

COUNCIL ON WORKFORCE INVESTMENT

Workforce Strategies Committee

Concourse Hotel -- Madison, WI

(Draft Pending Committee Approval)

December 8, 2006

Members Present: Dean Welch (co-chair), Connie Hoveland-Belden (for Lee Rasch), Colleen Bates, William Chaudoir, Morna Foy (for Daniel Clancy), Deborah Mahaffey (for Elizabeth Burmaster); John Wagnitz (for Sen. Dave Hansen), John Heyer, James Hill, Debra Malewicki, Joan Wilk

Members Absent: Rod Copes, Jewel Currie, Barb Fleisner, Susan Hatch, Sen. Joe Leibham, A. Kent Olson, Mark Reihl, Patrick Schillinger, Norma Tirado

Staff Present: Fred Bartol, Sheryl Billups

Guests: Pat Schramm (WDB SC)

Key Issue

I. Call to Order and Minutes

Co-chair Dean Welch called the meeting to order. John Heyer moved to approve the minutes of the August 3 and September 22, 2006 meetings; the motion was seconded and passed unanimously. Welch noted that the primary purpose of the meeting was to define strategies for the coming year, including identifying key objectives within the framework of current committee activities that can be brought to the Executive Committee Planning Process

II. CWI Project Updates

Fred Bartol and Sheryl Billups provided brief updates on various state and CWI projects, noting that all of the projects were discussed during the full Council meeting. Projects discussed included GROW II, the Joyce Foundation Shifting Gears/RISE grant, CWI Special Innovations projects, and MSSC project implementation.

III. Planning for the Future

Bartol provided a brief overview of the major emerging themes reflected by the above projects and new initiatives under discussion at the state and national levels. These focused on regional partnerships, industry sectors, and career pathways. He noted that a key question for the Committee is how its current objectives and strategies serve the Council given these new directions. This question framed the discussion and generated a number of Committee comments and suggestions, summarized below.

A. Regional Partnerships/GROW Grants

1. Members questioned how each region determined what to work on and whether activities were resulting in change. Committee members emphasized the importance of having some level of metrics to identify "best practices" and accountability for funding. Metrics need to be region-specific and not statewide.
2. Members suggested staff identify "best practices" and have them reviewed by the CWI. The CWI needs to share the best practices, but also needs to share what doesn't work -- to encourage innovation and at the same time recognize not all innovations lead to success.

3. In evaluation training, private partners are increasingly involved; while metrics are important, broader objectives also need to be recognized (e.g., assessment of improved communications, etc.)
4. Workforce boards need to be involved in all of the activities; the CWI needs to recognize the value of the Boards and role in "catalyzing" proposals as priorities.
5. The Strategies Committee should take an active role in identifying best practices and disseminating them -- we will need to determine how we want information presented on a regular basis.

B. Career Pathways/Sifting Gears Project

1. Questions were raised about where CWI/Committee can add value in project. Bartol noted that the project brings with it implementation issues on all fronts; these present opportunities for the Committee to be consulted. As an example, he raised the issue of how to frame the next GROW grants to build in a career pathways agenda. Bartol also noted that the CWI could advise on the strategies and action steps related to the project.
2. In reference to low-income populations, many W-2 recipients have taken the first step in getting low-paying jobs, but have no where to go from there; we need to have uniform tools to help individuals move up.

C. Industry Sectors/Skill Gaps

1. The basic information on skill gaps (Committee Objective I) is already available; skill gaps have been identified through various resources; specific objective needs to change/reflect where we are.
2. Efforts need to ensure a business/education partnership (related to current DPI efforts to restructure the high schools).
 - K-12 teachers often not at meetings related to manufacturing and skill gaps; they need to be present.
 - The value of technical education has lessened in the high schools -- it is receiving less attention at a time when students are making decisions that affect what they can do in the future.
 - Employers need to be brought into the schools early; they need to be more open about the need for quality education and back up the high schools.
3. It is important to identify the dynamics that produce the skill gaps and then address those dynamics -- a key question is how to create a culture of learning.
4. A separate issue is what to do with people who have lost jobs and employers who need workers -- need to address the mismatch.

D. General Comments

1. Need to develop a model/template for organizing community dialogue on skill needs, etc.
2. Consider getting behind specific high end industries in order to raise the demand for high end/value added (high wage) jobs.
 - Look to emerging opportunities; focus on health care and manufacturing.
 - Consider how entrepreneurship fits into the mix.
 - Consider training employers on how to be employers of choice
3. Align objectives and strategies.
 - Organize all activities around a sector-based approach.
 - GROW grants should be the organizing process for all CWI resources
 - For each objective, focus on sectors and have proactive strategies to solve identified problems.
 - Use GROW grants to identify best practices of what employers are doing.

4. Need to consider limited resources -- integrate different players to maximize limited resources

IV. Follow-up Steps

- A. Staff should revise Committee Objectives/Strategies Document and send to all members for comments.
- B. Comments to Executive Committee -- don't restructure; the committee is just beginning to coalesce; the last restructuring slowed the Committee down and members are would not like to see that happen again.