



Planning/ Career Center Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, March 20, 2018

8:00 a.m.

255 Essex Street, 4th Floor
Lawrence, MA 01840

Members Present: Juan Yepez, Chairman
Ron Contrado, Andrew Herlihy, Abel Vargas, Bob Wescott

Staff Present: Rafael Abislaiman, Susan Almono, Corina Ruiz

Other: Linda Rohrer

I. Approval of Minutes of the February 20, 2018 meeting

A quorum being present, Juan Yepez, called the meeting to order at 8:10 a.m. and then called for a motion on the minutes of the February 20, 2018 meeting.

Motion by Bob Wescott, seconded by Ron Contrado, to approve the minutes of the February 20, 2018 meeting as submitted. Motion passed.

II. Performance Summary as of February 28, 2018

Rafael said we are roughly on track. It's been a transition year and many performance numbers will go up.

Linda added that she's concerned about the entered employment numbers and wants to compare trends. She compared other trends and found that the state is at 86% of what they did last year and VWCC is at 84%. We are behind on the number of 'employers receiving job seeker referrals'. She will look to see if there is a data issue. Rafael said a new definition of what constitutes a job seeker referral helped cause the performance reduction. It has changed several times and that makes it difficult to plan. It now involves proven customer follow-up to a referral. They need to be confirmed and recorded as visiting an employer site. We have to make sure numbers reflect the work being done.

Juan Yepez asked if exiters are also completers and Rafael said yes in most cases. But some are exited without completing because they drop a course or we can't contact them and so need to exit them.

For the dislocated worker category, thirty eight of the sixty nine exiters entered employment. For the adult category, twelve of the twenty exiters entered employment at an average wage of \$15.65/hr. Juan said that an evaluation of the trainings should happen because people are

finding jobs with low wages. Linda said she will make an analysis of where we are training most of the customers.

Rafael wondered whether the healthcare industry will ever reach a saturation point. Abel said we don't necessarily have to train people to be CNAs but instead create pathways in other employment sectors. Linda said that is the plan with the newly developed industry sector teams. Susan said we have to look at training capacity because there are other healthcare positions that have waitlists. Rafael said that currently about half of our trainees go into healthcare. He added that, although it doesn't happen for CNAs, many professions in healthcare are protected by sorts of guilds that set quality and number limits on how many people can go into the field. Hence, there's a number limit on how many people can graduate with a nursing degree from a community college each year. NECC has 2,000 people studying healthcare but they can only graduate 150 or so nurses a year. Abel agreed and said that his wife had to make a line very early in the morning to enroll in the nursing program at NECC.

Bob Wescott said that limiting the number of people who enter the healthcare workforce occurs worldwide. Bob said we should train the right people for sales jobs because we'd be able to find them interviews and jobs. Fewer and fewer people want to sell and there's almost no pool of prospective hires. Discussion followed about sales training and jobs. Linda said it would be interesting to explore Bob's idea.

Juan mentioned possible training in real estate sales because it's a fairly cheap course. Rafael said that trainees need to have a 70% entered employment rate and that recordable jobs almost always require UI payments. Jobs that involve being a consultant or contractor are hard to track because those individuals are self-employed. It is difficult to track jobs that involve a 1099.

Linda explained that ITA vendors need to have a completion rate of 80% and an entered employment rate of 70%. The necessary average hourly wage for adult and youth is \$2 over MA min wage and for dislocated worker it's considerably higher. Rafael added that MVWIB staff verify trainers entered employment rate by contacting trainees presumed employers. We double check the job placement information trainers enter into TrainingPro. Rafael said that if the Board wants to get into other job training fields, we can try to do that.

Andrew Herlihy said we need to diversify our trainings and Susan said we can research providers and help them become training vendors in other business sectors. Juan asked how a training school becomes an ITA provider and Susan explained the process. Linda added that the ITA system involves customer choice. Members asked about IT-related training Rafael answered that most of the information technology (IT) training programs we use are in New Hampshire. There are some in Woburn but there are traffic issues getting there. Linda said most group programs are in manufacturing and the trades either because they are in high demand or because there's specific Federal or State funding for them.

III. Budget Update as of February 28, 2018

Rafael said we are a little over half way expended and roughly on track. The VWCC budget may reach \$2.8 million.

Abel asked if NECC employees are included in the GIC retiree total and Rafael said no. Only career center retirees prior to July 1st are included in that category. Rafael explained that six

years ago the MVWIB started covering retiree costs and it now pays about \$100K each year. Before that, the City covered it.

Juan asked if there are any issues with NECC and Rafael answered no, other than the campus wide closure issue. Rafael added that Linda is doing a great job trying to handle the closures by instituting skeleton crews. But he expects long-term problems if the issue is not addressed in a definitive way. He added that NECC is currently the community college career center operator in Massachusetts. Abel asked why other areas are getting away from using community colleges to run career centers. Linda said they aren't. Previously, Middlesex Community College was the only community college operator.

Bob asked for an update on the union issue discussed in the February meeting. Linda outlined the skeleton crew that she's instituted. They consist of three volunteer teams. Rafael added that the so called volunteers get paid for coming to work and then get an extra paid day off. He stated that he's most bothered by closures that occur because of issues that occur at some other NECC building and not by snow days.

Juan asked how the overall transition with NECC has been and Rafael said Linda is an excellent manager and that overall everything is going well. Linda added that once the industry sector teams are running, she hopes to see better performance. Rafael said he was concerned with career center youth staff summer work schedules but staff have agreed to work flex schedules during the Summer YouthWorks program.

IV. Grants Update

Susan said the MVWIB recently submitted an application to DESE for \$4,000 to plan 3 teacher externships at selected schools that receive Perkins funds.

The MVWIB submitted its first earmark to Representative Juana Matias for \$125,000 for energy efficiency group training to get weatherization jobs.

The MVWIB is currently working with ex-offenders through the WCTF grant. Ron mentioned that one of the graduates was referred to him and he will be interviewing him for a job.

Andrew Herlihy mentioned the Mass Office of the Attorney General Healthy Summer Youth Jobs RFP was just released.

V. Career Center Report

Linda Rohrer provided a hard copy of the career center report and reported the following:

There is a USDOL National Emergency Grant that will help serve people that evacuated from Puerto Rico as a result of the hurricanes. So far, 57 customers have been enrolled. The award was made to Massachusetts initially for \$862,837. The full grant is up to \$2,588,511. The grant dates are 12/1/17 to 11/30/19 (2 years). Hampden County REB is primary operator and payments will be made to Merrimack Valley for services provided through vouchers.

ValleyWorks will provide career services, access to training (ESOL, occupational, OJT), support services and job placement. The eligibility requirements are:

- Individuals who have lost employment due to the Disaster (including formerly self-employed individuals who become unemployed or significantly underemployed as a result of the disaster)

- Individuals who have evacuated from the Declared Disaster Areas resulting from Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

Juan asked if there are any incentives to employers to hire an evacuee and Linda said no.

Linda said ValleyWorks submitted an application for additional funds to serve Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) recipients. This grant is performance-based and could be a significant source of funds during FY 2019. The two different models are:

- Model 1 – Job placement; Model 2 – More intensive services; training; job placement

Linda said she attended the Massachusetts Marine Trades Association luncheon in Newburyport on March 15th to speak about ValleyWorks services. She attended to make connections within industry to help meet their hiring needs.

Linda talked about the advanced manufacturing training.

- NECC/Lawrence Vocational CNC Cycle: January 16, 2018 – June 15, 2018; 12 students continue to do well
- New Cycle: Quality Training; 6 weeks; May 21, 2018 – June 28, 2018; NECC Haverhill
- Target: ages 17-29 years; some advanced manufacturing experience

Linda mentioned past and future events:

- Job Fair held on March 14th at Lawrence Training School – Health and Human Services – The weather impacted the turn-out.
- March 27th co-branded event (AJH, NECC Health Care Programs, ValleyWorks) to promote healthcare careers and to recruit candidates for open positions at Anna Jaques Hospital; **advertising on WHAV**
- Clipper City Job Fair scheduled for April 10th at Elks Club in Newburyport
- Job Fair at Lawrence High School on April 26th
- Spring Veterans Event – will not be organizing
- June Multi-Industry Job Fair at NECC Technology Center

Linda talked about the industry sector teams. The Business Service Reps were organized by sector and the remainder of staff have been assigned to one of the teams. Teams consist of a business service rep, a counselor and a recruiter.

Linda concluded by saying she is working with the college to have it provide professional development training to the staff.

VII. Other Business

Andrew said that he's not worried about the number of 'employers receiving job seeker referrals' because he prefers quality over quantity.

Susan said the MVWIB is working on the career center certification and will be creating a committee for reviews that consists of three members. Anyone interested please let her know.

VIII. Adjourn (vote required)

Having no further business Andrew Herlihy made a motion to adjourn the meeting seconded by Bob Wescott, and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Corina Ruiz

Recorder