



**Governor's Workforce Board
Strategic Investments and Evaluation
Committee**

**June 4, 2015
Meeting Minutes**

Committee Members Present: Mike Grey, Chair, Constance Howes, Mario Bueno, Scott Jensen, George Nee
Committee Members Absent: Cheryl Merchant, Suzy Alba, Janet Raymond, Channavy Chhay
GWB Board Members Present: Robin Coia
GWB Staff Present: Rick Brooks, David Tremblay, Sherri Carello, Dan Brown, Pat Leduc-Pelletier, Paul Genovesi
DLT Staff Present: Sean Fontes, Robert Kalaskowski, Sue Chomka, Diane Gagne, Lisa D'Agostino
Others Present: Cheryl DaCosta, Tech Collective; Malcolm Baxter, BIS
Location: Department of Labor and Training, Conference Room 73-2

Call to Order

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

Minutes

Chair Grey asked for a review of the May 7, 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 George Nee. All were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Conflict of Interest

Per Chair Grey's request, Sean Fontes, Executive Counsel, asked for declarations on any of the voting matters before the committee for conflicts of interest. He explained that committee members should avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest according to the RI State Code of Ethics and Governor's Workforce Board By-Laws. He stated that committee members who disclose a conflict should both abstain from the vote and recuse themselves from any discussion.

Constance Howes recused herself from the vote to fund the Providence Center Workforce Innovation Grant, noting the Providence Center is directly affiliated with Care New England. George Nee recused himself from the vote to fund the Year Up Workforce Innovation Grant, stating his daughter is currently employed by the Year Up organization.

FY16 Workforce Innovation Grant Funding Recommendations

Chair Gray asked S. Carello and R. Brooks to review the Workforce Innovation Grants (WIG) process. S. Carello provided a summary of the WIG proposals received on May 11, 2015. The GWB has allocated \$2.3 million to support partnerships between education and training providers and employers to put unemployed and underemployed Rhode Islanders back to work.

S. Carello reported the GWB received 23 proposals, 11 of which are current grantees. She stated two organizations did not reapply: Stepping Up and AccessPoint. To be eligible for funding, proposals needed to receive a minimum score of 80 to be considered. She added there were three proposals that did not meet the threshold and will not be considered for funding. S. Carello called attention to the breakdown on page two of the handout (GWB FY16 Innovative Partnership Grant Submissions). If the committee chose to fund the highest ranked proposals at the \$2.3 million cutoff, a total of fifteen applicants would be funded. The total cost to fund all applicants who met the minimum threshold of 80 (20) would be \$2.8 million. S. Carello noted three of the FY15 programs may not be funded in FY16, as their scores were not high enough to fall within the \$2.3 million cut off. Chair Grey questioned if the previous grantees who applied are proposing to do similar projects or something new. S. Carello reported that Year Up is proposing to partner with a different employer and plans to incorporate an IT training component in their program.

C. Howes inquired about “outliers” when scoring proposals and discussed the possibility of dropping the highest and lowest scores. R. Brooks explained that this has been done in the past but not in the last two rounds of funding. He noted discussion amongst readers is strongly encouraged resulting in some group members changing their scores based on feedback from other readers. M. Bueno asked if the notes were a compilation of discussion points or from just one reader. R. Brooks and S. Carello explained the notes were taken from both the reader meeting feedback as well as comments from the rubrics submitted by the individual readers. M. Bueno stated he feels the discussion and the notes are just as important as the scores. R. Brooks explained a new section was added to evaluate FY15 grant recipients on their past performance. He noted the reader has the option of adding or subtracting up to five points based on the grantee’s self assessment and their performance reports for the first three quarters of the year.

C. Howes asked why the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) was deemed a priority in the RFP. S. Carello explained the goal was for grantees to have their training programs included on the list to generate income through WIOA funds. D. Tremblay explained that the ETPL is a list of programs that have been approved to serve eligible individuals through the WIOA system. The principle requirement is to issue a certification that is WIOA recognized. R. Brooks explained that this priority was an attempt to encourage these organizations to look at other sources of funding besides the Job Development Fund.

S. Jensen inquired about the purpose of the Workforce Innovation Grants and what the Board is trying to accomplish with these types of grants. R. Brooks stated the Innovation Grants were designed to address the core priorities of the first Biennial Plan: employer partners, work readiness, a connection to career planning, experiential learning, placing unemployed or underemployed individuals into jobs, and serving target populations with barriers to employment. R. Brooks stated the Board is interested in sector strategies, in-demand occupations that lead to career advancement, new strategies, and innovative ideas. These grants also encourage training providers to connect with employers that will hopefully lead to a permanent job. G. Nee noted there is no interview component to the review process; only the initial review of the proposal by the reader. C. Howes indicated that there are a number of organizations who plan to serve particularly hard-to-place populations that will not be funded, highlighting that these organizations are trying to better their community but are left out of this process. She stated the Board needs to further discuss how to utilize those organizations.

S. Jensen stated that the Real Jobs Rhode Island (RJRI) platform will integrate the Governor’s vision for economic and workforce development. He discussed the possibility of blending

funding streams to ensure the successful coordination of workforce development efforts. G. Nee stated C. Howes raised an important point when she addressed the organizations aimed at serving communities that has been left behind. He noted an obligation of the Board is to look at the big picture, stating the statute of the Board describes a coordinated workforce development system that everybody can be a part of. G. Nee suggested deferring the decision on the vote and asked the GWB staff to look at some of the organizations that did not make the cut to see if there is a way to incorporate their efforts with other organizations that are recommended for funding.

S. Jensen reported that DLT is applying for a \$3 million dollar NEG III Sector Partnership Grant which is earmarked mostly for Real Jobs Rhode Island. He stressed the need to prioritize how the money will be spent through braided funding. C. Howes stated the Strategic Investments and Evaluation Committee has the authority within its By-Laws to spend money but would prefer to address this issue in a special meeting before the full Board meeting in June. R. Brooks stated that he agrees with G. Nee that some of organizations that did not score well have a narrower mission and that is where they lose points. The notion of partnering them with training programs that have strong relationships with employers is ideal and inline with what the Board should be facilitating. He added partnering them with organizations that have stronger connections will only benefit them in becoming more robust programs.

In light of the discussion, Counsel Fontes suggested a motion to table the vote. Chair Grey asked for a motion to table the vote to approve the funding recommendations for the FY16 Workforce Innovation Grants

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

Based on the discussion, Chair Grey asked the GWB staff to review the list of proposals, taking into consideration the priorities of the Board, and provide recommendations on ways to support the organizations aimed at serving disadvantaged individuals, the opportunity to better their communities through the Workforce Innovation Grant program.

Adjournment

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

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

The meeting was adjourned at 9:58 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Pelletier