



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

**June 15, 2015
Meeting Minutes**

Committee Members Present: Mike Grey, Chair, Constance Howes, Mario Bueno, Scott Jensen, George Nee, Cheryl Merchant, Channavy Chhay
Committee Members Absent: Suzy Alba, Janet Raymond
GWB Staff Present: Rick Brooks, David Tremblay, Sherri Carello, Dan Brown, Pat Leduc-Pelletier, Paul Genovesi, Mavis McGetrick
DLT Staff Present: Sean Fontes, Robert Kalaskowski, Sue Chomka, Diane Gagne, Carlos Ribeiro, Connie Parks
Location: Department of Labor and Training, Conference Room 73-2

Call to Order

Chair Grey called the meeting to order at 8:35 am and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Minutes

Chair Grey asked for a review of the June 4, 2015 Strategic Investments & Evaluation Committee meeting minutes. Chair Grey asked if there was a motion to approve the meeting minutes.

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

Incumbent Worker Training Grant (IWTG) Update

Referring to the Incumbent Worker Training Grant Updates handout, R. Brooks reviewed the key changes to the program in FY16 resulting from employer feedback at the June 8th informational session. The major changes include: Express and "annual" IWTGs will be combined into a single application form and review process, applicants may propose and receive funding of up to \$45,000, training activity must begin within 30 days of funding, and applicants may apply twice in a 12 month period provided that the second grant may not start until the first grant has been completed. G. Nee inquired about the \$1.7 million allocated for FY16. R. Brooks indicated \$1.7 million is the combined total of what was previously allocated for Express Grants (\$400,000) and IWTGs (\$1.3 million) for FY2016. S. Jensen asked if companies have ever needed more than \$45,000 in matching grants. R. Brooks noted in previous years, the amount of funding was based on company size but that distinction has been removed in favor of distributing funds to more companies instead of just a few large businesses. The committee discussed Jobs Initiatives funds that have been used in the past for hiring incentives, marketing and outreach, and efforts to make IWTGs more user-friendly and on-demand for business in response to their training needs.

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 proposal, stating his daughter is currently employed by the Year Up organization. Channavy Chhay recuses herself from the vote to fund Providence Plan/Building Futures, stating she is currently a member of the ProvPlan Board of Directors.

Chair Grey asked if there was a motion to untable the vote on the FY16 Workforce Innovation Grant Funding Recommendations.

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

FY16 Workforce Innovation Grant Funding Recommendations

R. Brooks provided a review of the discussion that took place at the June 4, 2015 meeting. He reminded the committee, the priority of this funding initiative is to support and create innovative partnerships between businesses and training providers with an emphasis on serving unemployed and underemployed adults, especially those with barriers to employment. He noted 11 out of 13 current grantees reapplied. Referring to the FY16 WIG Submissions spreadsheet, he highlighted the cutoff based on ranked scoring and available funding, and the total funding requested by eligible scores. He stated the line was drawn after Foster Forward because the next two proposals had the exact same scores (83.6). At the previous meeting, committee members raised concerns about proposals that were below the funding line, in particular Man Up and OIC, who have applied the previous two years. The main concern was whether the funding solicitation puts them at a competitive disadvantage because the expectation of applicants is to develop a comprehensive program including occupational skills training, robust employer partners, and provide work experiences and jobs for participants. Man Up and OIC are primarily structured to provide recruitment, assessment, and case management for challenging populations.

R. Brooks indicated he spoke to Man Up and OIC to see if they would be open to the possibility of working with NEIT, RIMTA, Building Futures, or RIMA to formalize a partnership and create employment opportunities and stronger talent pipelines for disadvantaged populations. He noted the main questions for the committee to address are where to draw the funding line and how much to build into the contracts of the funded Workforce Innovation Grantees to support the proposed recruitment, assessment, and case management services provided by Man Up and OIC. The committee discussed the funding requests of OIC (\$199,957) and Man Up (\$115,502) and how much of their budgets represented foundational support. R. Brooks stated most of their budgets are staff costs. C. Howes asked if \$90,000 for each program would be sufficient. G. Nee stated it may be beneficial for the Board to pilot and mentor these types of partnerships and have the opportunity to evaluate whether they were successful in serving diverse populations. S. Jensen encouraged the Board to continue the role as “match-makers” and further develop partnerships between training providers and the business community. C. Merchant noted programs like OIC and Man Up will need coaching or technical assistance from the staff to build their programs into comprehensive training programs. Chair Grey added there is much to learn about programs that serve populations with barriers to employment and sometimes investments need to be made in innovative ideas to find programs that work successfully in addressing the needs of hard-to-serve populations. C. Chhay stressed the

importance of following the policy and procedures that have been previously put in place and spoke about the difficulty for smaller organizations with limited resources to develop programs and write to RFPs that require the establishment of robust partnerships and comprehensive training outlines. C. Howes asked who the recipients of the remaining balance of funds (\$182,789) will be. R. Brooks stated the grantees that are approved for funding would be the fiscal agents of the additional funds and would subcontract with the other community based organizations. He indicated their contracts would be renegotiated to include the funding and the staff will facilitate the development of the memorandum of agreements between the grantees and the community-based organizations. C. Howes recognized OpenDoors as a high-performing program that serves one of the most difficult populations to serve. The committee discussed increasing the FY16 Workforce Innovation Grant allocation from \$2.3 million to \$2.4 million to fund the OpenDoors 9 Yards program.

Chair Grey asked if there was a motion to reallocation of \$100,000 in unobligated FY16 JDF funds to increase the total allocation for FY16 Workforce Innovation Grants from \$2.3 to \$2.4 million, provide a total of \$2,217,211 to fund sixteen FY2016 Workforce Innovation Grant proposals and use the remaining balance (\$182,789) to formalize and strengthen partnerships between Workforce Innovation Grant recipients and community-based organizations to increase training and employment opportunities for economically- disadvantaged and ethnically-diverse inner-city residents.

VOTE: Constance Howes moved to approve, seconded by George Nee. All were in favor, the motion passed unanimously. Constance Howes abstained from the vote to fund Providence Center, George Nee abstained himself from the vote to fund Year Up, and Channavy Chhay abstained from the vote to fund ProvPlan/Building Futures.

Adjournment

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

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

The meeting was adjourned at 9:37 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amelia-Anne Roberts