

New Innovators' Professional Learning Network

"Get Acquainted Meeting," Sunday, March 2, 2003

Participants

Janie Bates, Texoma; Mary Ross, West Central Texas; Bruce Stenslie and Amy Fonzo, Ventura County CA; Lisa Rice and Linda South, Brevard County FL; Joe Carbone, Bridgeport CT; Bruce England, Susquehanna MD.

Guests: Pam Anderson, CSW and former Louisville WIB director; Vicki Byrd, North Central Indiana WIB director.

Discussion

Pam Anderson and Vicki Byrd discussed the value of professional networks from their experiences as members of the Innovators, another small grouping of board directors. Anderson described how the idea had come from a relative who is a car dealer; a small group of top dealers formed a network so they could learn from other dealers who are not their competitors. The intimacy of the group as well as the non-competitive, non-threatening environment allowed them to discuss innovations, share ideas, and be totally honest about the challenges they face.

Network members identified their interests in what they would like to learn from others as well as their own innovations to be shared with others:

- Linda South and Lisa Rice: interested in leveraging other funds (non-WIA) into the system and looking at ways to handle budget cuts other than just funding. Brevard County is getting ready to implement a web-based orientation to the one-stop system that will be available to customers 24/7. They are also working with the aerospace industry to bring more technology into the area. Their one-stop has a strong business unit.
- Bruce England: Susquehanna business services unit is currently going to fee-based, so he is interested in others' fee-based service strategies as well as developing good relationships with schools, community colleges, and economic development. Interested in knowing how to measure the value of the WIB and the value of the one-stop system.
- Janie Bates: dealing with many high-tech lay-offs. Recently completed community assessment and set priorities. Uses unified case management in the one-stop system. Has good relationships with economic development.
- Bruce Stenslie and Amy Fonzo: interested in how to use the WIB effectively to help partners to work together. Wants to know about innovations and new ways of thinking. Interested in how to streamline one-stop operations and best practices for

developing relationships with economic developers. Ventura WIB heavily invested in marketing. Recently completed State of the Workforce report and looking at how to put products and materials in the hands of the county. Working on phase two of that project.

- Joe Carbone: comes from area where unemployment was only 4% at height of recession; has been as low as 1.3%. Population is not increasing, but they are adding 500,000 jobs per year. Need to update skills to substitute for the lack of people. Started 6 years ago to develop alternative funding strategies. Half of funds in budget are non-WIA. Raise \$1 million per year from corporations and foundations. Has a couple staff dedicated to grant writing. Developed workplace scholarships. Interested in raising the level of importance of workforce development. Believes workforce as a major issue is diminished by having too many boards in the country. Would like to see some money used to encourage competition among boards.
- Mary Ross: challenged by dealing with a highly rural area of 19 counties where all the jobs are in one major city (which itself is not large). Boards have to manage diverse funding streams, including child care. Just completed a study with Wadley and Donovan about best ways to develop the economy of the area. Huge issue in the region is lack of high speed internet. Impacts being able to use technology to increase access to services in the rural area.

Next Meeting

Group suggested avoiding week of April 21 as well as April 6-8, 16-18, and entire first week of April. It was suggested that we test the waters for whether people would be available for a meeting that would be attached at either the front or back end of the NAWDP conference in St. Louis in May, since that would cut down on multiple air-travel and St. Louis is centrally located. CSW will test the waters with the group on having the first meeting beginning at 1:00 on Wednesday, May 7 and continuing the next day.

Handouts

CSW distributed folders with notebook tabs that members can transfer into 3-ring binders at home to organize their New Innovators agendas, meeting minutes, and data on fellow members. Notebook tabs will be mailed to members who could not attend. Member data will be e-mailed to those who could not attend on March 2.