

State Employment and Training Commission
November 25, 2008
Janice H. Levin Building – Room 102
Rutgers University Campus
Piscataway, New Jersey

MINUTES

Welcome and Opening Remarks – Dennis M. Bone, Chairman, State Employment and Training Commission

Chairman Bone called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM. Mr. Bone introduced new members Robert Gamgort, Jane Oates and Tapas Sen, and recognizing those still involved in the approval process, Elsa Candelario, Alice Hunnicutt, Robert Santare, Sharon Taylor and Jerry Ryan. Mr. Bone welcomed all to the meeting.

As evident by the current economic times, Chairman Bone indicated that there was a great deal of work ahead of the Commission. The work includes dealing with the impact of the economic crisis and the role of the SETC in support of Commissioner Socolow and the Department of Labor and Workforce Development. He spoke to the importance of focusing efforts and establishing workforce policy that result in the creation of an environment of accountability and high performance.

The Impact of the Financial Crisis: New Jersey's Response – David J. Socolow, Commissioner, Department of Labor and Workforce Development

Commissioner Socolow spoke about New Jersey's economic outlook and the current effect of the economy on job seekers, those underemployed and New Jersey businesses.

The Department of Labor and Workforce Development (LWD) has applied for a National Emergency Grant (NEG) from the United States Department of Labor. NEGs are discretionary monies, awarded by the federal government to assist areas that have experienced serious community impacts. The NEG application was developed as a tri-state proposal that included New Jersey, New York and Connecticut. The total requested amount was \$48 million dollars. If awarded, \$16 million would be allocated to New Jersey. The grant monies will focus on strategies for reemploying dislocated and unemployed workers. New Jersey's application emphasized retraining workers in the areas of healthcare, education and engineering. The grant would allow New Jersey to develop new delivery mechanisms, services and partnerships within these primary industry sectors.

New Jersey's Economy: The Emerging View of Employment and Unemployment as a Result of the Economic Fallout – Yustina Saleh, Director, Labor Market and Demographic Research, Department of Labor and Workforce Development

Ms. Saleh began her presentation by providing a perspective of the New Jersey economy through data. She indicated that New Jersey is the “back office” for the New York and Philadelphia area financial industries. Brief overviews of the comments are:

- New Jersey has been in a recession for 19 months.
- Manufacturing, finance and construction industries are down significantly.
- New Jersey will feel the ripple effect of the current loss in the banking industry.
- New Jersey ranks fifth in housing unit foreclosures.
- Essex and Union counties have the highest level of housing foreclosures.
- The economic impact is statewide, not just focused on certain locations in the State.
- New Jersey's One-Stop Career Centers are seeing large increases in claims.
- Professional, scientific and research, transportation and logistics, and health sectors are the sectors projected to experience growth.
- LWD is now able to provide “real time” data that identifies what jobs are currently available and more credible projections for growth in the future.

Commissioner Socolow thanked Ms. Saleh and her staff for the data collection and said that there is a push to get this data to the local level on a timely basis. He further stated that this “real time” data will allow the local areas to make sound decisions on training and that the role of the SETC should be to encourage the focus of training dollars based on the data received. Commissioner Socolow asked Chairman Bone to “put data into action.”

Open Discussion – SETC Update – Dennis M. Bone, Chairman, State Employment and Training Commission

Discussion included:

- A question was asked as to what specific jobs were open in the transportation, logistics, and health industries. The response was warehousing, distribution, technology and nursing are the occupations with the most significant numbers of job openings in those sectors. It was also noted that among the three wired grants, strategies and programs are being directed toward these industries.
- Inquiries were made as to where the data presented by Ms. Saleh came from. That data is based on UI claims and job openings reported in October 2008.

- It is through “spydering”, a web technique that gathers and collates all job openings from a significant pool of employers (coded by industry), that LWD will now use to provide the workforce system with “real jobs and in real time” availability.
- Commissioner Socolow then asked Commission Members how LWD can help the SETC assist the WIBs with the challenge of not training for positions that are not currently in demand. One response was that training should be skill-focused rather than job-focused.
- It was asked if the USDOL has the money available to fund the NEG or was it part of the “bailout” monies. The Commissioner responded that the NEG was separate funded, and not from the “bailout” monies.
- A question was raised to the status of training funds. Commissioner Socolow responded by saying that WIA’s annual funding cycle is July 1 to June 30th; he expects that in this economy funds mostly likely will be fully obligated and/or spent out in March/April. He further indicated the customized training funds are still available and are allocated month by month.
- One Commission Member suggested the need for WIBs to focus on limited English proficiency and requested that this training be woven into the One-Stop system. Data on limited English proficiency was also requested. Staff responded that the SETC has a sub-committee, the State Council for Adult Literacy Education Services (SCALES), which was created to deal with that specific concern.
- Another Commission member recommended that the WIBs allocate money and work with the local Vocational/Technical schools to initiate programs in computer software and healthcare.

Chairman Bone thanked everyone for their feedback, and emphasized the importance that these conversations have in helping to define and focus the role of the SETC.

SETC Update – Robin Widing, Acting Executive Director

Ms. Widing provided a brief update on the State Council for Adult Literacy Education Services (SCALES), the Council on Gender Parity in Labor and Education, and the Disability Issues Committee projects the SETC staff is working on. She informed Members that the SETC is planning a webinar on the economic crisis for all WIB Members, Freeholders and Chief Elected Officials. The goals are to provide them with the information they need to understand the enormity of the impact, the importance of communicating with businesses at the

local level to understand their needs and identify employment opportunities, as well as to ensure that full support is being provided to the local workforce system. The local WIB Directors and One-Stop Operators are involved in the planning.

Ms. Widing also reported that she attended a tri-state meeting of state officials to discuss the impact of the crisis. The key issues/priorities discussed included:

- Need to support the infrastructure of the One-Stop Career Centers to respond to the growing numbers of dislocated workers.
- Need a local workforce system that is more flexible and able to move quickly to support a new and more highly educated customer.
- Less resources require everyone to do their job 200% more effectively to weather the crisis.
- Need the ability to reconcile training options to jobs in the new economy.
- Need to ensure that State and local workforce systems continue to support the unskilled and undereducated.
- Strategies need to be developed that can assist “unstable” businesses maintain their workforce.

State Ethics Training – Margaret Cotoia, Ethics Training Officer, State Ethics Commission

A thorough overview of the State ethics law was provided to all Commission Members and staff who have not previously had the training who were in attendance. This is required training for all Commission Members.

Chairman Bone adjourned the meeting and asked Commission members to call him if they had any topics or suggestions to be included in next SETC meeting, which will be held January 21, 2009.

In accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, notice of this meeting was published in the Trenton Times and Star Ledger.

**State Employment and Training Commission
November 25, 2008
Attendees**

Members and Alternates

Marie Barry (for Davy)	Stephen Hornik	Jerry Ryan (for Contini)
Dana Berry	Andrea Karsian	Julio Sabater
Dennis Bone	Jody Levinson	Tapas Sen
Michael Cantwell	William Linder	Doris Sims (for Velez)
Gail Davis	Brian McAndrew	David Socolow
Nicky Gacos	Matthew McDermott	JoAnn Trezza
Robert Gamgort	Joe McNamara	Charles Wowkanech
Maxine Gilchrist (for Doria)	Robert Munyan	
Gloria Hancock (for Lawson)	Jane Oates	
	Clifford Reisser	

ABSENT MEMBERS

Celeste Carpiano	Julio Sabater	Carolyn Wade
Joseph Krimko	Linda Stender	
Harvey Nutter		

OTHER ATTENDEES

Elsa Candelario	Brian Fitzgibbons	Robert Santare
Dianne Ciesla	Joe Gazzara	Len Schneider
Juanito Chiluisa	Jane Guillard	Sharon Taylor
Margaret Cotoia	Alice Hunnicutt	Greg Williams
Theresa Daniels	Kathy Krepcio	Representative from DHS/CBVI
Marilyn Davis	Tony Langon	
Amy Fitzgerald	Nils Richardson	

SETC STAFF

Lansing Davis
Judith Formalarie
Maureen O'Brien-Murphy
Deborah O'Kane
Robin Widing

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