

## Meeting Notes and Flip Chart Notes: March 28, 2008

### Adult Work Group to Develop High Skills, High Wages

Attendees: Eleni Papadakis, Tim Sweeney, Marina Parr, Madeleine Thompson, Barbara Mix, Donna Ashman, Carl Wolfhagen, Bryan Wilson, Martin McCallum (Workforce Board staff); Karen Lee and Lynnae Ruttledge, Workforce Board members; Angel Lopez, Center for Career Alternatives; Anne Kenney, Seattle Job Initiatives; John Walstrum, Clover Park Technical College; Ronelle Funk, SBCTC; Jess Wilson, ESD; Matthew Kreiling, Washington Student Lobby; Patrick Baldoz, South Central WDC; Andi Smith, House Higher Education; Debbie Reck (for Don Rennegarbe), Tacoma Community House; Sandy Miller, ESD; Don Kay, DVR; Aldo Melchior, Senate Higher Education; Kathy Cooper, ESD; Frankie Artega, ESD; Rich Berkowitz, Transportation Institute; Paula Norby, Tacoma Community College; Uriel Iniguez, Washington State Commission on Hispanic Affairs; Matt King, YWCA; Randy Spaulding, HECB; Lisa Nisenfeld, Southwest WDC

Co –Chairs Commissioner, Karen Lee and Lynnae Ruttledge thanked everyone and led introductions of the group.

This is the first meeting of three meetings of this work group to develop HSHW 2008. Every two years the Workforce Board updates the plan. Last was approved by the Legislature in 2006. The purpose is to bring experts together to shape the strategic plan for workforce development in Washington, *High Skills, High Wages*.

Madeleine Thompson gave a presented an overview of the goals for the work group (see PowerPoint presentation.)

Carl Wolfhagen presented the recent study of the Board on Washington's demographic context for Tomorrow's Workforce. (Powerpoint presentation.)

Questions raised: How many have been in the labor force, dropped out, and are trying to get back into the labor force? Carl noted we do not have a good way of finding this information. The Commissioner noted ESD does have a way of looking at SSNs and providing some information.

Questions were asked about disaggregated data by race and ethnicity, also by income level. The Board plans to provide this.

Questions were raised related to ex-offenders – transitioning out of prison. A large number of workforce by 2013 will have had a felony conviction. Department of Corrections can help with this information.

Questions were raised about the number of new immigrants and workers with limited English proficiency.

Bryan Wilson presented the recent Employer Survey Results (PowerPoint presentation). Three key points to emphasize. Employers are having frequent difficulty in finding employees with specific skills, hurting employers ability profitability.

The work group members brainstormed barriers and issues for serving adults in the workforce development system. Flip Chart notes from the full group and small work group information is noted below

Next steps. Next meeting is April 2. SBCTC and HECB have updated Master Plans. We will invite a representative of the Department of corrections to talk about initiatives related to ex-offender re-entry employment and training programs. We will have an overview of Workforce Development council strategies that are relevant to the plan.

### **Full Group Brainstorm Notes on Key Barriers**

- ❖ Marine and other industries.
  - Transportation and worker identification
    - ✓ Previous convictions
    - ✓ Drug and alcohol issues
    - ✓ Recent immigrants
    - ✓ Costly to apply for identification card
- ❖ Transportation (public).
- ❖ Navigating bureaucracy.
- ❖ Previous felony convictions (block many opportunities).
- ❖ Basic skills/prerequisite skills.
- ❖ Being low-income.
  - Time/work
  - Dollars
  - Self-esteem
- ❖ Life skills:
  - Educate on benefits of education.
  - Be preventative (show up for appointments on time, don't party the night before an important interview).
- ❖ Cultural poverty/lack of dreams, expectations for anything better.
- ❖ Employers don't know about programs for employing ex-offenders.
- ❖ Literacy (not only reading but computer literacy, especially in older adults).
- ❖ Resources to take advantage of opportunities.
- ❖ Lack of understanding/need for lifelong learning.
- ❖ Low income working adults lack flexibility in schedule.
- ❖ Scheduling at educational institutions.
- ❖ Skills employers need:
  - Lack of soft skills (committing offenses).
  - Could be connected to learning disabilities (hidden disabilities).
  - Financial aid.
- ❖ Assessing learning disabilities early and development strategies to address these disabilities.
- ❖ Multiple barriers:
  - Lack of chemical dependence treatment
  - Low-income
  - Childcare
  - Transportation

- Expensive to provide programs
- ❖ Need to improve case management.
- ❖ Need to inform low-income people about where good paying jobs are.
- ❖ Importance of marketing in context to the local economy.
- ❖ Training to work with schedules (work and school).
- ❖ Two low-wage parents may not qualify for programs.
- ❖ Need to rethink eligibility thresholds.
- ❖ Understand disincentives for trying for higher paying jobs (i.e., lose daycare privileges).
- ❖ Flexibility of training:
  - Information about OJT.
  - Information about Apprenticeships
  - Increase credited training.
- ❖ Self-efficacy/self-esteem/coaching/mentoring.
- ❖ Lack of knowledge about resources—need for marketing.
- ❖ Consistent approach—strengthen what we have.
- ❖ Link people to benefits employers already offered, e.g., educational benefits with retention.
- ❖ Lifelong Learning Accounts (LiLa).

## **Group Work Flip Charts**

### Group 1

- ❖ Increase partnerships with community based organizations (CBOs).
- ❖ Increase paid work-based learning (ABE/ESL at the workplace).
- ❖ Increase Opportunity Grant program (also include money or eligibility for ABE/ESL students).
- ❖ Increase flexibility in course scheduling, program delivery, and financial aid.
- ❖ Public and private college partnerships (i.e., share equipment).
- ❖ Build on checkoutacollege.com
- ❖ Credit/credential recognition (portfolio) value.
- ❖ ESD credential search.
- ❖ Standardized career pathways.
- ❖ Different strategies for case management (peer mentoring, practical experience).
- ❖ Retain FSET program.

### Group 2

- ❖ Increase information about how to access apprenticeships.
- ❖ Increase work with employers and incentives to provide training or increase access to training.
- ❖ Community empowerment zones better tied to workforce development (partnership with CTED).
- ❖ Tax incentives—marketing as integration into work with other programs.
- ❖ Increase linkage between employers willing to work with the system to assist workers that are underemployed to increase skill development—part time work options, work with people of color, people with convictions (ex-offenders), or people with disabilities.
- ❖ Marketing bonding program to employers for employing people that are considered high risk.
- ❖ Integrate programs that have incentives for employers and market as a package.

- ❖ Increase the number of case managers, mentors, life coaches for adults with barriers to continue in life-long learning (workforce development expert)
- ❖ Expansion of F-Set program and marketing
- ❖ Take a look at laws and policies that present barriers to individuals with convictions from re-entering the workforce.

### Group 3

- ❖ Increase understanding/awareness and support for existing work and initiatives—consistent support for excellence-based practices.
- ❖ Link past-placement to postsecondary education:
  - Help workers and employers link to education.
- ❖ Radically uncouple federal financial aid and support for adult learners in Washington State that get them to a tipping point and support life-long learning.
- ❖ Support services for adult workers that may reflect hidden disabilities, lack of skills, and knowledge.
- ❖ Holistic safety net with assessment and treatment/services.
- ❖ Get people to know/vision/dream:
  - Marketing (government and large employers).
  - “Golden Arches.”
  - Mentoring.
  - Successful representation of “me.”
- ❖ Issue of convictions (ex-offenders):
  - Background checks.
  - Qualifications.
  - Consistent efforts to help ex-offenders.
  - Consistent efforts to reduction population in prison.
  - Learn and earn while still young.
  - Well-funded.
  - Identify programs that work.
  - Mobile employers for co-investment in ex-offenders.

### Group 4

- ❖ Incorporate the strategies laid out in the 12 Workforce Development Council strategic plans (i.e., working poor toward economic self-sufficiency).
- ❖ Assisting the young parents. This counts for two because their child benefits, too.
- ❖ System of the “future” looks different than our current collection of programs.
- ❖ Low unemployment and higher rate of poverty.
- ❖ World is fundamentally different.
- ❖ WIA reaches 2 percent of eligible population.
- ❖ Workforce 101—information sharing, common orientation.
- ❖ High rate of incarceration—what’s breaking down?
- ❖ Need holistic direction with the Department of Corrections.
- ❖ Preventative activities:
  - In schools.
  - In middle school.
  - During the summer.
- ❖ Business investment to middle and high school—engages them.