

**Governor's Workforce Board**  
**Strategic Investments and Evaluation Committee Meeting**  
**December 4, 2013**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Committee Members Present:** Mike Grey, Chair, Constance Howes, Cheryl Merchant, George Nee  
**Committee Members Absent:** Martin Trueb, Mario Bueno  
**GWB Board Members Present:** Charles Fogarty  
**GWB Staff Present:** Rick Brooks, Elizabeth Jardine, Dan Brown, Sherri Carello, Amelia Roberts, Hillary Feeney  
**DLT Staff Present:** Lisa D'Agostino, David Tremblay, Diane Gagne, Sue Chomka, Nancy Olson, Scott Greco, Sean Fontes  
**Others Present:** Malcolm Baxter, BIS; Irena Nedeljkovic, EPI; Cheryl Dacosta, Tech Collective; Mike Perrotti, Workforce Solutions of Providence/Cranston  
**Location:** Department of Labor and Training, Conference Room 73-2

**Call to Order**

Chair Grey called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**Minutes**

Chair Grey asked for a review of the November 6, 2013 Strategic Investments & Evaluation Committee meeting minutes. Chair Grey asked if there was a motion to approve the meeting minutes.

**VOTE:** G. Nee moved to approve, seconded by C. Howes. All were in favor, the motion passed.

**Financial Update**

Chair Grey asked Diane Gagne to provide a financial update for the Governor's Workforce Board external contracts through October 31, 2013. D. Gagne referred to the financial analysis spreadsheet, highlighting the contractually obligated funds and expenditures for each line item. She noted the Incumbent Worker Training Grant saw an additional \$17,000 in de-obligations and expenditures increased from the last report to \$349,699. D. Gagne reported an increase in obligations for Express Grants, bringing the total to \$247,987. She noted an increase in Express Grant expenditures of \$33,000 with total expenditures to date of \$101,085. D. Gagne noted that the export assistance line item has remained consistent from the last report and \$22,073 in contractual obligations has been added to Capacity Building due to the Board Retreat (\$4,073) and Industry Partner Evaluation (\$18,000) expenses. She stated that Youth Strategies de-obligations remained consistent and expenditures have increased by \$90,000 for a total of \$1,076,818. The contractually obligated funds for Industry Partnerships Grants increased by \$13,000 and expenditures increased by \$58,000 for a total of \$403,352. D. Gagne reported the Job Initiatives Fund expenditures increased by \$60,000 for a total of \$327,327 as of October 31, 2013. Discussion ensued regarding the increase in Job Initiative Fund expenditures due to AMAC/Tunstall. Innovative Partnership Grants saw a \$338,000 increase in expenditures for a total of \$417,474. D. Gagne further discussed the two grants that were approved at the November 26, 2013 Board meeting, totaling \$136,798 in obligated funds for Non-Trade

Apprenticeship Grants. In total, GWB external contract obligations increased by \$200,000 and expenditures increased by \$600,000 since the last financial update. D. Gagne highlighted projected de-obligations, noting that \$1,746,281 is currently available to reprioritize.

### **Investment Options for Unobligated JDF Funds**

Sean Fontes, Executive Counsel, provided the legal disclaimer, noting that all Board members are subject to Rhode Island's conflict of interest laws which state that members should abstain from discussing or voting on matters that they may have a financial interest in. He stated that board members who disclose a conflict should both abstain from the vote and recuse themselves from any discussion.

Chair Grey asked Rick Brooks to discuss the investment options of unobligated JDF funds. R. Brooks referred to the FY2014-FY2015 GWB financial worksheet, noting that every spring, the Board will make investment decisions on how to best allocate funds for the upcoming fiscal year. He explained that some of the funds are fully obligated, others are available to be drawn down upon throughout the year (i.e. Express Grants), and some are not obligated to provide flexibility for the Board to allocate as needed (i.e. AMAC/Tunstall). R. Brooks highlighted the projected de-obligations, briefly explaining the total allocations, contractually obligated funds, and unobligated balance for each external contract.

R. Brooks discussed the Incumbent Worker Training Grants, noting that only \$800,000 was awarded of the \$1,200,000 allocated in the spring, leaving a balance of \$400,000. He stated that with additional de-obligations, the unobligated balance for FY14 is \$693,038. R. Brooks added that there is no current plan to spend the funds. G. Nee inquired about the RFP process and timeframe. D. Brown informed the committee that the total process takes about three months. C. Merchant asked why only \$800,000 was awarded in the last round of grants. R. Brooks noted that a total of \$1,100,000 was received in requests, and of those requests, only \$800,000 was awarded to employers who met the scoring criteria. C. Merchant recommended providing feedback to applicants who did not meet the minimum score. C. Howes inquired about the historical demand for Incumbent Worker Training Grants. R. Brooks stated that the demand has been pretty consistent. The committee further discussed reviewing the criteria, policy, and process of awarding Incumbent Worker Training Grants.

C. Howes highlighted concerns on doing two RFPs and drawing from the same pool of employers. C. Fogarty recommended doing an RFP in January with grants to be awarded on April 1<sup>st</sup> and pushing the annual round to the fall of 2014 (FY15). Chair Grey inquired about the significance of starting the process in March. R. Brooks suggested the second round would be guided by the demand in the first round of grants and noted the bigger question is how much will be allocated in total. Chair Grey noted that it would make sense to stay within \$1,900,000 due to historical demand.

In regards to the Incumbent Worker Training Grant discussion, committee members recommended the following:

1. Eliminate levels of funding based on size of company
2. Eliminate "every other year" rule
3. Issue two RFPs per year (e.g. February and October, 2014)

4. Review application, scoring rubric, and rating process to ensure that all qualified proposals are funded.
5. Seek authority from DOA to increase Express Grant cap to \$10,000
6. Increase minimum Annual grant to \$10,000 (if Express Grant cap is increased to \$10,000)

R. Brooks further reviewed the FY2014 allocation and obligations for Capacity Building, Job Initiatives, and Innovative Partnership Grants. He noted that the total projected carry-in is \$2,213,361, which includes unallocated and de-obligated funds. The committee agreed to table the vote on unobligated JDF fund allocations to the January Strategic Investments and Evaluation Committee meeting.

Action Items for January 9, 2014 SIC Meeting

1. Present a grid that illustrates current criteria and recommended changes.
2. Provide program details from previous years including the number of grants, amount of grants, size of companies, numbers of employees to be trained, sectors, etc.

**DLT Funding Request to Upgrade Computers at the netWORKri Centers**

Chair Grey asked Sue Chomka to discuss the DLT funding request for \$356,000 to upgrade the technological infrastructure of the netWORKri centers. S. Chomka, Assistant Director of Workforce Development Services, described her responsibilities and role of the one-stop centers. She informed the committee that the Local Workforce Investment Boards and the Department of Labor and Training receive a majority of federal funds to operate the one-stop centers and provide services to both job seekers and businesses. S. Chomka noted that the one-stop centers are dependent on technology as the primary method to provide services. She presented a handout showing the type of technology-based activities and number of people served through those programs, noting that over a program year, 22,420 individuals were served through the one-stop resource centers that house computers for job seekers to look for work and research information on training programs and occupations. She reported that annually, approximately 42,000 job seekers used the services, with 53% of them securing employment.

C. Howes noted that the request is consistent with the priorities of the biennial plan, but expressed concern that the request seemed disproportionate compared to other funders. She asked what other states would do to find other sources of funding. S. Chomka noted that other states would look at cost-allocating from the funds that come in as well as look at the one-stop partners in the system and where they can leverage the funding. She referred to the spreadsheet and discussed the programs where funds are being leveraged: Wagner Peyser, WIA, Veterans Program, and the Workforce Innovation Fund. G. Nee inquired about leveraging more of the WIF grant to fund the technology upgrade. C. Fogarty noted that the purpose of the WIF grant is to fund programmatic change that includes specific categories for funding. S. Chomka shared that in 2008; the GWB provided \$1,000,000 in funding for technological upgrades. Chair Grey recommended an annualized building capacity investment to maintain and support technology infrastructure. C. Fogarty described some of the improvements and ongoing changes that will occur internally to make the system more user-friendly. C. Howes asked what would happen if the GWB did not fund the request. S. Chomka explained that the upgrades would occur at a much slower pace and the ultimate goal is to maintain the staffing

level. She further discussed the type of technological upgrades that would take place with the funds.

### **GWB Biennial Plan Report Card**

Due to time constraints, Chair Grey asked Elizabeth Jardine to give a brief update on the Biennial Plan Report Card. E. Jardine referred to the updated scorecard handout, noting that she and R. Brooks had previously discussed submitting a quarterly version of the report to the Board and key stakeholders, including some of the key data points and narrative piece describing the current state and progress of the report. The committee agreed that a quarterly status report would be extremely helpful to keep everyone informed of the report progress.

### **Program Updates**

Due to time constraints, the program updates discussion was tabled to the next Strategic Investments Committee meeting on January 9, 2014. S. Carello noted that the updated spreadsheets for the Work Immersion internships, Innovative Partnership Grants, and Express Grants were included in the meeting packets for committee members to review.

### **Adjournment**

Chair Grey asked if there was a motion to adjourn.

**VOTE:** G. Nee moved to approve, seconded by C. Merchant. All were in favor, the motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:33 am

Respectfully submitted,

Amelia-Anne Roberts