in identifying core business services for the region and working to have a consistency of services throughout the ten-county Bay Area.

Within **WIA Training**, the funding available for “non-demand” occupations will be used mostly to assist program participants in those training programs to complete their training programs. Any new training authorization will be primarily for high-wage, demand occupations. Behind this is a DWD requirement that 35% of the Bay Area’s WIA grants be spent on training for occupations that pay a wage of at least \$13.60 per hour. This policy will require additional training for all our contracted case managers to understand the new requirements and gain the skills to steer job seekers toward these occupations.

Karen Flood continues to work on the regional **Job Center Website**. She took some time to learn about a “virtual job center” initiative that covers several other areas in the state, but that project seems to be developing more as a case management tool, whereas we need something more focused on direct customer service. She is now moving ahead with our own design which will include a questionnaire that allows a job seeker to determine potential eligibility for the various programs.

Ann Franz will give a demonstration of the new **Manufacturers Alliance** at the Bay Area WDB meeting that follows this meeting. The new website began operation in December and has some wonderful features. A formal Steering Committee is being formed to guide the development of the Alliance. Participating companies will now be asked to pay membership dues and invoices are going out this week.

Corrections initiatives to assist individuals coming back to our communities continue to move ahead, although quite slowly. The Community Circles project needs dedicated staff time to handle various operational details, but no one has stepped forward to provide that yet. WIA programs will continue to focus on various **targeted populations**, but will need to work with the 35% requirement for high-wage training.

WIA Youth programs were briefly discussed. With the reality of diminishing resources, new focus is needed. Mr. Golembeski gave his opinion that the worst option is simply to keep all existing programs and just whittle them down as resources go down. The board will be discussing options.

The **NE Wisconsin Job Center** in Green Bay will be moving to a facility downtown on Cherry Street this spring. Lease agreements are being developed.

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 PM.