



YOUTH COUNCIL

MINUTES

Wednesday, September 14, 2011

11:30 a.m.

Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board

439 South Union Street

Lawrence, MA 01843

Youth Council MEMBERS PRESENT:

Howard Allen, Nicole Austermann, Irene Chalek, Lisa Coy, April Lyskowsky, Heidi Riccio, Steve Noroian, Donna Rivera, Michael Strem, Megan Shea, Ed Warnshuis, Cal Williams

MVWIB Youth Council MEMBERS ABSENT:

Janet Allison, Tom Casey, Tom Connors, Brad Howell, Beverly DeSalvo, Ed Fitzgerald, Vinnie Ouellette, Barbara Richards, Linda Piergeorge

MVWIB STAFF PRESENT:

Deborah Andrews, Rafael Abislaiman, Barbara Zeimetz, Mary Kivell

I. Call to Order

Youth Council Chairman Cal Williams called the meeting to order at 11:38 a.m. and asked everyone to introduce themselves. He mentioned that our board chair Joe Bevilacqua is unable to attend but wanted to extend his apologies to the Youth Council and say that he wishes them well with their work in the coming year. Cal said that Joe will be bringing information from the state Youth Council to this committee at a future meeting.

II. Approval of June 8, 2011 Minutes

Cal then called for a motion on the minutes of the June 8, 2011 meeting.

Motion by Megan Shea seconded by Howard Allen to approve the minutes of the June 8, 2011 Youth Council meeting as submitted. Motion passed.

III. Safe & Secure Streets Proposal

MVWIB Executive Director Rafael Abislaiman said that we have partnered through the Lawrence Community Development Department on a Safe and Secure Streets Proposal. Five communities were eligible to submit a proposal and Lawrence was one of them. The purpose is to reduce the number of serious crimes. This is a hard to serve population who may have spent time in jail or may be seeking revenge for something done to them. It is our hope to provide workforce development but Rafael noted that this is not without risk. We will be part of a coalition to minimize crime and if funded our portion would be \$160,000. The grant will serve 14- 24 year olds and partners include Youth Build, Groundworks Lawrence, Lawrence Police Department, Courts, the WIB and others. April

Lyskowsky of Youth Build said that the money is awarded for proven high risk males and is slated to start October 1st. She said that we should hear if we have been successful by the end of the week and described some of the plans for this program. Funding is through the Mass EOHHS. Howard Allen wondered if we had identified any numbers and Ralph said that the state feels that there are 200 in Lawrence. We are expecting to serve between 40 and 80 people.

Cal Williams said that there will be an update on the agenda for the next Youth Council meeting. Megan Shea spoke about a Sustainable Communities grant through the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission and Rafael said that we have been in contact and informed the MVPC that we would be pleased to participate.

IV. Program Update – 2010/2011 Youth Outcomes

Deborah referred to a handout on September 2011 program updates. Lisa Coy, Valleyworks Youth Program Director, reported on the Bridging the Opportunities Gap Grant which provides youth with work readiness skills necessary for career success. From orientation through job placement, youth are encouraged to identify their own assets and interests through participation in career exploration and awareness activities. Lisa said that we have completed two cycles with 17 & 15 youth in each cycle. Some of the youth are very high risk.

The next grant is the Pathways with the goal to provide options that address the unique academic, employment, and career needs of seniors and post 12th grade students from classes of 2003-2012 who need further assistance to attain the skills necessary to pass the MCAS in order to complete the state required Competency Determination for high school graduation. We will be partnering with schools who offer MCAS tutoring and we will provide mandatory workshops to identify career ladders for youth. We are also looking at offering subsidized employment with ARRA funds.

Deborah said that the goal of Year-Round YouthWorks is to provide participants with comprehensive career development services to prepare them for entry into the workforce whether after school or after post-secondary education or training. Our priority populations are in-school-youth who are over-age and/or under credentialed, and reconnected out-of-school youth who may be at-risk of dropping out of an educational program, such as the GED. We are looking to piggy back with connecting activities and do more one on one with 30 youth in two cycles. Megan Shea also suggested looking into ELL services.

Lisa Coy reported that some of the ARRA Jag Funding was used for summer jobs and some will be used to offer jobs to Year-Round YouthWorks in-school students. It includes MCAS remediation, career development and subsidized jobs and will end by December 31st, after youth take the MCAS. The final program is Connecting Activities which supports college and career readiness by providing students with high quality "work and learning" experiences and other career development activities that are focused on school-wide efforts to raise graduation and MassCore completion rates. We will conduct workshops with area high schools, offer internships and more with 1.5 staff this year instead of 1. We will also provide teacher externships.

Discussion followed on demographics and outcomes of the summer jobs and Lisa mentioned that we should have information on participant characteristics after October from Commonwealth Corporation. Mike Strem also mentioned a large number of area job fairs as a resource for employees.

Deborah referred to a grant grid with the funding and dates of the 2011-2012 programs. She reported that employers provided 226 jobs at 50 worksites. Deborah spoke about one young man who had a good leadership experience at the YWCA and will probably be hired this fall. Four other summer youth have been hired.

Deborah also said that we plan to provide 33 youth with ITAs with our WIA funding and have reserved about \$85k for a group program.

V. DOL Monitoring

Rafael Abislaiman said that the recent DOL monitoring went very well and cited the fact that kids who are receiving case management and using the computers at the Career Center are also receiving services as well as those receiving training.

Deborah Andrews reported that DOL monitors a couple of WIBs every few years as well as the state and we were chosen this year. DOL took back a best practice from us, which was that we have a dedicated Business Services Representative (BSR) for our youth population. We are out of compliance regarding membership as we don't have a parent of a WIA eligible youth on our Council. She asked if anyone knows of a parent who would want to join and to please let her know. Deborah said that she would like to respond to DOL that we have a parent in place prior to the issuance of their final report.

Deborah continued that, as reported in June, in the third quarter of 2011 we met all WIA goals for out of school youth and all for in-school youth except one. The 2011 end of the year performance information has not yet been collated and released. Deborah said that we will present that information next month. We also have new outcomes to meet beginning this year – Common Measures. Youth are no longer categorized by in-school and out-of-school, but by older and younger youth. The measures are: a.) Placement in employment or education – applies to both older and younger; b.) Attainment of degree or certificate – applies to both older and younger; and c.) Literacy and numeracy gains – only applies to older youth.

Reporting on group programs, Deborah said that the Medical Assisting has 8 participants, 6 planned entered employment and 4 employed. The program ends October 28th. The Food Service program has 9 participants, 7 planned entered employments, 7 employed and 2 entered post secondary school and ended in August. Deborah reported that we haven't put together the RFP for 2012 group programs yet.

VI. 2012 Annual Plan

Deputy Director Barbara Zeimetz reported on the 2012 Annual Plan which was due this year in August. The document contains our plan on how to utilize WIA dollars for the year. We looked at all resources coming in to the board to support the objectives to build the capacity of the workforce system; close the skills gaps; and build a pipeline for youth. We focused on advanced manufacturing, health care, life sciences and biotech/green jobs. Our plan is to increase the number of youth in our region with high school diplomas and GEDs. We also plan to prepare kids for the emerging technology and options in health care, manufacturing and green jobs. We have recently funded an auto tech, culinary arts, and customized machine training program. Our older youth are able to access CNC machinist and other skilled machine operator training through ITAs. ValleyWorks Career Center has a Business Service Representative (BSR) specifically for youth programs and

services. We are looking to increase the quality of our vendor programs and collaborations with education and health services and we are looking at several new models.

For FY'12 we will be focusing on five major impact areas. We will work to expand program opportunities for youth through broadening eligibility; partner with area schools in the Race to the Top initiative; continue to search for training options for out of school youth; increase GED attainment for out of school youth; and figure out how to serve more youth through ITAs. One need that we must address is that not all youth who come in are ready for the GED class. Many of them need much remedial work before they can attempt it. There is a need for more ABE in the area and we are looking at new funding and partnerships to provide it.

Barbara said that we are also looking at adding computer assisted instruction in our lab at the Career Center and are aggressively looking to seek additional funding with the addition of our Resource Development Manager. We are also working with Northern Essex Community College on career development and dual enrollment.

Deborah handed out information on a legislative hearing that would increase funding to lower the dropout rate of in school youth and to find youth to serve who are out of school.

VII. Adjournment

Having no further business Donna Rivera made a motion to adjourn seconded by Howard Allen. Motion passed and meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Kivell

Mary Kivell
Recorder