



Governor's Workforce Board Strategic Investments and Evaluation Committee

**February 5, 2015
Meeting Minutes**

Committee Members Present: Mike Grey, Chair, Constance Howes, Mario Bueno, Channavy Chhay, Scott Jensen
Committee Members Absent: George Nee, Cheryl Merchant
GWB Board Members Present: Robin Coia
GWB Staff Present: Rick Brooks, Sherri Carello, Robert Kalaskowski, Dan Brown, Amelia Roberts
DLT Staff Present: Sean Fontes, Diane Gagne, David Tremblay, Lisa D'Agostino, Sue Chomka, Nancy Olson
Others Present: Cheryl Dacosta, Tech Collective; Malcolm Baxter, BIS; Anne Walsh, WSPC; Brittany Morrison, GWB Intern
Location: Department of Labor and Training, Conference Room 73-2

Call to Order

Chair Grey called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Minutes

Chair Grey asked for a review of the January 8, 2015 Strategic Investments & Evaluation Committee meeting minutes. Chair Grey asked if there was a motion to approve the meeting minutes.

VOTE: Constance Howes moved to approve, seconded by Channavy Chhay. All were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Discussion of FY 16 Incumbent Worker Training Grants

Chair Grey asked Rick Brooks to review the Incumbent Worker Training Grant recommendations with the committee and discuss the options of continuing the competitive RFP process or changing them to rolling grants. R. Brooks noted last month the committee approved \$1,300,000 in funding allocations for the Annual Incumbent Worker Training Grant Program and an additional \$400,000 for Express Grants for FY16. He stated if the committee decides to continue doing an annual competitive RFP, the solicitation for the proposals would be posted within the next couple of weeks. Referring to the handout of recommendations and discussion items, R. Brooks noted changing the Annual IWTG Program to rolling grants would be more responsive to businesses but would require approval from not only the Board, but from the Department of Administration. If the annual grants were changed to rolling grants, businesses could determine their training needs based on their timeline. He stated currently the Department of Administration delegates to the GWB the authority to award funds. If procedures were to change, the Department of Administration would need to approve the recommended guidelines beforehand. R. Brooks described the new process that would be submitted to the Department Administration including clearly defined criteria for funding; the review process of proposals on a rolling basis by staff and outside readers, and any funding recommendations would be brought to the committee and full Board for final approval. R. Brooks asked the committee for their feedback and suggestions. S. Jensen discussed his concern with the lack of transparency if the Board decides to move away from a RFP process. M. Bueno suggested to involve other businesses in the review process and asked what type of effects this change would have on the funds. C. Howes noted it would be more conducive to businesses to allow them to apply for training funds based on their budget cycle. S. Carello added if the grants were on a rolling basis there may be less de-obligations at the end of the year because companies are able to apply for a grant based on their current training needs. Channavy Chhay inquired about issues with collecting performance data for rolling grants. M. Bueno suggested running a pilot for rolling grants and extending the time for

grantees to spend the money in the annual RFP from 12 to 18 months. S. Carello noted the difficulty with tracking grants that span over two fiscal years. The committee further discussed the procedural structure that would need to be in place to ensure the transition from an annual RFP to a rolling grant process is successful and responsive to business needs. L. D'Agostino noted it might be interesting to find out why there are deobligations and if they can be prevented through technical assistance or monitoring. R. Brooks discussed the similarities and differences between Massachusetts Incumbent Worker Training Grants and Express Grants. D. Gagne indicated the Department of Administration is really interested in the review process and who specifically will be evaluating the proposals. R. Brooks noted outside sector-based readers could be utilized to review proposals. S. Jensen proposed creating a formal procedure and bringing it back to the committee at the March meeting for review. C. Howes suggested creating a mechanism to award proposals from certain sectors. R. Kalaskowski discussed the current review process of Express Grants, noting many of the procedures used for Express Grants could apply to the rolling Incumbent Worker Training Grants. Chair Grey reviewed the recommendations and feedback from the committee, highlighting the importance of a transparent process that ensures every proposal is held to the same standards. D. Tremblay added a more substantial tracking and monitoring process needs to be established. S. Jensen recommended including an auditor in the process of developing the administrative procedure. C. Chhay noted rolling grants would encourage all types of businesses to apply instead of the current process that favors larger companies that have a staff of grant writers. Chair Grey asked for a motion to have the GWB staff develop an administrative process and criteria for rolling Incumbent Worker Training Grants to be presented at the next committee meeting, concurrent with the request for approval from the Department of Administration to change the Incumbent Worker Training Grant Program from an annual RFP to a rolling grant process.

VOTE: Constance Howes moved to approve, seconded by Scott Jensen. All were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Program Focus: Innovative Partnership Grants

Chair Grey asked Sherri Carello to provide an update on the Innovative Partnership Grant Program. Referring to the Expenditures and Outcomes handout, she stated of the 13 grantees, 2 programs have not begun their training. S. Carello noted, the Institute for the Study and Practice of Non-Violence has had some staffing issues and Open-Doors have just finished up with their last cohort of training from the previous grant and are a little behind due to the type of population they deal with. She stated there have also been some staffing issues as the Department of Corrections that has affected their training schedule. Stepping Up has also had some issues with their recruitment process. Chair Grey asked if their targets are yearly targets. S. Carello noted the targets are for the full year and the YTD outcomes are through December 31, 2014. M. Bueno asked if there have been any specific challenges or successes among the programs. S. Carello noted almost half of the recent graduating class from Connecting for Children and Families has started working. R. Kalaskowski indicated at the last Innovative Partnership meeting, grantees were able to share with each other best practices, what works, what some of the challenges have been, which has been very beneficial for the new grantees. Chair Howes inquired about why Stepping Up has been having issues with the recruitment process. S. Carello noted that some of the applicants were already employed and it was difficult for them to start the training program.

Referring to the handout of key highlights from the Innovative Partnership Program Evaluation of first-year grantees, Sherri Carello discussed the recruitment and completion outcomes, employment and credential rates, and overall effectiveness of the programs according to the evaluators, Forth Economy. She highlighted the 87% completion rate and discussed the two types of models of employer engagement: Primary Employer and Industry Partnership model. S. Carello discussed the comparison between Innovative Partnerships and traditional WIA programs, noting the WIA programs are spending nearly \$6 for every \$1 that the Innovative Partnerships spent. R. Brooks stated the full evaluation will be available for the committee at the next meeting and discussed the additional sections that will be included in the full report. In particular, the evaluators credited the success of the Innovative Partnership programs to the initial connection and engagement with businesses upfront to develop the curriculum, provide experiential learning, which translated into job placements. S. Chomka inquired about an analysis of the type of training provided by Innovative Partnerships and WIA programs to identify any redundancies. C. Howes noted the Innovative Partnership Program provides employers with trained and pre-screened employees

which ultimately act as a recruitment function that would otherwise cost businesses additional time and resources. The committee discussed the diversity of participants in comparison to the diversity of the state of Rhode Island.

Referring to the questions and issues handout for the FY2016 Innovative Partnership Grant RFP, S. Carello asked for feedback from the committee on whether to renew some or all of the current contracts based on performance, or should the Board limit the number of years of funding. S. Carello expressed her concern with current grantees relying on funding from the GWB and not exploring other options of funding. She also noted that renewing the same programs hinders new programs from being funded. C. Howes discussed braided funding and leveraging WIA and JDF funds to serve a broad population. S. Chomka suggested a deeper evaluation and analysis of what works and how there can be increased coordination between JDF and WIA programs. S. Carello highlighted other points relating to Innovative Partnership Grants such as prioritizing jobs or target populations, separating the RFP for Youth Innovative Partnerships, and should the Board require all work experiences to be paid. Chair Grey noted that innovation means something new and different and if we try to gauge or restrict innovative programs, then it's not innovative anymore. C. Howes suggested for those existing programs that apply for another year of funding, possibly requiring them to grow the program and show that it would work for a larger group of individuals. R. Brooks noted an 18-month report of outcomes for Innovative Partnerships could be generated and reminded the committee of the time restriction to do another RFP for FY16.

GWB Quarterly Program Report

Chair Grey asked Rick Brooks to review the GWB Quarterly Program report. Referring to the comprehensive program handout, he asked the committee members to review the targets and outcomes for each program. R. Brooks noted most of the program data is for the first 6 months of FY15 except Express Grant and Work Immersion, which is through February 3, 2015. The committee discussed employer partners and whether the outcomes are for new or total partners for FY15. R. Brooks noted there has been some confusion in reporting total or new employer partners, but is the intention of the staff to report all employer partners engaged in GWB programs. R. Brooks also discussed the difficulty with tracking participants in programs such as Youth and Adult Education that sometimes receive services over the course of several years.

Adjournment

With no further business, Chair Grey asked if there was a motion to adjourn the meeting.

VOTE: Channavy Chhay moved to approve, seconded by Constance Howes. All were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:31 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amelia Roberts