



Governor's Workforce Board Strategic Investments and Evaluation Committee

November 5, 2015
Meeting Minutes

Committee Members Present: Mike Grey, Chair, Mario Bueno, Channavy Chhay, Cheryl Merchant, George Nee, Scott Jensen
Committee Members Absent: Constance Howes, Suzy Alba, Janet Raymond
Other Board Members Present: Robin Coia
GWB Staff Present: Rick Brooks, David Tremblay, Sherri Carello, Pat Leduc-Pelletier, Paul Genovesi, Amelia Roberts
DLT Staff Present: Sean Fontes, Sue Chomka, Nancy Olson
Other Guests Present: Malcolm Baxter, BIS; Nathan Sloan, GWB Intern
Location: Department of Labor and Training, Conference Room 73-2

Call to Order

Chair Grey called the meeting to order at 8:34 am and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Minutes

Chair Grey asked for a review of the September 3, 2015 Strategic Investments & Evaluation Committee meeting minutes. Chair Grey asked if there was a motion to approve the meeting minutes.

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

Financial Update

Chair Grey asked R. Brooks to provide an update on JDF expenditures and allocations for FY2015, FY2016, and FY2017. Referring to the Financial Analysis spreadsheet, R. Brooks reviewed the initial availability for FY16 (\$19,170,009) and the total program availability for FY2016 (\$18,034,891). G. Nee inquired about the DOR/Employer Tax Unit line item, noting the increase from FY15 to FY16 of more than \$200,000. R. Brooks discussed the funds obligated by contract and expenditures through 9/30/15, balances unexpended and balances unobligated/de-obligated for each of the external contract line item. He reviewed the line items that will likely be drawn down on by the end of FY2016 including Incumbent Worker Training and Work Immersion. R. Brooks highlighted the possibility of shifting in investments by the GWB in a couple of the major categories, Industry Partnerships and Workforce Innovation Grants. He stated, given the launch of Real Jobs RI and the sector focus of those partnerships, it seems logical to move funds that have previously supported Industry Partnerships into the RJRI line item. In addition, R. Brooks indicated that many of the current Industry Partners are likely to be funded by RJRI as well as some of the Workforce Innovation grantees.

The committee discussed grantees that are neither Industry Partners nor involved in Real Jobs partnerships, such as OpenDoors 9 Yards Program, that work with hard to serve populations. S. Jensen asked if OpenDoors is working with companies. R. Brooks noted they are, but they also work closely with training providers to prepare inmates for placements in other training programs that work directly with businesses.

S. Jensen discussed the ease of moving JDF funds from Industry Partners to RJRI, as most of them have applied to be RJRI partners. In regards to the Workforce Innovation Grants, he indicated that if the GWB sees value in a particular program then the Board should figure out a way to continue supporting it. R. Brooks indicated that the grantees are eligible for a 1-year renewal based on performance discussed the option of keeping the line item on a reduced basis.

Board Retreat/Future Role of SI&E Committee

Chair Grey asked Director Jensen to recap the items discussed at the October 20th Board Retreat and possible new roles for the Strategic Investments and Evaluation committee pertaining to Real Jobs Rhode Island. He highlighted the Governor's sense of urgency regarding her workforce development vision and how the work of the GWB is aligned with her other broader efforts. S. Jensen noted the distinction between the RJRI grant program and platform effort to align the work across state government to meet demand. He stressed the importance of aligning the investments of the GWB with Real Jobs RI and the state's broad economic development strategy.

Referring to the handout highlighting possible roles the GWB could play in Real Jobs RI, S. Jensen noted he and the Governor would like to see the GWB take an active role in monitoring the performance of Real Jobs RI and holding RJRI partnerships accountable. C. Merchant suggested including, in addition to the performance monitoring, the analysis of the outcomes for suggestions going forward. M. Bueno discussed the possibility of a Real Jobs RI committee of the GWB to provide guidance and suggestions on the programmatic side. C. Merchant noted the policy changes the Board has made to meet the needs of businesses and suggested taking the same approach with RJRI to evaluate the success of the program. The committee discussed system changes that are needed to ensure new initiative are successful, such as policy changes pertaining to insurance to allow youth to work at manufacturing sites. Chair Grey highlighted the development of the Comprehensive System Improvement Plan and the role of the GWB to ensure the workforce development investments across the state are aligned. G. Nee suggested the SIC is the appropriate group to evaluate the success of Real Jobs RI. R. Brooks suggested asking the staff from Harvard Kennedy School to present at the next committee meeting.

New Youth Initiative

Chair Grey asked Robin Coia to present a new youth initiative to the committee. R. Coia discussed the possibility of a new initiative to support a specific population of disconnected youth between the ages of 17 and 24 who are no longer in school and are unemployed, to connect them with an occupation that will lead to a permanent job. She suggested using the allocated JDF funds earmarked for a new youth initiative and braid it through WIOA funding to capture that particular youth population. R. Coia indicated that the youth centers are experienced in providing services such as soft-skills and work-readiness training and could be leveraged in partnership with CTE schools, union trades, and businesses to serve youth and place them in permanent positions. R. Coia asked the Strategic Investments and Evaluation Committee for their support to further explore this new initiative. The committee discussed the current stigma of youth centers and rebranding them to promote the services they provide for young adults. M. Bueno suggested looking at other best practices to development the program structure. The committee expressed their support and look forward to learning more about the program design.

FY16 First Quarter Program Reports

Chair Grey asked Amelia Roberts to provide an overview of GWB program outcomes for the first quarter of FY2016. Referring to the Program Updates handout, A. Roberts highlighted key data points of each program, discussing the most notable changes from the FY2015 report. She stated 80 companies have received Incumbent Worker Training grants, with 6,479 workers to be trained in FY16. In regards to Youth Development activities, A. Roberts reviewed the total number of participants served in Q1 (3,505), the total number of youth that received work readiness training (2,904), and the number of job placements (385). A. Roberts further discussed key statistics of the Adult Education, Work Immersion, and Workforce Innovation Program in relation to their FY2015 data. A. Roberts noted that many of the outcomes for Workforce Innovation Grants, such as job placements, do not occur until later in the program and will be reflected in the third and fourth quarter reports. She highlighted the number of college student participants in the Work Immersion program (416) and the permanently hired unemployed adults (290).

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 Scott Jensen. All were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:59 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amelia-Anne Roberts