

Bay Area Workforce Development Board
Strategic Leadership Committee

Meeting Summary
July 20, 2006

Present: Joe Hilke, Karen Besiada-Hansen, Mike Troyer, Liz Mahloch, Patty Nagle, Heidi Schaible, Karen Flood, Ann Franz, Jim Golembeski

The group reviewed the Meeting Summary from June 22 and reaffirmed the points that were made at that meeting.

Ann Franz spoke about the Manufacturers Alliance group that has been created to help manufacturers in the NEW North region to work together to address their workforce challenges. Currently there is a core leadership group of about 12 companies of different sizes and from various sectors. They hope to begin to address the image of manufacturing, especially for young people and their parents, as well as working to brand NEW North as a world leader in advanced manufacturing opportunities.

There was a lengthy discussion about connecting targeted populations to the opportunities presented by advanced manufacturing and other jobs that fall into the category of "high wage." Ms. Schaible spoke about the fact that a large percentage of the individuals who come into the job center are basic skills deficient and computer illiterate. These folks will require both one-to-one attention because they are not able to access services online, as well as needing longer time commitment from our programs so that they can progress through a clearly defined career ladder. Mr. Golembeski shared information about the work he has been doing with the Wisconsin Department of Corrections on reentry programs for offenders.

As we plan for the allocation of WIA and other resources, there will always be the tension between meeting employers' needs and attending to the special needs of targeted populations. The challenge will be to balance the allocation of resources between the cyber linkages that will engage the bulk of the workforce with the more cost-intensive needs of the less-skilled segments of the workforce. This committee's work is to make a recommendation to the Bay Area WDB later this year about how best to strike that balance.

Karen Flood gave a presentation about her assignment to create a centralized web presence for the Bay Area job centers. She has found that Manitowoc already has a professional format and design that she thinks could be used for the whole area. The website might also be a source of advertising revenue for the job center.

A unified system might address some of the needs of the less skilled workforce by offering computer literacy instruction at our job centers. This could be done in a classroom format such as we have at the Computer Lab in Green Bay, or perhaps

through a video instruction format. This latter approach could be web-based if it were simply set up in a user-friendly format or we might somehow tie into the Computer Lab in Green Bay through a network. Ms. Besiada-Hansen thought that employers might also be willing to support such an effort financially if the labor market is tight. Again, it will be a matter of allocating resources to projects that will have the most significant outcomes. The question also came up about whether computer literacy is being taught in all the school districts in the Bay Area.

Ms. Flood also told the committee about the recent initiative to bring young people into the Green Bay job center for a day. She will provide an update at the next meeting.

Budget recommendations were discussed. Ms. Schaible suggested that the training options available to WIA enrollees will have to be narrowed down to a smaller number of occupational areas that the WDB decides to focus on. The numbers of trainees will likely have to be reduced as well if significant budget cuts are experienced. Given that possibility, we need to start reducing enrollment levels this year since the Bay Area has so many people in two year programs. This will take some mindset changes since WIA training was predicated on customer choice and the Bay Area has tried to maximize training opportunities for enrollees.

Mr. Hilke stated that he strongly believes that WISCareers is a vital component in the overall approach we take to connecting job seekers with employment in the Bay Area.

The focus on short-term, more abbreviated training, such as what we have piloted in welding and CNC training, led to a discussion of the fact that a number of professional occupations, especially health care careers, now require longer and more intensive training that is available only in a few places. This closes some occupations to our WIA program enrollees. Continued coordination with area employers will be vital in order for us to access training opportunities that will be successful for our enrollees. Our programs will require higher levels of partnership and collaboration than in the past.