

New Innovators Professional Learning Network

August 4-5, 2003

Houston, Texas

Participants

Mary Ross and Horace Dicks, West Central Texas

Lisa Rice, Brevard County, Florida

Amy Fonzo, Ventura County, California

Rodney Bradshaw, Gulf Coast Texas

Paula Butcher, Colorado Springs

Janie Bates, Texoma

Bill Loope, West Virginia

Facilitators: Roy Vanderford and Nina Babich, CSW

Local News

Gulf Coast (Rodney Bradshaw):

- ◆ 7.8% unemployment. High for this area, and climbing
- ◆ 449,000 people (unduplicated count!) came through the one-stops in the region last year. Most getting core services.
- ◆ Have had success working with health care sector where there is still a labor crisis - difficult to work with other employers right now because they have their pick with unemployment so high.
- ◆ Recent USA Today article cites Houston as a place where many of the 13,000 Bantu from Somalia will be relocated. WIB contracts with a group that meets immigrants as they come in and helps them access the services they need.

Texoma (Janie Bates):

- ◆ Lost 4,500 jobs in the last 2 years
- ◆ Anticipate hitting 8.2% unemployment
- ◆ Jobs are going to Oklahoma (in addition to overseas) because it is cheaper to operate there
- ◆ Most success in sector work is in health care field.
- ◆ Manufacturing and high tech are losing jobs.
- ◆ Just opened a new technology training center. WIB helped fund it by securing funds from the state. All training is customized.

Brevard County (Lisa Rice)

- ◆ 160,000 (unduplicated) through one-stops in one year; individuals revisit the one-stops of 11 times on average. Most served in resource room.
- ◆ Lost 1200 jobs last year in manufacturing and high tech.
- ◆ Expect to gain 1000 new jobs between now and June 30. About 300 will require skills that are directly transferable from those that have been lost.
- ◆ Washington Mutual will provide 500-900 new jobs in financial services. Will hire many from existing financial services employers in area. Jobs are lower skill than those being lost, but require certifications.
- ◆ Initiating web-based one-stop orientation available 24/7 in September. Users will be able to print out a certificate saying they completed the orientation.
- ◆ Florida implementing some provisions of TANF reauthorization in advance of any legislation. State is working with faith-based organizations on family enhancement services. Boards will have to meet performance standards.
- ◆ Have a youth scavenger hunt every year on youth website. Kids who complete it get a "neat pen." The gimmick really works at getting kids to work their way through the website. The pen is the "tipping point" that brings the effort to scale. Kids access it through Mini-Job Links located in the high schools.
(www.brevardyouthworks.org) The "hunt" will launch in October this year. At the end of the hunt there is a random drawing for free movie passes, but it is the pens that attract the youth. Getting ready to do survey of kids and their parents to find out what they know about career planning so the board can work with schools on developing a curriculum.

Ventura (Amy Fonzo)

- ◆ 125,000 (duplicated) through their one-stops in one year.
- ◆ Just held event on June 11 to introduce a new WIB product on low wage jobs in the county.
- ◆ Anticipating changes in the near term due to shake up within the human services agency within which they are housed.
- ◆ A new WIB priority is addressing the high cost of doing business in California. They want to champion change.
- ◆ Many initiatives in progress: foster youth pilot, medical career ladders, life sciences funding for community college, "tech to teach" and more. Board had 20% cut in core funding but pulls in enough discretionary dollars from state for special initiatives to make up for it.

Colorado Springs (Paula Butcher)

- ◆ 6.9% unemployment
- ◆ High tech and manufacturing were taking cuts even before 9/11.

- ◆ In 1999, the one-stops saw 20,000 job seekers; in 2001, it went up to 24,000 and in 2003 it is up to 45,000.
- ◆ Lost 6-8,000 jobs since June of 2001. High tech jobs went to Taiwan. Former workers are now working two to three \$7/hour jobs to survive.
- ◆ WIB has 3 small grants for Work Keys. Board vision is to link skills better with skills in demand. Community college does the job profiling and one-stop does the assessments.
- ◆ They have a web-based one-stop orientation. Used to be good, but due to complaints from individuals with disabilities about the rapid flow and changing images, it is now very boring.
- ◆ Economic vitality group meets once per month to “take the pulse” of the region. WIB director is on the group, but WIB does not sponsor it.
- ◆ Business visitation project involves sending two people out together to learn about employer needs. One person is a one-stop account rep, the other is a local stakeholder or elected official. They use a structured survey (everyone will share their business survey tools).
- ◆ Planning youth resource room to open downtown which will be separate from one-stop. Part of planning ahead to focus WIA youth money on out-of-school youth.

West Central Texas (Mary Ross and Horace Dicks)

- ◆ Recently contacted by both newspaper and TV for quotes on the economy.
- ◆ 20-30% of employment in their region is government related.
- ◆ Most rapid response lately has been to government agencies as they cut back staff.
- ◆ White collar workers joining the ranks of unemployed and they stay unemployed longer.
- ◆ WIB facilitates professional development group that allows networking opportunities for white collar. Ph.D facilitates it.
- ◆ Unemployment is about 5%. The quality of jobs being lost is fairly high. Losing utility jobs, which are higher wage.
- ◆ 40,000 (unduplicated) through one-stop last year. Numbers are growing and customers are coming more frequently.
- ◆ No problem spending youth funds – in fact, may have to close youth resource room due to cuts in youth funds. They require match money from their youth contractors. Their best youth provider by far is an interfaith faith-based organization.
- ◆ Held a youth event: “Hot Dog, I got a Job” where kids got free hot dogs. Expected about 70-80 kids and 400 showed up. Looking to develop a portfolio

approach for youth; the portfolio will serve as the ticket to get into the youth job fair in the future. This will indicate to employers that the youth who attend are better qualified to be hired.

- ◆ Big regional study underway. Have had two meetings of the group of 50-60 folks from around the region. The group has no staffing. Trying to get “connectors;” need the right people on the group if it is to be successful.

WORK4WV (Bill Loope)

- ◆ General: West Va has a shrinking population. 7 WIBs. Bill’s area is 11 counties in southeastern part of state. Pop is about 350,000. There are 5 counties that have no four-lane highways. It takes 8 hours by car to drive across the area. There are only two cities over 10,000 in pop. Area is very rural, poor, old, and with little education.
- ◆ Board is 39 members; 60% business. Board was reorganized in July ’02 around industry clusters. Private sector members were recruited from health care, mining/timber, and tourism/hospitality. The issues the board discusses are about industries, not about towns or counties. Board now has sense of ownership. One-stop issues are kept within the executive committee so the board meetings can focus on what’s important to industry.
- ◆ Four major initiatives:
 - Small business responsibility centers. They are responsible for *being there* for businesses when they need help. Board contracts with 5 venture capital firms as part of support for the centers.
 - Health care: West VA is #1 in rate of heart disease, cancer, black lung, and obesity. There is a critical shortage of health care workers. Survey of nurses who left the state found that #1 reason 600 nurses left was to “find an intelligent husband.” A 54 organization consortium was created from hospitals, nursing homes, etc. to develop strategies to work on the shortage, and they have done the job. Three non-traditional training programs were initiated for working with incumbent workers to transition into nursing. Industry pays the tuition. Go to high schools to change the image of the profession. Kids don’t see health care as high tech; they see it as a dirty business.
 - Hospitality/tourism cluster in next focus. One out of every 8 people are employed in it. Rating people through a computer-based skills assessment in the hospitality industry to identify skill deficits. Mobile unit with 11 computer stations goes out on-site. Purpose is to identify individuals’ strengths in order to put them into the best position in the industry.
 - Technology – don’t have good capability. Collaborating with 5 tech industries and School of Osteopathy to work on it. Secured \$2M in federal funds from U.S. Dept. of Highways to put in broadband.

Sector-Based Workforce Development

The group discussed the documents that had been sent out prior to the meeting:

- Innovators II: Sector Based Approach
- Health Industry Linkages
- Sector Strategies

Example of a report was passed around: "Health Services Findings Report, June 2003" published by the Middle Georgia Consortium and Macon-Bibb WIB as an example of a "State of the Industry" report that a board can use to define and raise awareness of issues in a single sector.

Interesting conference coming up September 10-13 in Boston, Massachusetts sponsored by the National Network of Sector Partners. Sessions include topics such as "Effective roles of Workforce Investment Boards," "Employer Services," "Using Outcomes to Improve Performance," and "Identifying and Sustaining Community-Based Partners." Full information about the conference may be found at www.nedlc.org/nnspevents.htm

WORK4WV sector work: Bill indicated that they have 2 planning commissions in the 11 counties and 4 economic development authorities. They all sit on a board of Directors of Technology Council. All except 1 are WIB members. Bill spends considerable time training WIB members so they "get it." Also spends a lot of time at the state level educating the bureaucrats. The health care sector is now an empowered body. Previous to the development of the sector collaboration, they had seen each other as competitors. They worked through that with the help of a facilitator who provided them a place to vent and helped them identify a common enemy. The WIB had catalyzed and staffed the consortium originally, but now they are self-staffed and self-funded. The WIB gives the consortium credit for the work they do, and remains silent about its role. *The WIB advertises itself by lauding the work of others.* A media person is on the board, and they make the board members feel like heroes by profiling each one of them in turn to the public as community leaders.

Gulf Coast sector work: Rodney said in the Gulf Coast region the employer services unit stands between the career centers and referrals. They're responsible for the quality of referrals; the centers are prohibited from doing employer services. Five-six members of the team are part of the board staff. The rest are contracted from a non-profit organization. Those staff are assigned to centers and are expected to build relationships with the center staff, but they have a separate office apart from the one-stop. Rodney said he will share their employer services manual. They focus on 10 industries that have high potential for high wages, high growth. They called a breakfast meeting of 10 hospital execs, using a very well-known person to extend the invitation to increase the chances people would come. Tested the sector approach with them and formed them into a committee. The WIB pays for a staff person, but the person reports to the committee. The Board used the committee to verify the nursing shortage. The

board hired a well-known doctor to interview the hospital execs, because they would confide in a doctor. The doctor wrote up an anonymous summary. Most of the work is now being done by the committee members. The board hires consultants as needed to help the committees. The board's goal is to become a quality provider to those businesses and learn from them about the real issues. As an example of the work they have done, they got hospitals to "adopt" schools of nursing. The hospitals put instructors in the classroom, which puts more money into the colleges' hands. They found a way to supplement instructors' salaries to keep them from leaving teaching. The CEOs initiated the idea, and that's why it works.

In general discussion about sector-based initiatives, several success factors were implied:

- Having a "champion" for the sector initiative
- Moving the action beyond the WIB
- Spending time developing partnerships and building trust
- Catalyzing, not "running" the initiative
- Involving high level folks from the sector - the CEOs.
- Using the collaborative to get information back about the sector that the WIB can use
- Giving lots of kudos to the work of the collaborative

WIA Reauthorization Impressions

What's Good

- ◆ Youth eligibility; income requirement removed
- ◆ More control of Wagner-Peyser
- ◆ Fewer performance measures (although having the wrong ones would be bad)
- ◆ Getting required partners off the WIB; they distract from the business focus
- ◆ Required dollars contributed to one-stop
- ◆ No mandate for youth council, which frees up possibilities for membership

What's Bad

- ◆ Shift to all out-of-school youth
- ◆ More age overlap between youth and adults; neither good nor bad, just confusing
- ◆ Block granting may result in decrease in overall dollars, state local role confusion, and Wagner-Peyser flexibility; devil will be in the details.

Professional Development Series

The group liked the idea of spreading the "Rethinking Workforce Development series in stages over the course of a year, with pre-work, etc. Suggestions included:

1. Keep it from sounding like it is "something new." Some of the boards have been involved in similar kinds of endeavors. They need to see this as building on what they've done rather than starting their thinking from scratch.
2. Since board meetings are not terribly long, a module can't take long than 1-2 hours at the most to work through with their boards. Concern was expressed that some of the modules
3. The first session may need to be done by somebody from the outside to do the initial set-up and act as an outside expert. Having the outsider come in increases the credibility.
4. As it is developed, members would like a summary of the curriculum for each piece to put in orientation materials for new WIB members to get them up to speed since membership changes during the course of the year that this curriculum might take.

NEXT MEETING

JANUARY 8-9 in Brevard County, FL.

Commitments

- **Employer survey tools:** Everyone will share their employer survey tools.
- **Board plans:** Everyone who has one will share their *board* strategic plan (as opposed to community or one-stop strategic plan), or board corporate plan or board business plan - whatever it is termed - with the rest of the group.
- **Board staffing models:** CSW will send out information on board staffing models... Members can add their own information to it if they wish and we'll share it again.
- **Staffing state WIB associations:** CSW will send out information relevant to staffing state WIB associations.
- **Partner resource sharing:** CSW will share a model picked up from one area that provides a basis for partner resources sharing to support the one-stop.
- **Organizational charts:** everyone will bring their board organizational charts to the next meeting. There is interest in what functions are contracted out and which are kept in-house.
- **Recommended reading:** The Rise of the Creative Class by Richard Florida

- **Quality WIBs:**
 - ◆ CSW will share “Tier II WIB Certification Criteria” that was developed in Indiana.
 - ◆ Janie will share the “tweaked” version of the NAWB self-assessment tool that they developed
- **One-Stop Quality:** CSW will share the study done on strengths and weaknesses of one-stop chartering with the group.
- **Employer services:** Rodney will share the manual Gulf Coast has for employer services. (Post meeting, Rodney sent the link to the website : They can be accessed through as follows: www.TheWorkSource.org ; On the right side of the page, under contractors and vendors, please click standards and guidelines. Then click The WorkSource Operational Standards and Guidelines, then go to section 801.)

Potential Topics for Next Meeting

- **Marketing:** Branding the work of the board versus the work of the one-stop center; how does the board get credit for its work without confusing the public?
- **Professional development: Rethinking workforce development.** Next step in launching professional development series
- **Performance report card:**
 - ◆ Annual report
 - ◆ State performance measures
 - ◆ How do we judge ourselves outside of WIA
 - ◆ Developing and measuring outcomes for employers; how do we know if we’re making an impact on industries, sectors, jobs in demand. Interested in impact measures, not process measures.
- **WIB Standards:** Standards for quality WIBs.