

**Chester County Workforce Investment Board**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, July 15, 2009 8:30 a.m.**  
**Chester County Government Services Center, Suite 171**

**WIB Members in Attendance:** Patricia Burt, Ethel Carter, Kevin Sand (A), Dot Raisul, Tom MacNamara, Pat Bokovitz, Tom Rhoads, Doug Schmidt, Bob Scanlon (A), Eric Forsyth, Joyce Chester, Christine Warren and Doug Doerfler.

**Others in Attendance:** Butch Urban, Linda Jackson, Laura McOdrum, Anne Morris, Mike Weishaar, Lila Singleton, Laura Heikkila, Linda Grosse, Beca Yarnell and Colin McLaughlin.

**I. Call to Order and Introductions**

- Tom MacNamara called the meeting to order at 8:40 a.m. and began the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Following the Pledge, introductions were made.

**II. Meeting Minutes**

- Minutes from the March and May 2009 WIB meetings were reviewed and approved through the quorum in attendance.

**III. Presentation/Special Guest**

- Joyce Chester presented information about Chester County Adult Education Workforce Coalition and how the program helps adults improve their basic academic skills, English language, communication skills and job skills.
- The program partners with Bayard Taylor Library, La Comunidad Hispana, Delaware County Community College, Volunteer English Program, West Chester Area School District and the Tri-County YWCA.
- Areas served include Downingtown, Exton, Kennett Square, Pottstown, and West Chester.

**IV. Subcommittee Reports**

**1. Advocacy, Communication, and Education (Eric Forsythe)**

- Did not meet, but subcommittee members are remaining active through phone and email to make sure those most in need will have access to ARRA funds.
- Eric is representing both Open Hearth and the WIB as a member of the United Way Financial Stability Partnership.

**2. Business Services Team (Doug Schmidt)**

- Has not formally met since last WIB meeting, but has been in communication.
- Actively working with CCEDC to support the maintenance of BREP (Business Retention and Expansion Program), which confirms for employers that help is

available to ensure a skilled workforce pipeline and to uphold the needs of businesses in Chester County.

- OJT opportunities will be communicated to employers, as well as to job-seekers.
- Working to show businesses the value of workforce development, which translates to overall economic development.

### ***3. Council for the Workforce of Tomorrow (Anne Morris)***

- 44 students from all around Chester County have been enrolled at The HOOD.
- The new service provider at The HOOD, Handi-Crafters, has successfully begun initiating services of the youth workforce development program.
- Laura McOdrum provided a report on the Chester County Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP):
  - 23 worksites have been confirmed, offering participants a diverse variety of work experience opportunities.
  - Each worksite will operate for 5 to 12 weeks this summer.
  - Academic remediation and workforce development training are incorporated at each location.
  - Easy transition/referral of participants into EARN, OIC, and CareerLink programs, as appropriate.
  - 192 applications for SYEP were submitted.
  - 122 eligible applicants were approved to participate.
- Pat informed the Board that the idea of expanding SYEP to continue to March 2010 is being pursued. This would provide an extended time for out-of-school youth to participate and benefit from SYEP.
- 60-70% of SYEP funds will be used this year.
- Doug Schmidt identified a possible opportunity for recruiting SYEP participants – returning soldiers.
- DCD staff deserves credit for doing a great job getting the word out about SYEP, as evidenced by the number of applicants from throughout the County.

### ***4. Executive Committee (Tom MacNamara & Pat Bokovitz)***

#### ***i. ARRA***

- Discussed transparency and strict fiscal accounting standards that are needed as part of utilizing ARRA funds.
- A funding table listing all ARRA funds being administered through the Chester County Department of Community Development (DCD) is included in this meeting's information packet.
- A new web page will be posted so that the public can see all of DCD's ARRA activities.

#### ***ii. Weatherization***

- We are taking a proactive approach in working to connect Community Services Recovery funds with workforce development by contracting with Chester County OIC for weatherization training.
- The state will determine required certifications.
- Vendors have not been selected yet.

- Announcement of weatherization training opportunities will have to be timed appropriately to when funds are available, so that agencies are prepared for the high number of applicants who will be seeking this assistance.

### **iii. Connecting Community Service Activities with Workforce Development**

- Besides connection to weatherization training through community agency partners such as OIC, the WIB will be connecting the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) program to workforce development as much as possible through coordination and collaboration among agencies.
- The HPRP (Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program) will involve 5 community service agencies to provide intensive case management services to families. The case management services will connect to CareerLink services for HPRP clients.
- The Chester County Food Bank has arranged to hire a van driver who will be an EARN program participant.
- REDI Inc. representative will be available at CareerLink to work with released prisoners re-integrating into society and also with Life Transforming Ministries. They will coordinate their work with the workforce development services that are already in place.

### **iv. Succession**

- A succession plan to identify a WIB Chairperson and Vice Chairperson has been discussed, and we are soliciting for interested candidates.
- Interested candidates are encouraged to let the Executive Committee know of their interest.

## **6. Marketing, Data, and Outreach (Linda Jackson)**

- The six-month WIB Subcommittee survey results provided helpful feedback on Subcommittee effectiveness.
- Subcommittee survey results indicate a need for increased communication and help for facilitators to streamline reporting processes/structure meetings.
- The survey results will be incorporated into an amendment document to the WIB's 2008-2009 Strategic Plan, which will show progress by including updated information about each subcommittee's action items and the specific strategies and goals they have identified so far.
- Before the next WIB meeting in September, a webinar will be coordinated to provide subcommittee facilitators with information to ensure meeting consistency and effectiveness.
- "Chester County WORKS!" a 12-page insert in the Daily Local News, will include a variety of useful information for the public, with information on workforce opportunities in Chester County for: 1.) individuals; and 2.) the business community.
- Prior to running this publication, the WIB wants all partner agencies included in the publication to be fully prepared for the number of calls that may flood their offices in response to the publication.

## **7. CareerLink Partners (Doug Schmidt)**

- The Job Openings Report is being shared monthly.

- Pat has been holding monthly meetings with the CareerLink staff.
- The WIB's purchase of new chairs for the CareerLink office has improved its physical infrastructure, appearance, and office morale.
- New employers, referrals, job placement, and new job orders are all down.
- Job-seekers are up 40%.
- Unemployment has increased significantly, compared to last year.
- Successfully partnered with the Chester County Library to offer PREP services at an Exton location.
- Available capacity of up to 100 people per PREP session, and Veterans receive intensive services.
- PREP emphasizes getting people motivated to look for jobs.
- WIA ITA requests are up, the money is available, and people who were on waiting lists are being contacted to begin training.
- Pat requested authority and support from the WIB for moving forward with a small subcommittee that will address working with dislocated professionals who need help re-entering the job market. The Board approved this request through quorum.

#### **8. RCEP (Laura Heikkila)**

- A community event was held on June 29, 2009 for students and their parents at The Garage in Kennett Square which served 50 people.
- Several IP's were represented and high priority occupations were highlighted.
- Positive feedback was received from this event.

#### **9. Training and Quality Assurance (Butch Urban)**

- We did not meet but are currently finalizing the On-the Job-Training (OJT) policies.
- More ARRA opportunities are becoming available for job-seekers.
- Targeting an event for the end of July at Penn State Great Valley for employers to learn of OJT opportunities.
- Stressing aggressive and proactive marketing efforts to inform job-seekers and employers of workforce development opportunities.
- Goal is to use ARRA funds to connect people to jobs ASAP.
- WorkKeys assessment tool is almost live. Testing sites will be available at the EARN Center, The HOOD, and at CareerLink-Chester County.
- The state strongly recommends using WorkKeys, and CCWIB will be rolling it out by mid-August.
- Remedial tools are available to get client assessment scores up to par.
- Will explore partnering with Community Agencies to have them use the remedial tools with their clients.

#### **10. Workforce Partners (Anne Morris)**

- Met to discuss ARRA funds and strategies.
- Industry Partnership funding proposals were submitted to the state.
- Dollar matches from the state were exceeded.

- An event held at Penn State Great Valley offered an opportunity to provide many dislocated workers with BioScience and IT career information.

#### **V. General Updates**

- YouthBuild funding was not awarded to CCWIB.
- Concern over the status of pending state budget regarding Industry Partnership funding.
- “Here to Help” community event on Friday, July 24 from 1-5 PM at the Community Youth and Women’s Alliance in Coatesville – targeted to citizens who are unemployed to provide individuals and families with information on state and federal programs that are available to assist them.
- Next WIB Meeting on Wednesday, September 23rd at the Chester County Economic Development Council.

#### **VII. Adjourn**

- Tom MacNamara motioned to adjourn the meeting, and the motion was approved.