



YOUTH COUNCIL

MINUTES

Wednesday, November 9, 2011

11:30 a.m.

Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board

439 South Union Street

Lawrence, MA 01843

Youth Council MEMBERS PRESENT:

Howard Allen, Irene Chalek, Beverly DeSalvo, Lisa Coy, Brad Howell, Linda Piergeorge, April Lyskowsky, Steve Noroian, Heidi Riccio, Barbara Richards, Megan Shea, Cal Williams

MVWIB Youth Council MEMBERS ABSENT:

Marina Acosta, Janet Allison, Tom Casey, Tom Connors, Ed Fitzgerald, Vinnie Ouellette, Donna Rivera, Michael Strem, Nicole Austermann

MVWIB STAFF PRESENT:

Deborah Andrews, Mary Kivell

OTHERS:

Arthur Chilingirian, Abismael Morales, Michelle Soto, Nancy Tariot

I. Call to Order

Youth Council Chairman Cal Williams called the meeting to order at 11:40 a.m. and welcomed the Youth Build members Abismael Morales and Michelle Soto. Introductions were made around the table and Cal Williams asked them to tell the Youth Council how they heard about Youth Build. Abby Morales said that he heard about the program through friends and family. He said that he started this year and that that this is unlike any school or GED program he has experienced in the past. He said that they teachers and staff treat you like family. He said that he was selected to speak at the AmeriCorps National welcome and is hoping to finish the program and meet his high expectations. He said that he is a member of the Youth Build Policy Committee which consists of 5 members who are rotated monthly with 2 staying so that all program members have an opportunity to participate. The Youth Build Policy Committee is going to publish a newsletter and looks for different ways to raise funds for the program.

Michelle Soto said that she completed high school but did not pass MCAS. She said that a friend told her about the program and she is looking to better herself to be able to better take care of her children and herself. She said that getting accepted in this program is different from other schools, as they give you the attention you need. She is learning new things.

II. Approval of October 12, 2011 Minutes

Cal then called for a motion on the minutes of the October 12, 2011 meeting.

Motion by seconded by to approve the minutes of the October 12, 2011 Youth Council meeting as submitted. Motion passed.

III. Final ITA Policy

Deborah referred to copies of the ITA Policy with the revisions which were previously voted on at the Planning Committee and MV Workforce Investment Board Meeting. She said that Page 12 B. is the portion of the ITA Policy which deals with Youth. She said that Massachusetts has a new ITA waiver for youth, which allows them to participate in ITAs. We have several providers of ITA training programs. Deborah said that some training programs have previously included an option for GED preparation as well as remediation for those who had a GED or had a high school diploma but were basic skills deficient. Going forward, all youth must have a previously earned GED or HSD before being referred to an ITA. The policy follows:

A. Addendum to Youth ITA Process: Additional Criteria for Youth ITA participants

1. *All youth participants must be eligible for WIA Title I to participate in a youth program activity including receiving an Individual Training Account voucher. Only older youth aged 18-21 or younger youth who are out of school are eligible for services through ITAs. Older youth may also be enrolled as Adult or Dislocated Workers if that eligibility criteria is met. All Youth registered to be served under WIA are comprehensively assessed and an individual service strategy or Case Management Plan must be developed.*
2. *The comprehensive assessment will review the youth's academic skills, educational background, work history, job titles and skills, labor market for present skills, test results, and current barriers preventing the youth from securing and/or holding employment leading to self-sufficiency. **It is essential that all factors be reviewed in a comprehensive manner, including marketability. All potential barriers to employment must be documented and incorporated into the justification for training.***
3. *All youth referred for ITAs funded through WIA Youth Program funds will have previously earned a GED or HSD.*
4. *Remediation, if necessary should be contextualized to support the skill requirements necessary for the occupation for which the youth is training and provide educational remediation to raise academic levels to 9.0 or above.*
5. *Youth with TABE Levels of 9.0 in BOTH math and English require no formal remediation.*
6. *Required TABE Levels for enrollment in Occupational Training with Remediation:*
 - *All youth must have at least one score – math or English - at level 7.9 or higher.*
 - *In order to minimize the possible impact of this policy change, the other subject score can be as low as 6.9 for the transition period, which will end on June 30, 2012.*
 - *Prior to June 30, 2012, remediation in either math or English will be offered between 7.9 and 8.9 for one subject and 6.9 and 8.9 for the second.*
 - *Beginning July 1, 2012, all TABE scores must be at least 7.9 to qualify for Occupational Training with Remediation*
7. *This policy applies to **all youth** without dependents or a prior work history.*
8. *The VWCC Executive Director may designate youth aged 18-21 as eligible for enrollment in ITAs funded through the WIA Adult program. The MVWIB strongly suggests that this discretion be limited to the following special circumstances:*
 - a) *A previous history of employment.*
 - b) *The obligation to support minor or disabled dependents.*

1. *There must be justification for training.* The justification includes labor market data supporting the training choice, and an objective assessment which indicates the youth's ability to successfully participate in and complete the training. The Youth Case Management Plan, or service strategy must articulate an age-appropriate career goal that corresponds to a youth's assessment.
2. The Youth Career Counselors must provide counseling that includes labor market information and information on careers, wages, and career ladders. All of this must be documented in Moses.
3. Youth Career Counselors must utilize the MOSES system to review appropriate Occupational Skills program availability. The Counselor must direct youth to visit more than one program if available. Counselors must provide youth with program performance information, average wages of the participants who have obtained employment and any relevant feedback on the program and training design.
4. Following provider selection, the Youth Career Counselor must follow the ITA General Process articulated in this document under Section III. At no point should customers be told that the training is set and approved until the ITA voucher is signed by the authorized ITA Contract signatory.

Megan asked about students who may have a high school certification but have not passed the MCAS and Deborah said that we have other programs like Pathways and Lawrence High School SMART for those youth. Lisa Coy reminded folks that youth must meet WIA eligibility and it applies to all the towns in this WIB. There was a request for a list of ITA providers and Deborah directed folks to the state website where all ITA providers are listed. April Lyskowsky said that before youth 16-21 with or without a HSD were able to receive training and Lisa explained that the federal definition of WIA youth and eligibility applies but that the local area exercised its authority to target this population. April interjected that often it is not lack of motivation that encourages youth to leave school, but various reasons such as a family to support. Megan said that we need to make sure that the youth pipeline has something else there for youth without a GED or HSD. Heidi Riccio referenced a recent study where youth are more successful if they have some employment during their high school years. Often they have to put food on the table and buy diapers for babies and don't always look at the long term results.

Beverly DeSalvo then asked the Youth Build representatives to describe a typical day for them. Abby Morales said that they arrive around 8:00 a.m. and punch in and eat. Then they go upstairs to the classroom at 8:30 a.m. for roll call, reflections, the pledge and then their classes.

Cal Williams said that we will have another discussion about ITAs on the next meeting agenda.

IV. FY2012 Program Plan Discussion

Deborah explained the Performance Goals for Fiscal Year 2012 issued to each region by the state. These include the following categories: Youth for Placement in Employment or Education – 74%; Attainment of a Degree or Certificate – 61%; and Literacy and Numeracy Gains 25%. Deborah said that before we decide on the program plan we need to ensure that we will be able to meet these requirements. We have \$80k to utilize after 33 or so ITAs.

One suggestion was to provide occupational training for seniors in high school who are not planning to attend college. Chili said the Career Center ran two programs for seniors in the past. He said that one was successful and one wasn't. One was electronic assembly and those students were placed in jobs. The other program was medical assisting and Chili said there was difficulty placing them. If we want to offer a group program, we will issue an RFP for bids.

Bev DeSalvo talked about jobs in machine shops and Heidi Riccio said that the IT field will be the second fastest growth industry in the next ten years. Cal Williams asked Youth Council members to submit any other ideas for training or programs to Deborah by Tuesday of next week. Megan Shea

also suggested that the RFP be very prescriptive and should include more details rather than fewer. A discussion followed about the possibility of offering training for three hours per day after school. Both GLTS and Whittier offer evening programs. Lisa Coy said that it is sometimes difficult to add three hours for students who have been in school all day. There was also discussion if students in an after school program would have issues with daycare, transportation and needing to eat after school. Bev DeSalvo said that the biggest outcome is if they get a position at the end. Chili said that we need to be cautious talking about the design of any program as there were a number of vendors in the room who may respond to the RFP.

Chili also said that it doesn't necessarily have to be an In School Youth program as we can decide the population we want to serve. He said that we will be following the HPW Strategic Plan focusing on IT, Manufacturing and Health Care. There was further discussion on CNC and machining holding a lot of possibilities in the Merrimack Valley. Beverly DeSalvo spoke about Whittier's program and how the evening classes are full but they cannot fill all the job openings in the valley. Howard Allen said that Mike Munday of Arwood Machine has new equipment that requires training and that is why some folks go back to school.

V. Program Updates

Deborah asked Lisa Coy to talk about the youth programs. Lisa said that the Year Round Youthworks program has 17 youth from Lawrence High School attending workshops on work readiness, looking for a job, and career exploration. Some of our employers presented information about their industries including Howard Allen and Cal Williams. This will go through December.

Lisa said that the Pathways program is trying to get kids from a couple of high schools who did not pass connect finishing high school with employment and earnings. Classes are 15 hours per week including a Saturday MCAS class.

The ARRA Jag Funding includes MCAS remediation, career development and subsidized jobs for 68 Lawrence youth 18-21 years old working full and part time and will end by December 31, after youth take the MCAS.

The Bridging the Opportunities Grant is to provide youth with the work readiness skills necessary for career success through a positive youth development approach. Youth are encouraged to identify their own assets and interests through participation in career exploration and the development of a BOG Student Center Awareness Portfolio. Our preference is for a "team" approach with most of the youth at the same site and are looking for a program that includes, for example, a business in need of painting and other refreshing at their site. Lisa said that this is a DYS grant and we finished the summer cycle. This is a new cycle with 12 youth participating.

VI. Safe and Successful Grant Update

Deborah Andrews reported that Lawrence has received an \$800,000 grant for youth involved in serious crimes and at risk for offending. This grant is through the City of Lawrence Community Development Department and we are looking for a place for the youth to go to work after career readiness training and counseling. The site needs to be one where a clean CORI is not an issue. Lisa Coy said that we will be teaching work maturity in a group in the beginning instead of individual sites. The city is partnering with DYS and probation to identify candidates.

Heidi Riccio said that City Hall is in need of countertops that are handicap accessible. GLTS has installed ramps in the past but is not able to do that this year. Perhaps that is a good partnership for the program. Irene Chalek suggested other organizations that need to become ADA compliant and also install appropriate signage.

VII. Other Business

Cali Williams said that there is a wealth of talent around this table and asked for ideas on today's discussions. Michelle Soto said that there is a need for more daycare for young parents. Also discussed was how information is shared and Abby said that Facebook and other social media sites are a good way to reach young people. In addition, passing out cards or flyers for youth to take to their social events over the weekend is very successful.

April Lyskowsky then invited everyone to the Orange Wheeler 150 anniversary celebration on November 29th.

VIII. Adjournment

Having no further business Megan Shea made a motion to adjourn seconded by Howard Allen. Motion passed and meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Kivell

Mary Kivell
Recorder