

Workforce Innovation Board of Ramsey County
Youth Committee Meeting
May 16, 2019 - 2:30 – 4:00pm
CareerForce - North Saint Paul
2266 2nd Street North, No. St. Paul, MN 55109

Members Present

Tom Aasheim
Karen Gerdin
Jennifer Germain
Larry Gilbertson
Brian Goodspeed
Robert Morse
Jane Nicholson
Paul Nikstad
Tim O'Brien

Members Absent

Kathy Kittel-EA
Gaye Adams Massey
Joy Nyabwari

Staff/Guests Present

Julie Baker, Workforce Solutions
Ling Becker, Workforce Solutions
Becky Milbrandt, WIB Staff
Rachael Molenaar, Workforce Solutions
Steve Randall, Saint Paul Parks & Rec.
Tonya Yarbrough, Workforce Solutions

Call to Order

Chair Paul Nikstad called the meeting to order at 2:32pm. All those in attendance introduced themselves.

Approve March Youth Committee Minutes

Motion (Aasheim/Germain) to approve the March 21, 2019 Youth Committee minutes as presented.
Motion carried.

Introduction of 2019 Vern Vick Award Recipient

Nikstad announced Randall as the 2019 Vern Vick Award recipient. Yarbrough and Baker, who nominated Randall, introduced him and shared some highlights from his over 30-year career serving youth. Randall also shared information about his life and career. He credits an influential adult for getting him on the right path as a youth and now his passion is to give back. Randall's advise to others working with youth is to be genuine, let them know you care, follow through on your commitments, hold them accountable, and give them the opportunity to change. Randall will be formally presented with the Award at the June 6 WIB meeting.

Updates

Summer Youth Employment Program: Stanton reported that he has received 80 applications so far. Seventeen of those youth qualify for the TANF Innovation grant, so they will receive 200 hours of work experience and leadership training as part of the summer employment program. The total number of youth that can be served this summer will depend on the state budget, which has yet to be approved. Stanton anticipates being able to enroll 40 additional youth if funding remains the same as last year. He hopes to be able to enroll the remaining applicants in the WIOA youth program or keep them on a wait list. It was noted that there are always more applicants than spots. Stanton is setting up work sites and orientation sessions for the youth who have been accepted so far. Effort is being made to match the work sites with the youth's interest. Stanton will share more details at the next committee meeting. Nikstad asked committee members to refer businesses who may be interested in hosting youth for a summer or year-round work experience.

Outreach to Schools Program: Stanton reported that the interns will finish their work in early June. The 2018-19 program will end with four interns working, two at LEAP. All interns have the potential to return next year. Stanton will bring a final report to the next meeting along with a status update on the program's budget.

Youth Plan Budget: Stanton reported that the WIOA Youth budget was cut by 22% for 2019, which brings it back to 2017 levels. There was a significant funding increase in 2018, however, Workforce Solutions (WFS) has not spent out all those funds. Based on a recommendation from DEED, WFS is in the process of releasing an RFP for a one-year contract with four or five youth service agencies in the committee who will help increase program enrollment. Programs run by these agencies will mirror WFS' program. Becker reported on plans to collocate counselors in the community to serve clients where they are instead of expecting them to come to us. She anticipates a lot more integration with internal and external partners over the next year.

Right Track Partnership: Becker stated that a partnership with the City of Saint Paul is being developed to enroll some of the out of school youth who were not placed in a Right Track work experience into the ULEAD program. A recruiting event to kick off this partnership is being planned.

Youth at Work Grant: Becker announced that a new Youth at Work grant was recently released. A condition of the grant is for recipients to collaborate with their local WIB. In Ramsey County, each of the four applicants was asked to submit a proposal summary. Once the awards are announced, the programs will be reviewed by the One-Stop Operator consortium.

Cookie Cart

Becker explained that Cookie Cart is a youth social entrepreneur group, meaning that they provide youth with entrepreneurship experiences as part of their business model. Although grant funded, Cookie Cart makes, markets, packages, and sells cookies. Becker is working on a partnership that could include having a counselor at their Saint Paul location and using their site when it is not being used for cookie production. Gilbertson stated that he encounters youth in need of assistance with resume writing and interviewing skills. He suggested these are areas when WFS could be helpful. It was suggested that a representative from Cookie Cart come to an upcoming committee meeting.

GenZ Connection

Becker provided an overview of this program which provides youth with work experiences at four manufacturing businesses in White Bear Lake. Ramsey County serves as the employer of record to help remove administrative barriers. The program is starting its third year and will employ two sets of four youth over the summer. Plans are in place to expand the program to the automotive repair industry. Becker would like to see this expand to other businesses who may be willing to share the cost in this tight labor market.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services for Youth

Germain explained that the passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) dramatically changed the Vocational Rehabilitation program by mandating that all youth with a documented disability be served. Because of the order of selection mandate and the fact that there is a statewide waiting list, only the most significantly disabled individuals are able to be served. There are VR counselors working in every school in Ramsey County to identify students who have a real need for services, so they aren't behind after high school. Germain provided several handouts detailing the employment and career services offered through the VR program. Youth are matched with employers based on their interests and abilities. Germain encouraged committee members to refer youth to the program and to refer businesses who are interested in helping disabled youth find success.

Committee Member Updates

Hubbs Center: Gerdin reported that the Hubbs Center fall class schedule will be released soon. She will share it with the committee.

Job Corps: Nikstad announced that the first Karen Job Corps student will be graduating from the IUPET painting apprenticeship program next week.

Century College: Nicholson reported that this is Century's graduation week. Student portfolios are being displayed on campus.

Finishing Trades: Aasheim stated that the first group of APEX participants are finishing tomorrow. Of the ten who enrolled in the work experience program, nine completed and most are already committed to employers. The next group, focusing on work readiness, is starting in June. There are a few openings left so Aasheim encouraged members to refer prospects. Becker suggested the committee take a tour of the Finishing Trades facility.

Local 512: Gilbertson reported that the Ironworkers are also hosting APEX training in June and July. He also pointed out that the trades are becoming more reflective of the community. A Karen refugee from Roseville was recently selected to start working with their program in July.

WIB Executive Director: Becker reported on plans for collocating workforce services in the community at places like libraries and colleges. A counselor will be at Arlington Hill within the month.

Roseville ABE: O'Brien announced that Roseville is currently placing ten students; four of which are getting their high school diploma.

Ain Dah Yung: Riemers introduced herself as a new WIB member. She is excited about opportunities to collaborate with other members of the committee. She also mentioned two upcoming events; an open house next Wednesday and a fundraiser on June 20. Details will be emailed to the committee.

Sheriff's Department: Goodspeed reported that there is a new Sheriff and he is very youth oriented. Officers will be out in the community more in an effort to increase connections. Goodspeed plans to share information about this committee's work with the Sheriff.

Workforce Solutions Youth Program: Stanton reported that a youth client plans to start attending these committee meetings.

Other

Molenaar, the new Youth Planner, introduced herself and shared some information about her background.

Adjourn

Upon completion of the agenda, the meeting was adjourned at 3:57 pm.

Next Meeting: July 18, 2019, 2:30-4:00 in Training Room B, CareerForce - North Saint Paul