



Bay Area Workforce Development Board

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BAY AREA YOUTH COUNCIL

Meeting Summary

April 28, 2004

Present: Jessica Bierke, Liz Case, Meg Dallapiazza, Donna Freeman, Renee Koenig, Dan Konop, David Raasch, Nancy Schopf, Richard Seidemann, Fred Steig, Lindsay Yandila

Absent: Anita Barber, Louise Brekke Daul, Christopher East, Gema Garcia, Torri Gillis, Bob Guenther, Paula Huff, Jody Madden, Mark Mertens, Victoria Ostrowski, Bob Rau, Noel Ryder, Heidi Smith, Sharon Spengler, Paula Van Straten, Benjamin Villarruel, Patti Warmenhoven, Tammy Zinther

Guests: Kate Elvidge, Division of Juvenile Services, attended in place of Victoria Ostrowski; Kathryn Zavala, Family Services; Holly Allen, NEW Curative Rehabilitation

Lunch was served at the Wildlife Sanctuary and the meeting was called to order at 12:30 p.m.

Expelled Youth Program

Kathryn Zavala with Family Services explained the Choices program in which her agency partners with CESA 7 to increase the educational attainment and employability skills of Brown County youth who have been expelled, or have committed expellable offenses. The program provides intensive assessment and case management, employment or community service work, and counseling, in addition to the education component. Every effort is made to keep the youth linked closely to family, community, and school, with the main objective being to assist the student in completing the requirements to return to a traditional high school setting. Choices, a first year pilot program for Brown County, has made an effort to have a diversified staff to reflect the cultural diversity of the program participants. Some of the real challenges for the program are transportation costs, gaining parental cooperation, and meeting the special needs of young people returning from juvenile corrections facilities.

Staff asked the Youth Council members to prioritize this program in relationship to the other WIA Youth programs. The current contract with Family Services for Choices could be extended for an additional year without going into a competitive process. There was broad support for continuing Choices as a priority since it seems to reach a population that otherwise is not well served and the program also seems to be having a great deal of success with several participants having already returned to regular school. A recommendation will be made to the Bay Area WDB to extend the contract for the Choices program for another year using WIA Youth funding.

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.

Disability Navigator Program

Holly Allen with NEW Curative Rehabilitation explained her role as Disability Navigator under a new program in the Bay Area. In general, her job is to assist individuals with disabilities in making better connection to job center services and programs. She has been working both with individuals who require employment services and with job center staff to increase the capacity of the system to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities. Members expressed some confusion at the seeming lack of focus in her efforts and asked for clarification. Ms. Allen asked for input from the Youth Council members regarding how best to focus her efforts. Since the Disability Navigator grant comes through the Workforce Development Board, staff will work with NEW Curative to make sure we get real results from this program.

WIA Programs

Staff had not yet received final allocation figures for the new WIA program year, so some decisions had to be deferred. The competitive process for the WIA Younger Youth was proceeding with a Program Review Committee consisting of several Youth Council members as well as WDB and LEO representation. The Youth Council had been given some amount of authority in this process by the board.

Youth Program Priorities

The Youth Council discussed the possibility of how to create an employment and training system more responsive to the needs of young people. Several members noted that it was very difficult for young people to find summer employment this year because of the economy, and even finding places in which to provide work experience as part of a program strategy was becoming more difficult. Several issues and initiatives were discussed: bringing in some employer development people to the next meeting to discuss how we can better help the youth/employer barriers.

- How do our youth programs connect more productively with employers, especially for youth with serious barriers to employment? Appeals to employers' community-mindedness no longer seem to be effective. It was suggested that some employers be invited to a Youth Council meeting to discuss involvement with young workers, and ask them what could be done to make young people more attractive to employers. What other partnerships might assist us with finding appropriate work experience for young people, including young people with disabilities?
- Members asked that staff send out information on the federal bonding program. This was of special interest to the programs working with adjudicated youth.
- Ms. Dallapiazza raised the question about the increasing number of people opting to home-school their children and the lack of accountability in many such cases. It was suggested that the Youth Council might meet with key state legislators to discuss some of these concerns. Staff will contact appropriate legislators.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 PM