

State Employment and Training Commission
May 11, 2010
10:00 A.M.
Janice H. Levin Building – Room 102
Rutgers University Campus
Piscataway, New Jersey

MINUTES

Welcome and Introduction – Dennis M. Bone, Chairman, New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission.

The meeting was called to order at about 10:05 am and Chairman Bone had everyone introduce themselves. In accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, notice of this meeting was published in the Trenton Times and Star Ledger.

Chairman Bone called for a motion to accept the minutes of the March 4, 2010 meeting. The motion was made, seconded, and unanimously approved.

Chairman's Report – Dennis M. Bone, Chairman, New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission

Chairman Bone indicated that Robin Widing and he made a presentation to the Board of the NJ Association of Counties on April 23, 2010. The presentation focused on strengthening the partnership between local elected officials and the local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs), and provided an overview of the responsibilities each has to the other. Twenty-four individuals attended the meeting and the presentation was well received. A copy of the presentation slides was included in the Commission packet.

Mr. Bone acknowledged that Matt McDermott was appointed Chief of Staff for the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (LWD) and the Chair asked him to briefly discuss his role in this position. Mr. McDermott noted that his duties will include representing Acting Commissioner Harold Wirths on the New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission (SETC) and being the legislative liaison for LWD. He looks forward to continuing to serve on the Commission, albeit as a representative of a State agency rather than a private citizen.

Governor Christie selected Mr. Bone to help develop and lead the *Choose New Jersey* partnership initiative. This partnership is part of a three pronged approach to create a more business-friendly climate in New Jersey. The other two elements in this three-pronged strategy are 1) an initiative to help businesses expeditiously navigate through government regulations and 2) Partnership for

Action, which is led by the Economic Development Authority (EDA) – in essence the bank that funds and supports business expansion efforts.

Choose New Jersey, a privately-funded public/private partnership, will enlist current New Jersey businesses to promote the State to prospective employers as well as encourage and assist existing ones to expand and prosper in the State. Mr. Bone has already recruited a number of private sector employers to serve on the board of the partnership and to contribute financial resources. The board will hire an executive director who will select a small staff.

The SETC continues to host quarterly WIB Chair meetings to keep these Chairs informed and to work with them to improve their local service delivery systems. Three WIB Chairs sit on the Governance Committee and are present at today's meeting. At the last series of WIB Chair meetings in March 2010, 14 of the 17 Chairs attended.

SETC Update – Robin Widing, Acting Executive Director, New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission

Robin Widing sent to all Commission members a copy of the audit report of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Summer Youth Employment Program that was issued by the Office of the State Comptroller. The program provided jobs for more than 6000 youth throughout the State and another 1000 were served through LWD's Summer Heat program. More than 90% met the work readiness standard one of two goals established by the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) for the Summer Youth Employment Program. The other goal was to provide as many youth as possible with work experience during the summer; and New Jersey achieved a participation rate of more than 90%. The Comptroller's audit did not find any financial irregularities.

LWD and SETC challenged local areas to serve a high percentage of older out-of-school youth and as a result New Jersey exceeded the national average in serving this hardest-to-serve youth population. The SETC tracked local best practices in three areas: recruitment, placement, and transition services.

With the passage of the Workforce Investment Act and its focus on year-round programs for youth, there had not been a summer youth employment initiative of this magnitude in more than 10 years. WIBs deserve credit for organizing a summer youth employment initiative in the span of only a few months. Although the State's workforce system did not direct local areas not to recruit private sector employers and provide wage subsidies for youth at these sites, the short window for implementation and the focus on the hard-to-serve resulted in an emphasis on public sector jobs.

USDOL in its review of the State's implementation of ARRA commended New Jersey for its local WIB planning process.

The Governance Committee has scheduled two meetings during the summer.

Because the program year ends June 30, the dashboard that will be coming out shortly which will provide a good indication of 2010 program performance for each local area.

USDOL has approved the State's request to initiate the sanction policy beginning with data from July 2010 and beyond.

LWD has prepared a document for USDOL's review that recommends performance targets for the next program year and requests a continuance of all current waivers.

The SETC's Gender Parity Council will host a Women in Science and Technology Workforce Summit at the Conference Center at Mercer County Community College in West Windsor, New Jersey on May 21, 2010. The Summit theme is *Taking Initiative: Re-tooling for an economy that can handle curves*. Also the SETC, Rutgers Center for Women and Work has partnered with the Workforce Investment Boards of Passaic, Monmouth and Ocean Counties to host Women's Economic Forums to help women with job search strategies. A similar session is scheduled for Newark on May 25, 2010.

Two interns from Rutgers will work with the SETC this summer. A Douglas College intern will work on Gender Parity issues and a student at Rutgers Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy will research strategies to better articulate postsecondary learning outside of the classroom with credit requirements for a degree.

The Disabilities Issues Committee, as part of the DiscoverAbility grant, will establish a leadership academy that will promote best practices in education and training individuals who have disabilities.

SESP Policy Issues – Dennis M. Bone, Chairman, New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission

The focus of the State Energy Sector Partnership (SESP) grant, which brought \$6 million of federal funding into the State, is to connect the workforce system to the new jobs being created, or to retain existing workers to meet Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy industry demands. The SETC established the SESP Council to oversee the administration of the grant. Some of the policy questions that the Council is considering are:

1. Should first year training projects be conducted on a pilot basis?
2. Should jobs be evident prior to the start of training?

3. Should the Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Sector Committees be involved in curriculum review/selection to ensure alignment to industry?
4. Should training programs extend beyond “green” skills and include other training that is not “green” but supports EE/RRE sector expansion?

The SESP Council is mindful that there is currently high unemployment in the trades and other occupational areas which will be the focus of planned training initiatives. Included in the Commission folders was a handout that addressed SESP policy recommendations.

New Jersey Compliance Review – Thomas J. Dalton, Federal Project Officer
U.S. Department of Labor, Region 1

Thomas Dalton is from the USDOL Region 1 headquarters in Boston. About every three years each state in the region undergoes a compliance review. During the months of August through September 8, 2009, Region 1 conducted a review of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), Wagner-Peyser (W-P), and Unemployment Insurance (UI) programs and discretionary grants administered by the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development. Among the effective practices noted in the report were the following:

1. The local planning process that the State required for ARRA
2. A continued and regular monitoring of local programs and fiscal records
3. An emphasis on serving older youth through the ARRA Summer Youth Employment Program

Overall, New Jersey’s responses to USDOL’s findings have been positive. Of the 31 citations, 11 have already been addressed.

USDOL noted that New Jersey’s workforce system has been understaffed for too long. In particular the youth department which is the area where 90% of the performance failures occur.

Another major concern for USDOL was gaps in communication, which made it difficult for the State to provide clear guidance to local areas and to address issues. Mr. Dalton indicated that lack of effective communication was the greatest concern. Effective communications will strengthen the relationship between the State and local areas. It will also enhance the relationship between WIBs and their One-Stop centers.

Noncompliance with WIB membership requirements was noted. The State was also cited for its lack of evaluating the workforce system. New Jersey did not have a sanction policy in place, but has subsequently approved one that will be in-force beginning July 2010. In addition, the State has not yet finalized the recommendations for the Eligible Training Provider List.

Mr. Dalton reaffirmed that WIBs are responsible for oversight of One-Stops, which include budgets. Every two years the Governor is responsible for certifying local WIBs. Failure of any WIB to receive certification should result in a reappointment and certification of another local board. A new or recertified board may choose to select a new One-Stop operator; however, the One-Stop must include all mandatory partners. The organizational reporting relationship of some WIB Directors is problematic in that they report to a government unit rather than the WIB Chair.

Mr. Dalton noted that New Jersey has the highest number of customer complaints in the nation, most frequently relating to Unemployment problems. There needs to be a local process for customers to make complaints and for the local system to address them. Likewise, there also needs to be a process for sharing complaints with the WIB that are sent directly to the State or USDOL. Mr. McDermott was asked to work with SETC to understand the complaint process and Ms. Widing was asked to develop for the Commissions review a proposal for that addresses the complaint process.

In addition, it was suggested that SETC staff create a handout that lists all of the findings and provide timetables for their resolution.

Governance Committee Report – Jody Levinson, Chair, Governance Committee

The feedback from the USDOL reinforces the need to strengthen the governance structure of the workforce system.

Included in the Commission packet is a document that the Governance Committee has drafted, which suggests changes to the process for nominating potential WIB members to the local elected official (LEO) and notifying new members and the WIB of the appointments. The Committee is also recommending changes to how the minimum number of members is determined, that is, to move from percentage requirements, to actual numbers, which should help streamline membership, while ensuring appropriate representation in each category. It is expected that WIBs will still have a minimum of 37 members. In addition, WIBs should have an attendance policy that indicates a minimum number of meetings members must attend to remain on the board.

The recommendations are still in draft form and the Committee welcomes feedback. When finalized and approved by the SETC, the revised guidelines will go into the WIB handbook and the WIB/LEO agreement will reflect these changes.

Currently, 13 of the State's 17 WIBs are not in compliance regarding their membership. A motion was made to have the SETC send a letter to all LEOs indicating whether their WIB is in compliance with membership requirements, and to send a copy of the letter to WIB Chairs. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

The meeting ended at about 12:05 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for September 2, 2010.

MEMBERS or ALTERNATES

Glenn Album (for Robert Gamgort)	Jody Levinson
Marie Barry (for Bret Schundler)	Arlene Martin (for Dana Berry)
Dennis Bone	Brian McAndrew
Michael Cantwell	Matthew McDermott (for Harold Wirths)
Gail Davis	Robert Munyan
John Donnadio (for Celeste Carpiano)	Clifford Reisser
Kim Ehrlich (for Caren Franzini)	Jerry Ryan (for Peter Contini)
Nicky Gacos	Julio Sabater
Jane Guillard (for Veleria Lawson)	Doris Sims (for Jennifer Velez)
Deborah Heinz (for Lori Grifa)	JoAnn Trezza
Stephen Hornik	Greg Williams
Andrea Karsian	Charles Wowkanech

ABSENT MEMBERS

Harold Burlingame	Robert Santare
Henry Henderson	Tapas Sen
Rev. Msgr. Bill Linder	Bruce Stout
Joe McNamara	Carolyn Wade
Harvey Nutter	

OTHER ATTENDEES

Jim Black	Alice Hunnicutt
Edward Correa	Joseph Jennings
Thomas Dalton	Hosea Johnson
Robin Ford	Robert Melcher
Daniel Frankel	Nils Richardson
Joe Gazzara	Donna Scalia

SETC STAFF

Lansing Davis	Maureen O'brien-Murphy
Judy Formalarie	Robin Widing