

COUNCIL ON WORKFORCE INVESTMENT

CWI EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes Friday, September 1, 2006 (Teleconference)

Members Present: Paul Linzmeyer (Chair); Joel Rogers (Vice-Chair); Roberta Gassman, Doug Moquin, Dean Welch, Christopher Ruud

Members Absent: Mark Burke, Lee Rasch, Tina Koehn

Staff Present: Sue Gleason, Sheryl Billups

Others Present: JoAnna Richard, Gary Denis, Sandra Breitborde (DWD); Neal Hall (for Teresa Barch), WAJTE

Key Issues

I. Call to Order and Approval of Minutes

Paul Linzmeyer called the meeting to order at approximately 9:40 a.m.

Action: Gassman moved, Rudd seconded the motion, to approve the minutes of June 2, 2006. The motion passed unanimously.

II. Workforce Strategies Committee Report

A. Manufacturing Skill Standards Proposal

At the request of Dean Welch (Committee Co-chair), Sheryl Billups provided a background on the Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSSC) system and the Workforce Strategies Committee recommendations to provide \$100,000 for capacity building efforts to support the system. Support would be directed to employer-focused public information, workforce development system staff training, and certification of comprehensive job centers as MSSC-certified assessment centers.

Gassman expressed strong support for Wisconsin's involvement, but indicated that unions need to be involved. Linzmeyer also expressed support, noting that the system offered an important opportunity for New North manufacturers and other regions focusing on the manufacturing sector. Welch commented on the importance of employer connections. Rogers expressed concern that employers have been slow to adopt manufacturing skill standards, though they have been around since 2001. Members also questioned the extent to which this addresses an identified need. They also noted several factors important to implementation, among them: targeting employers who build in pay increases as skills increased/workers become certified, rolling out in an order and manner that will improve acceptance and use, and linking this effort to the GROW grants and the technical college's Advanced Manufacturing Solutions Initiative.

Action: Gassman moved to accept the recommendations; Rogers seconded the motion. The motion passed with Rogers abstaining.

In follow-up discussion about implementation, Gassman expressed support for linking the effort to the technical college system efforts. She suggested that the WTCS President, Dan Clancy, could become a member of the Executive Committee. There was general support for this suggestion. Christopher Ruud suggested that the Strategies Committee should also follow-up. Welch noted that it would take a grass roots effort to get the system implemented; it would be helpful to get the GROW regions to start thinking about it.

B. Unspent CWI Special Innovations Project Funds

Welch reviewed the Committee's recommendations for use of unspent Special Innovations grant funds, explaining that under the recommendations, funds would reinforce GROW grant funds, with special focus on regional metrics and career pathways. He explained that the Committee also was interested in making GROW regions aware of good ideas being implemented through GROW efforts across the state; some of the "best practices" might also be supported with these extra dollars.

Action: Rogers moved to accept the Committee's recommendations; Gassman seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

III. Workforce Information Grant Application for 2006

Sandra Breitborde, Director of DWD, Bureau of Workforce Information, provided a brief overview of DWD plans for using the U.S. DOL grant to support the state's labor market information efforts. She explained that the first two items that are planned (populating the workforce information database and producing industry and occupational employment projections) are core products that must be done. The third product, publishing an annual economic analysis report, is a new requirement; this is an area where the CWI may be actively involved.

In discussion, questions were raised about activities related to special studies and the definition of "economic transition." Breitborde indicated that it is broadly defined, giving states considerable flexibility to use dollars as needed. For example, DWD studied the community impact of the Dephi closing in Southeast Wisconsin. Gassman noted that Wisconsin has specific criteria for communities in distress (e.g., high unemployment levels, high levels of dislocations, etc.).

Action: Rogers moved approval of the draft plan as presented; Moquin seconded the motion; it passed unanimously.

IV. Workforce Systems Development Committee Report

Christopher Ruud (co-chair) reviewed current Committee activities. He indicated that a status report on the first set of Committee recommendations on system improvements shows some progress being made. In addition, the Committee is making some progress on the next set of recommendations for system improvement. An issue that has been raised is regional boundary differences -- the seven GROW regions vs. the 11 Workforce Development Areas.

V. Grow II Grants

Sue Gleason provided a brief overview of the status of the GROW II grants, pointing out the summaries included in the Executive Committee meeting packet. She indicated that \$764,000 has been requested while only \$500,000 is available. The formal review is beginning, with criteria based on the guiding principles approved at the last CWI meeting and what has been done to date.

Gleason indicated that funding decisions are expected in time to be announced at the September 22 CWI meeting. She also indicated that any Committee member who wanted a full copy of the applications and/or who wished to sit in on applicant interviews planned as part of the review process should contact her. Dean Welch requested a copy of the full applications.

Linzmeyer noted that his review of applications indicated that some areas are making progress, but that overall implementation is uneven. Rogers noted that the CWI has some responsibility to train and provide technical assistance to the regions so that they understand what is expected. Gassman indicated that discussions will occur internally about how DWD can provide the needed technical assistance.

VI. Report for July NGA State Liaisons Meeting

A. National Support for Regional Direction

Gary Denis provided a brief overview of the recent Milwaukee meeting of the National Governors' Association Liaisons. Among presenters was a representative of the U.S. DOL who talked about the WIRED initiative. This represents the federal effort to move to a regional approach that links workforce and economic development more effectively and to infuse the WIRED philosophy into the WIA system. It also reflects the U.S. DOL's disillusionment with workforce development boards, which are not as productive as the U.S. DOL had hoped they would be. This perspective is also why DOL is investing in the technical college system rather than WDBs. In response to questions about combining WDAs to reflect this regional approach, which Wisconsin has implemented through its GROW regions, Denis noted that WIA legislation prohibits the Governors from changing WDA boundaries. However, the state might want to consider incentives to encourage local areas to request consolidation.

B. Waivers

Denis pointed out that Wisconsin participates in only one of the many waivers the U.S. DOL has approved (related to service providers for individual training accounts). The Department has approved a high number of requests; it uses the waivers to address what it considers deficiencies in the WIA legislation.

VII. Joyce Foundation Shifting Gears Grant

Gleason provided a brief overview of the "Shifting Gears" grant proposal, which was submitted to the Joyce Foundation. The proposal is a result of very good interagency cooperation; DWD and the WTCS are very optimistic that the proposal will be favorably received and funded. The "career pathways" approach detailed in the proposal will fundamentally change how Wisconsin does business in the workforce development area.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:40 a.m.