

State Council for Adult Literacy Education Services

Meeting Notes
February 18, 2009 (10:00 AM-12:00 Noon)
Labor Education Center
New Brunswick, New Jersey

Attendance

Members and Alternates

Hal Beder, Retired
Bob Berezny Department of Education
Elissa Director, Literacy Volunteers of NJ
Nancy Fisher, Jewish Vocation Services
Claudia Merkel-Keller, LWD
Robert Santare (SCALES Chair), Champion
Fasteners
Robin Widing, SETC
Terri Hughes

Guests

Heather McKay, Center for Women and
Work, Rutgers University
Leigh Freeman, NJN
Nick Montaldo

Welcome and Approvals of Minutes – Robert Santare

The meeting was called to order at approximately 10:10 a.m. The Acting Chair welcomed attendees and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

Members were then given time to re-review the minutes. The motion was made to approve the minutes, seconded, and unanimously approved by members present.

Selection of Chairperson – Lansing Davis

Robert Santare is currently serving as Acting Chair of SCALES replacing Dennis Bone who left to assume the Chairmanship of the State Employment and Training Commission (SETC). A motion to appoint Mr. Santare as the permanent Chair was made, seconded and unanimously approved by all members present.

LWD Update – Claudia Merkel-Keller

The Department of Labor and Workforce Development (LWD) has completed the update of the State plan for Adult Education. It will be submitted to the US Department of Education. It is anticipated that some of the funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA - the stimulus package) can be used to support adult education activities.

ARRA allows contracts to institutions of higher education, such as community colleges, or other eligible training providers, if it would facilitate the training of multiple individuals in high-demand occupations and if the contracts do not limit customer choice. The New Jersey Council of County Colleges has proposed the delivery of training programs in occupations suggested by the labor market information tool, ***Real Time Jobs in Demand***, as being in demand by local employers and training programs responsive to the needs of One-Stop

Career Center customers lacking basic workplace skills. The Consortium has also agreed to ensure that training participants complete the training program, pass industry recognized credentialing exams where applicable, attain training related employment within 30 days of training completion, and retain that employment for at least 90 days. Basic skills opportunities are also part of this initiative.

Through Project Connect, LWD is seeking faith-based and community-based organizations to partner with the One-Stop Career Center system and other partners to promote and deliver core workforce and workforce support services to underserved populations who are currently unaware of or reluctant to take advantage of the One-Stop services locations.

Recognizing that the State's economic success is linked to an appropriately educated and skilled workforce adaptive to changing technologies and employer demands, LWD has built an array of workforce development, literacy, income security, worker safety, job match and support services for the labor force and employers. The One-Stop is the hub for accessing workforce investment services, including adult education and literacy services, business services, career information and counseling, job search services, labor market information, occupational training, unemployment benefits information, vocational rehabilitation services, etc.

LWD will be allocating in the neighborhood of \$22 Million to support youth subsidized jobs. This program is in the process of being coordinated through the Division of One-Stop Programs and Services and Division of One-Stop Coordination and Support.

LWD is also developing a grant request to improve outreach to Hispanic communities. Additionally, the NGO for Continuation funding for Title II for PY 2009 is being developed.

Stimulus Package – Robin Widing

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act will infuse \$3.95 billion nationwide into the system for training and other assistance to help get people back to work. Under Title I WIA, New Jersey will get \$9,386,433 for adult services, \$20,834,103 for dislocated workers, \$20,834,103 for youth. The legislation increases the age level for youth eligibility to 24 and places a priority on serving out-of-school youth and encouraging the use of the youth money for summer employment programs, while making work readiness the only performance criteria for summer employment. Two NJ programs, Summer Heat and Youth Corps can potentially benefit from this infusing of funds, because they provide an infrastructure for youth programs. For dislocated workers, ARRA extends unemployment benefits in 2009 to 33 weeks. Colleges, faith- and community-based organizations are all important partners in the workforce investment system. ARRA permits local areas to procure bulk training contracts with these organizations, with emphasis on community colleges, to better prepare individuals for employment.

LWD has introduced a new tool (***Real Time Jobs in Demand***) for identifying job openings. This tool uses spidering technology that collects online job listings from many sites to provide a more accurate picture of what jobs employers are listing. This tool can be used to help WIBs identify trends as well as which companies to reach out to. One-Stops and job seekers can also use the information to target which employers are hiring.

The ARRA will require state-level planning, but also necessitate local planning. The SETC would like to build local literacy planning into ARRA planning. If we focus on the needs of the customer, then basic skills and literacy skills development are concerns for segments of all three target populations: adult, dislocated worker, and youth.

Regional planning is also a key concern. Labor markets expand beyond local geography, and planning as well as services should provide a broader focus. Through the WIRED and REDI initiatives, WIBs are working together to address regional planning issues and provide customers with a broader picture of the job and labor markets.

To respond to the goals of the ARRA, including stimulus money which is coming with less constraints, we need to look at how we can best meet the needs of clients. We need to build flexibility. The role of the SETC (the NJ State WIB) is to be the conveners.

Heather will put together an electric Google group. Lanse will provide email addresses.

Focus groups with learners.

Common factor is to improve people's basic literacy skills.

You need to connect people to jobs.

Transition- Hal Beder.

Last June agreed to set up a transition group.

Had telephone meeting of group and will have a meeting next Tuesday, February 24, 2009.

March 26, 2009 NJALL conference day.

People from Maine and New York City will be there to discuss transitions.

Lanse asked for volunteers to review WIB plans.

Leigh - WIB Plans.

Lanse will form a workgroup on technology with Heather on tech question for website.

Send agenda items to Lanse.

Next meeting will be at Burlington County College.

LVNJ Health literacy conference is April 3, 2009.

LVNJ annual conference at Burlington County College will be April 25, 2009.

Meeting ended at 12:05.