

**Workforce Investment Council  
Quarterly Board Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, April 8, 2014  
9:00 A.M. – 11:00 A.M.  
National Education Association  
1201 16<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, Chanin Room  
Washington, D.C. 20001**

**I. Call to Order and Introductions**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:13 A.M. and welcomed board members and guests.

**Board members present at the meeting included:**

Jesús Aguirre	Thomas Luparello
Robert M. Brandon	Kathleen McKirchy
Anthony J. Cancelosi	Catherine Meloy
Lyles Carr	Lori Kaplan
Deborah Carroll (designee, David Berns)	Solomon Keene
Celine Fejeran (designee, Abigail Smith)	Andrew Reese (designee, Laura Nuss)
Michael Harreld	Joslyn N. Williams
Cedric R. Hendricks	Marullus Williams
Anne Robinson (designee, Councilmember Grosso)	

**Board members not in attendance:**

Robin Anderson  
Joseph L. Andronaco  
Thomas Penny  
Tynesia Boyea-Robinson  
Bill Dean  
Councilmember Kenyan McDuffie  
Sarah Looney Oldmixon  
Carl Rowan  
Christopher Smith, Jr.  
Neil Stanley  
Charlene Drew Jarvis  
Deputy Mayor Victor Hoskins  
Calvin E. Woodland  
Adrienne Todman  
Nicola Whiteman

The Chair asked the Board to review the draft minutes from the January 2014 board meeting and the March 5 board call. The Chair then asked for a motion to approve the January minutes as well as the draft meeting minutes for the March 5 conference call.

**BOARD VOTE: Upon a MOTION made by Lyles Carr and seconded by Catherine Meloy, the board voted unanimously to approve the draft of January 14, 2014 WIC quarterly board meeting minutes and March 5, 2014 conference call meeting minutes.**

Kermit Kaleba welcomed board members, gave an overview of the agenda for the day, and reviewed the handout items in the folders.

## **II. Updates on Certification of DC American Job Center-SE**

Kermit introduced Sheree Finley, Associate Director for Workforce, and Sonita Lal, Program Manager for American Job Centers (AJC) from the Department of Employment Services (DOES) to present to the board on the status of the certification process of the American Job Center-SE. Sheree and Sonita gave a status update on the following criterion listed in the WIC Certification Business Plan for DC American Job Center-SE, including action steps and due dates:

- Customer Target Groups
- Physical & Services Accessibility
- Cultural Competency Plan
- Business Services Functional Alignment
- Mandatory Partner Engagement
- Supportive Services and Barrier Remediation Strategies
- Staff Development and Capacity Building
- Management Information System/Monitoring and Evaluation System
- Performance Outcomes Data
- Customer Feedback Data

Sheree noted that DOES is not currently able to report data on current and expected service levels for one of their three customer target groups - low-income individuals – but is in the process of updating systems to do so. One board member asked if DOES was on target to be able to report this data in the current program year, and Sheree confirmed that they were.

Sheree also noted that DOES is working with the WIC to ensure that all mandatory AJC partners are engaged and referrals between agencies are well-coordinated. Kermit elaborated that our goal is to make the AJC's a true one stop access point for all District-funded workforce and related services.

Sheree elaborated on AJC performance measures, which track customer traffic, engagement and orientation data, and placement and retention outcomes for enrolled participants. Sheree explained that jobseekers may register in the AJC system but are not enrolled in WIA until they meet with AJC staff and receive additional services. One board member asked if there is any feedback indicating why customers visit the AJCs, but do not enroll. Sheree explained that many customers only come to use the resource room at the AJCs, which are self-service. She also mentioned that there are customers with limited computer skills attending orientation sessions and not registering. She noted that this gap has been identified and she and her staff are working on connecting these customers to orientation sessions, Microsoft Digital Alliance and DC Networks workshops to assist customers and encourage registration.

Paulette Francois, Deputy Director of Workforce, concluded the presentation by stating that the workforce development team is focusing their efforts on how to better engage with the mandatory partners and integrate locally funded programs to create a true 'One Stop' for District residents. The WIC and DOES will continue to work together to achieve these goals.

### **III. Workforce Intermediary Updates and Next Steps**

Geoff King gave a presentation to update the board on the Workforce Intermediary Pilot Project. He talked about the status of the hospitality industry job placement partner, hospitality industry job training services grantees, and updated construction industry strategy and timeline.

He noted that the WIC is planning to closely align construction services with DOES efforts, including their new Center for Careers in Construction, and is in the process of drafting a RFA to solicit pre-apprenticeship and supportive services that will complement their programming. WIC staff also plan to convene a Construction Industry Advisory Committee consisting of representatives from employers, organized labor organizations, and industry associations to help oversee program efforts and inform broader District construction industry workforce efforts. Geoff concluded by asking the board to approve moving forward with an RFA based on the updated construction model.

After the presentation and the proposed construction strategy, one board member asked how many jobseekers we are seeking to serve. Geoff responded that the number for WIC grants had yet to be determined since total funding was still being finalized, but likely be somewhere between 50 and 75. The combined efforts of WIC and DOES programming through Center for Careers in Construction will likely serve additional jobseekers beyond these numbers.

Another board member asked if the advisory committee was now in place. Kermit answered that we are currently in the process of establishing the board, which will be chaired by WIC Board member Chris Smith or his designee and would also include organized labor representatives.

A board member asked if there are specific models for other construction workforce intermediaries that the District was looking to follow. Kermit noted that there are a number of construction intermediaries, but their design varies significantly based on the local labor market. In general though, successful intermediaries generally involve government agencies and/or community based organizations building partnerships with employers and organized labor that will make sure jobseekers are prepared for demand occupations and get access to the right services at the right time and be able to sustain employment.

Another board member then asked Geoff if he had spoken to employers and verified that sufficient jobs exist to support this model. She mentioned that she had heard there isn't much need for entry-level construction workers in the DC market and that people who were laid off 6 months ago or more are now re-entering the industry job market. Geoff replied that a number of employers he spoke to indicated that there was significant demand for DC residents in apprenticeship and higher skilled occupations, which is amplified by First Source requirements. More job opportunities exist with larger District-based construction projects, and WIC staff remain in contact with representatives from these projects and are working to ensure that our investments are coordinated with their employment needs.

Another board member gave input and stated that the hospitality industry, which has many seasonal employees, are training employees as necessary opportunities come up. He added that we need to get some balance with the number of available slots and people who are in the pipeline so that D.C. residents can compete with others looking for these positions.

Another board member asked how many training providers are focused on construction, and to what extent the Workforce Intermediary will be working with those organizations. He noted that the program

is not likely to have an impact on the larger workforce system if it doesn't incorporate many of the possibly hundreds of organizations that train jobseekers. Geoff answered that WIC staff have identified at least a dozen training providers that provide some form of construction pre-apprenticeship training with varying quality and links to employers and unions, and that the total number of jobseekers in these programs was relatively small. He acknowledged that the construction strategy may initially be less comprehensive in working with the full range of training providers than the hospitality strategy, as the hospitality strategy specifically requires the job placement partner to source from a broad range of training providers. Geoff indicated that between WIC-funded pre-apprenticeship and existing DOES-funded pre-apprenticeship through labor unions for specific trades, our combined efforts will directly engage a number of training providers. He also noted that DOES has some existing links to other training providers and may also look to recruit jobseekers from them through its Center for Careers in Construction. He noted that the intermediary is looking to fund more service providers and scale up services, and will make an effort to engage a broad range of programs.

Another board member added that the trouble isn't with reaching employees, but reaching employees in the District that are well prepared for their industry, and that the workforce developers aren't always providing the right training that industry is looking for. He noted that there may be merits to working with a more limited set of providers to ensure quality programming. Kermit then mentioned that as part of the Centers for Careers in Construction, DOES will build creating a database of individuals who have construction skills or training, and link them to industry jobs.

One board member noted that pre-apprenticeship training can be difficult for youth to access and significant support services may be needed to assist youth in accessing and maintaining participation in these programs. She asked if WIC staff had reached out to construction-focused charter schools and related organizations in considering its service design, and noted that it will be important to share information with them on what the youth population needs to be able to apply and prepare for these training opportunities. Geoff confirmed that WIC staff had met with several youth and secondary school-based construction training providers, and noted that DOES also had relationships with those organizations. Another board member added that there is a need for industries to articulate what their core competencies are in order for training providers to know what is required.

Another board member asked what the partner requirements are for partnership with the intermediary team. Kermit that the RFA has not been developed yet, but that we will ensure that construction employers, unions and other stakeholders are consulted as we finalize the overall model.

The Chair asked if anyone would like to make a motion to move forward with the revised construction strategy and RFA model.

**BOARD VOTE: Upon a MOTION made by Anthony Cancelosi and seconded by Cedric Hendricks, the board unanimously voted to approve the revised construction strategy and RFA model.**

#### **IV. WIA Year Round Youth Programs Updates and Next Steps**

Next, Kermit invited Laura Burgher to brief the board on the WIA Out-of-School Youth (OSY) and In-School Youth (ISY) grants. After providing the performance outcomes and enrollment numbers for each grantee, Laura explained as part of the grant renewal process that, the WIC and DOES staff worked with ISY grantees to develop enrollment plans for April 2014 to October 2014. The plans addressed the following areas: Weekly enrollment targets, recruitment strategies, engagement of secondary school

partners, engagement of industry or postsecondary partners, the transition/phase out plans for current 4<sup>th</sup> year students, and any challenges. She outlined each of the ISY grantees' recruitment and enrollment activities, and based on the enrollment plans, the WIC staff recommended that the board approve the ISY grant renewal for its four grantees: the Latin American Youth Center, the Opportunities Industrialization Center, the Sasha Bruce Youthwork, and Urban Alliance.

The Chair explained to the board that he had participated in a meeting with the WIA Youth providers in late February to discuss challenges with the WIA Youth programs. While he noted many challenges were identified, such as the lack of cooperation with public schools, he indicated that WIC and DOES staff are in the process of developing and implementing new procedures to improve the administration of the programs and make them more effective. Another board member responded that she would like the Chair's statement be reflected in the minutes.

One board member stated that one of the major challenges for ISY enrollment is the 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading level eligibility requirement in the RFA. She said many of the students that have been tested are not testing at 8<sup>th</sup> grade level and therefore are ineligible. She further noted that the grant modification to partner with additional host secondary schools will most likely help increase the enrollment numbers.

Another board member asked if the WIC knew the test scores for those students who were tested but did not meet the 8<sup>th</sup> grade threshold. Kermit responded that the WIC currently does not collect that data. The board member replied that it might be worth capturing data about what levels students are testing at that prohibits them from enrollment. Kermit stated that the WIC could most likely collect this data and report out on the findings. The board member then asked if there is there additional tutoring that we can offer those students to help them reach the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level, or should we lower the requirement to a 7<sup>th</sup> grade reading level.

The Chair made the point that a question that should be asked is: whose responsibility is it to help students achieve an 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading level? He mentioned that this was one of the issues that will need to be further studied.

Another board member asked if the board should consider lowering the testing requirement before approving further renewal of the grantees. The Chair responded that the board should not lower the testing level standard just to make enrollment easier. He would like to work with schools and providers for a while to find out where the problems lie before any action.

Two other board members pointed out that an alternative or an additional measure to the CASAS test should be considered to give an indication of a student's true ability to succeed since some students do not test well. . Kermit said that he is willing to explore other measures of assessment.

Another board member contributed that the goal is to make sure students are prepared for the workforce and that instead of looking at how we measure these students, attention needs to be given to how students are being prepared. Therefore, he agreed that the board should not lower the testing standard.

Kermit proposed that the board approve renewal of the ISY grants for one option year – from June 2014 to June 2015 – but on the condition that the WIC reserves the right to reevaluate the progress of ISY grantees at the October board meeting.

**BOARD VOTE:** Upon a MOTION made by Robert Brandon and seconded by Vice-Chair, Joslyn Williams, the board unanimously voted to approve the ISY renewal grants for one year. Lori Kaplan abstained from voting.

**V. Public Comments**

The Chair then called for any public comments.

An audience member representing DC Appleseed commented that the organization recently released a report that shows how to help adult learners obtain literacy skills and services that lead to career pathways. A board member asked that this report get sent to board members electronically. Kermit responded that the report will be sent out.

**VI. Adjournment**

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 11:05 A.M. and announced that the next WIC quarterly board meeting is scheduled for July 8, 2014 at PNC Bank.