



Bay Area Workforce Development Board

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STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE
of the Bay Area Workforce Development Board
Meeting Summary
November 16, 2006

Present: Joe Hilke, Larry Harkness, Heidi Schaible, Brian Pelon, Patty Nagle, Liz Mahloch, Mike Troyer
Others: Betty Gregory-Paasch, Karen Flood, Ann Franz, Jim Golembeski, Ken Stubbe

Mr. Hilke called the meeting to order at 11:00 at the NWTC Center for Business and Industry. A quorum was present. The Minutes of the previous meeting were approved as submitted by consensus.

Members reviewed the draft job center regionalization plan for 2007. In the north, the plan calls for bringing services together in the NWTC Learning Center in Niagara with staff from Florence County relocating there to serve customers in Florence and northern Marinette Counties. Better service can be offered by collaborating with the NWTC staff that is located there. In the future, workshops and classes can be made available there through streaming video via the Internet. Mr. Hilke asked whether there would be any cost savings associated with this consolidation. Staff responded that was not likely the case in the short term, but that once the new system was established we will be looking to automate more services via the Internet. In Kewaunee, WIA case managers will no longer be present, and services will be offered through Manitowoc and Green Bay. In addition, the NWTC Regional Center in Luxemburg will become a place at which Internet linkage and basic job search assistance will be available. It is possible that the W-2 program for Kewaunee will operate out of the NWTC site as well. Again, the committee emphasized the importance of demonstrating cost savings in making these moves.

Oconto County poses some particular challenges because of the significant portion of the low skilled labor there. Under the draft plan, case management services will relocate to the Green Bay job center, but a job search assistant will remain at the NEWCAP building in Oconto to help connect people to services. There was discussion about how to better engage leaders from Cruisers Yachts in our efforts. The Northeast Wisconsin Job Center in Green Bay will be moving to a new facility on Cherry Street early in 2007, and this is a very positive development. Door County will be an Access Point of Service working closely with the Green Bay staff. The Door County workforce, however, tends to be self-contained with only limited commuting in and out of the county, and that reality will have to be respected as changes are made. Marinette, Manitowoc, and Sheboygan will continue as Comprehensive Job Centers. There are already some efforts to collaborate more effectively between Manitowoc and Sheboygan. Shawano will also be a Comprehensive Job Center and will continue to closely with the College of the

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.

Menominee Nation to provide employment and training services in Menominee County. Longer term, regional efforts in Shawano need to be promoted because of the mobile nature of that county's workforce.

The Committee recognized the need to continue along the path of regionalization and change in service delivery strategy as a preferred option to whittling away at the current system as funding decreases. The Bay Area has always tried to maximize the training available to workers, but number of trainees, as well as the number of case management staff, will have to decrease in the future.

Ms. Flood continues to work on the regional job center website and, in the future, there will be an increased level of services offered using the Internet. She is in the process of visiting all the job centers in the area and demonstrating the new website. Staff envisions that some of the case management services currently done face-to-face will soon be done over the Internet. For example, eligibility determination for a variety of programs could be done using a series of questions on the website and then a connection made via e-mail to a case manager in a regional center. There is a statewide project to create a "virtual job center" that Ms. Flood will connect with as well.

The truth is that a significant portion of the jobs in NE Wisconsin now can only be applied for over the Internet. This presents two important challenges: 1) high speed Internet access throughout the ten counties of the Bay Area, and 2) basic computer literacy for everyone living here.

Business Service Teams are functional in the Comprehensive Job Centers. The next step is to link them so that there is coordination of those efforts throughout the entire Bay Area. Ann Franz and Brian Pelon will provide additional information about such coordination at the January meeting.

Serving those with significant barriers to employment remains a real challenge. The skill levels required in the current workforce leave many people with only limited options. The computer lab that the Bay Area WDB funds in Green Bay is a good model for improving the skills of a significant number of job seekers. With labor shortages continuing to be a reality, we need effective strategies to train these workers. Continued efforts to integrate WIA and W-2 program services will also contribute to this effort.

Ms. Franz reported briefly on the Manufacturers Alliance. The new website should be up by December 1 and interest from manufacturing firms remains high. Mr. Golembeski reported that the Community Circles project with the Department of Corrections is still moving ahead slowly. The group working on implementation wanted to enhance the mentoring portion of the project in addition to recruiting volunteers for the Circles. The mentors will spend a good deal of time with the former inmates as part of the process.

Ms. Mahloch suggested that the WDB make a formal acknowledgement of Comprehensive status for those job centers so designated. The committee agreed that such recognition was a good idea.

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 PM.