

Workforce Innovation Board of Ramsey County

Youth Committee Meeting

November 21, 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
Kathy Kittel
Camila Mercado Michelli
Paul Nikstad
Sheri Riemer

Members Absent

Brian Goodspeed-EA
Gaye Adams Massey-EA
Robert Morse
Tim O'Brien

Staff/Guests Present

Ling Becker, Workforce Solutions
Rachael Molenaar, Workforce Solutions
CJ Stanton, Workforce Solutions
Dan Young, Ramsey County Sheriff

Call to Order

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

Approve September Youth Committee Minutes

Motion (Gilbertson/Mercado Michelli) to approve the September 19, 2019 Youth Committee minutes as presented. Motion carried.

2020 Meeting Schedule

Nikstad reported that the 2020 committee meetings will be held at Job Corps. Meeting invites will be sent next week. Becker hopes to have a youth from Job Corps join this committee. The location change will make it easier for youth to participate.

Summer Youth Employment Program Partnerships

Becker stated that in the past, Workforce Solutions (WFS) used its youth funding to cover participants' wages. She asked the committee for feedback on moving to a model similar to Right Track where wages would be funded work experiences at non-profits or community-based organization, but for-profit businesses will be asked to partner on covering wages. This would allow more youth to be served. She suggested businesses be asked to match the wages in 2020 and possibly move to having them cover 100% of the wages the following year. Ramsey County will continue to process all the payroll and other employment paperwork. Becker would like to develop some marketing materials to help get the word out to employers about this program. Suggestions from the committee included:

- Give the participating businesses some good publicity or incentive
- Consider asking businesses to pay for transportation and/or food initially
- Highlight the fact that the county covers FICA, worker's compensation, etc.

After discussion, there were no concerns about moving toward a public-private partnership funding model.

Becker reported that work experience wages will increase in 2020 to be more in line with Saint Paul's minimum wage ordinance despite the county being exempt.

Youth Audit Response

Becker provided a brief overview of the federal audit findings and the response to the findings. She reported that the Department of Labor is happy with the policy, service delivery model and program changes that have been implemented since the audit. A deeper review of the fourteen elements will take place at the next committee meeting. Two significant actions resulting from the audit that are still ongoing are to permanently place two youth counselors at the Saint Paul CareerForce site and to fill all the business vacancies on the WIB. Both will be done by March 2020 which is within the one-year timeframe to close all findings.

WIOA Youth Data Summary

Becker expressed her committed to full transparency and desire to utilize the knowledge around the table to provide oversight and guidance, especially in areas that need improvement. A snapshot report for the WIOA

Youth Program was reviewed. Becker plans to provide this report at each committee meeting. It was suggested that the race data also include ethnicity. Becker acknowledged that government systems, such as Workforce One, are not well equipped for capturing this type of data accurately. This is something the Policy Committee could advocate for.

Updates

Youth Works!: Becker provided an update on this initiative which has a goal of raising awareness about the value of youth working. Highlights that will be part of this effort are:

- develop five to seven tenants that businesses can sign on to.
- create a newsletter.
- start a youth employer award, similar to the Vern Vick Award, selected by youth.
- make a youth employment directory.
- convene conversations with youth, educators and employers.
- conduct a survey of counselors to gather best practices.
- develop a simple youth employment toolkit.

Becker explained that the first year will be committed to building awareness, year two will be an acknowledgement year, and the third year will focus on action. Anyone interested in getting involved should contact Molenaar. Regular updates will be given to this committee.

Youth at Work Grantees: The list of 2019 Youth at Work grantees was reviewed. Molenaar expressed excitement for the resources coming into organizations within Ramsey County. Becker noted that lack of coordination with the local boards is element of the grant system that she feels is broken. All grant applicants were to notify their local WIBs of their intent to apply but several did not. Becker asked DEED to follow through on holding applicants to this requirement.

Outreach to Schools: Molenaar reported that three interns are currently working at LEAP, Creative Arts and Roseville High Schools. The interns attended an orientation meeting and have been on the job for about three weeks. Funding from the WIB may be used to hire additional interns for the second semester. Molenaar will develop profiles for each intern to share with the committee. Becker would like to frame out a vision and cost for what it would look like to have an intern in every school using this model. There may be interest from a foundation to fund this effort. Recruiting traditional college students to work as interns has been challenging due to the work hours. Becker mentioned another model involving pop-up workshops at libraries and other sites for intensive workforce services for youth.

Individualized Service Strategy: Stanton explained that each youth creates an Individualized Service Strategy (ISS) upon enrollment that gets updated yearly. In the past, this has been a simple plan; however, the audit identified the need to ramp it up. The ISS form has been modified to highlight the fourteen elements. WFS youth counselors received additional training on use of the new form and how the elements are to be incorporated and tracked. The new ISS will be used for all new enrollments through the end of the year and then reassessed in January to determine if changes are needed. Becker stated that WFS plans to put out a master contract around the fourteen elements so that staff can place youth in leadership training and other mentorship, entrepreneurship and financial literacy trainings.

One Stop Compliance (Staff Relocation): Becker mentioned that she is having conversations with the Maplewood Library about opening a hub for youth services in the area that used to be a coffee shop. She'd also like to find other relevant, existing spaces in the community to delivery services.

WIB Strategic Plan/Youth Committee Work Plan

Becker walked the group through the WIB's strategic planning document. She explained that each committee is developing a work plan of tasks that support the WIB's strategic outcomes. The tasks for each committee will feed a dashboard to track progress. The committee discussed the tasks it would like to add to its work plan:

- review the youth dashboard regularly
- continue the Vern Vick Memorial Award
- invite the Vern Vick Award recipient to be a member of the youth committee
- continue to learn about youth employment barriers
- partner with the Communications & Marketing Committee to create and implement a youth-oriented communications plan
- support the Youth Works! initiative

- host an annual youth summit
- provide people who work with youth, such as career counselors, with tours of the trades training centers

Committee Member Updates

Ain Dah Yung: Reimers announced the opening of their 42-unit supportive housing facility for homeless youth. Nineteen HUD defined youth have been brought into the site so far. Reimers offered to host the committee or the full WIB at the site in 2020.

CLUES: Mercado Michelli reported on two big annual events that just took place; the Shaping Our Future Conference and the grand opening for the Best Buy Teen Tech Center. She also mentioned her work on the Youth Works! initiative, as a housing advocate, and her recent certification as a top facilitator.

WFS: Molenaar mentioned the cohorts that WFS has coming up in January, including a bridge to CNA cohort in partnership with CLUES, another round of EMS Academy, and the Ramsey County Public Sector Academy. The Public Sector cohort of eight students will do customer service training at Saint Paul College followed by two-week rotations in several county departments. The students will also have opportunities to do tours and learn more about working in the public sector. Becker explained that the cohort model is an effective way to use some of the WIOA Youth underspending. Molenaar also provided details on the Katherine Project which will train women for computer coding careers. The project is being done in partnership with the Hubbs Center.

Finishing Trades: Aasheim stated that a group of eight students just completed the APEX training. One of the students just started a job this morning and two others will likely be starting next week. Another training session will start in the spring.

Ironworkers 512: Gilbertson reported on two recent Construct Tomorrow events at Fort Snelling and in Mankato. Both were very well attended. He expressed interest in attending the job fairs held at the CareerForce locations. Gilbertson also mentioned just a few of the apprenticeship week events, including an event for high school counselors and an event at the training center in Hermantown MN.

Saint Paul Public Schools ABE: A new job training class will begin in January for students who have below a 6th grade reading level and are interested in starting a small business. Gerdin is looking forward to the on-site coffee cart that will be operating as part of the training.

Saint Paul Public Schools CTE: Kittel explained that Saint Paul Public Schools developed a new strategic plan. Elements of the plan that impact CTE students are the development of career plans and career related curriculum for all students in Pre-K to 12th grade, establishing career pathways in every high school, and the creation of a resource network to help students find opportunities in their fields of interest.

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR): DEED Vocational Rehabilitation has a new director, Dee Torgerson. Germain also stated that VR hired 23 new employees to do outreach to all potentially eligible youth in the schools who are not currently enrolled in VR services. Since starting, the three new counselors in Ramsey County have enrolled 60-65 additional youth.

Other

No other items were discussed.

Adjourn

Upon completion of the agenda, the meeting was adjourned at 4:06 pm.

Next Meeting: January 16, 2020, 2:30-4:00, Job Corps – Building 1, 1480 N. Snelling Ave., St. Paul