

# **New Innovators Professional Learning Network**

## **February 6-7, 2008**

### **Bricktown Hotel**

### **Oklahoma City, Oklahoma**

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#### **Participants**

**Members:** Peggy Herbertson, Pike's Peak Colorado; Horace Dicks, Central Texas; Bob Rhoden, Texoma Texas; Janie Bates, Texoma, Texas; Marci Brilley, Brevard County Florida; Lisa Rice, Brevard County, Florida; Theresa Reynolds, Northwest Piedmont NC; Jasen Jones, Southwest Missouri; Mike Temple, Gulf Coast, Texas; Rodney Bradshaw, Gulf Coast, Texas; Eddie Foreman, Central Oklahoma; Mary Ross, West Central Texas

**Guests:** Nanette Robinson, Eastern Oklahoma; Janie Wheeler, Northwest Arkansas; Hugh Dougherty, Workforce Oklahoma; Ed Strong, CSW

**Guest Speakers:** Brad Bauler, DCA-Boston; Larry Fitch, CSW; Geri Scott, Jobs for the Future

**Facilitators:** Nina Babich and John Metcalf, CSW

#### **Member News**

- ◆ Jasen - RIG to be approved this month by DOL
- ◆ Janie Wheeler - engaged in youth development collaborative for Shared Youth Vision
- ◆ Theresa - Leveraged \$3m with \$3.1m in WIRED. Youth forums held in every county
- ◆ Bob - Project Recovery has created solid network of referrals for individuals who fail drug screens
- ◆ Janie Bates - Working on a RIG with 10 counties in southern Oklahoma. Working on consortia for manufacturing and energy.
- ◆ Eddie - suffered a 42% budget cut with the WIA rescissions. Created first board sponsored apprenticeship training program in U.S. Put truck driving training in prisons.
- ◆ Nanette - suffered a 25% cut in budget. Working with Jasen's WIB on regional health care. Providing WorkKeys onsite for employers.
- ◆ Lisa - space shuttle being retired in 2010. Will dislocate 3500 aerospace workers who will need to transition to new work.

- ◆ Marci – Schools are now forced by law to work with WIB on career and technical education 5-year strategic plan.
- ◆ Horace – received second million dollars in BRAC money to work with returning vets. WIB honored as 12<sup>th</sup> best place to work in Texas.
- ◆ Mary – Meeting with high school principals; having career fairs, on-campus career pathway events targeted to seniors. Focus is on jobs that require less than a 4-year degree, but more than a HS diploma. Hired a staff person to set up a series of events. Will go back and meet with counselors, teachers, and students one-on-one.
- ◆ Mike – put welfare “in a corner” in the one-stops because they are inconsistent with what the system is trying to do.
- ◆ Rodney – getting into schools to push information about careers.
- ◆ Peggy – CAA- wounded warriors.

Hugh said Oklahoma is putting a graduation coach in every high school to work with families and counselors. The coaches are certified social workers.

Hugh added that two communities in Oklahoma are being designated as “Work Ready Communities.” There are several ways to get the designation (Florida has dictated only one). Criteria are a high school graduation rate of 92% (using a 9<sup>th</sup> grade base); 3% of existing workforce and 25% of available workforce are credentialed with Career Readiness Credential. The level at which they are credentialed (bronze, silver, gold) doesn’t matter. “Available” workforce is undefined. Eddie retorted that if he gets more people to have associate’s degrees in his region, then the percentage of CRCs doesn’t matter. No business person was on the committee that came up with the Work Ready Community criteria. Profiles International (<http://www.profilesinternational.com/>) is preferred by employers over WorkKeys, but it is very expensive.

## **Incumbent Worker Training**

Mary said they advertise their incumbent worker training resources by distributing information to economic developers, Rotaries, Kiwanis, Chamber events, and elected officials. Board members also pass out information themselves. Economic developers sometimes put up the 25% required cash match! The funding stream is WIA. Little documentation is required. They have leveraged *lots* of money as result of the grants. They move about 10-20% of their resources into incumbent worker training. Texas has a waiver to turn local WIA funds into “state” money so it can be used for incumbents. Mary said they have to track outcomes, but the participants are not included in their performance measures. This is really board work. Her contractor is only involved in the case of new hires. It requires no additional overhead, no additional staff to administer.

No major evaluation has ever been done. We need to be able to turn anecdotes into a story and capture/communicate our success. Jasen said that he’d like to move away from the case management approach to workforce development and do more impactful

work such as Mary describes.

Janie Bates noted that they move around 25% of adult funding into incumbent worker training. If an employer trains fewer workers than planned, she prorates what the employer gets.

**Future agenda items:** Discussion of how we move away from case management to impactful work with an employer focus. What can we push to the national level to move the system in a new direction? We need to think about what we're going to measure around this concept. The book, **How to Measure Anything: Finding the Value of "Intangibles" in Business** was recommended for future discussion.

## Asset Mapping

A variety of asset/resource map models were shared. A "resource map" might be considered *funding sources* (e.g., WIA), while an "asset map" might be considered institutions, organizations, etc. (e.g., a community college is an asset). Many people who request an asset or resource map aren't clear on what they want nor what they are going to do with it. Some equate it to a State of the Workforce report.

Janie Bates said they are creating a list in conjunction with 211 services for employers who need to refer people for Project Recovery. They are trying to determine what the need is, who is filling it, and what the gaps are.

Theresa said they are mapping to find out what makes them best in class, and then determining where they are not best in class so they can address those items.

Jasen suggested there are two schools of thought: 1) how to get people to services; and 2) what prevents the region from being competitive. Asset maps developed for those different schools of thought would be constructed very differently.

Mary said they did a study of their region, looking at the infrastructure, capacity issues, education, high school completion rates, school system quality, and labor supply. The study has driven their economic development folks regarding where to make investments. She added that they created a talent pipeline, but the value was in the *process*, not the map itself.

Lisa said Volusia developed an emergency asset map for businesses, with information about hurricane shelters, dealing with people with special needs, broadcasting stations, a hotline number, and so forth (<http://volusia.org/storm/>). You can sign up for an e-mail notification system to receive alerts and emergency updates. An e-blast can be issued to seek help. Developing the disaster guide brought together county officials, emergency experts, economic developers, and others.

CSW will compile types of asset maps and use the wiki to have the group edit and add to the list of types.

The wiki reference raised the issue of technology tools. It would be useful to have an introduction and walk-through to various tools at a future meeting (e.g., IPEDS database, pbwiki, meeting wizard, and googledocs).

## **Fiscal/Procurement Issues**

Eddie said that they are re-procuring all WIA contracts. They will procure staff *only*, not services. Essentially, they are procuring a staffing entity.

A future discussion item is what are our *metrics*? What do we put in our contracts to drive our performance? What are the focus areas and when do you put in rewards?

Boards don't have good mechanisms to take in money. Chambers of commerce are set up well to take in money. Workforce development fiscal officers are against it because they don't understand it. Lisa indicated that they are looking at a merchant account to accept corporate credit cards. Theresa said they are thinking about bank drafts with a separate account just for the virtual job fair. It was suggested that we think about a seminar for fiscal officers on how to think outside of federal funding sources.

## **Underemployed and Low Wage Workers**

Brad Bauler from DCA-Boston presented a power point on Successful Societal Change Campaigns in preparation for our discussion of the draft concept paper, "Underemployed and Low-Wage Workers: The Message, Policies, and Strategies," that had been distributed prior to the meeting. (The power point and the original concept paper are on the New Innovators website under the Oklahoma City meeting summary).

The group determined that the problem statement should be flipped around so that it starts with employers' issues rather than the workers. The old statement read,

*Too many hard-working underemployed and low-wage workers lack the education and skills necessary to achieve self-sufficiency and middle class income, while too many middle-skill jobs that could provide that income go unfilled. The result is lower personal wealth for individuals and lower productivity for businesses, impacting the overall prosperity and quality of life of the nation.*

A flipped statement might be:

*Too many middle-skilled jobs are unfilled, at the expense of lower productivity for businesses and lower personal wealth for individuals who lack the education and skills necessary to obtain those jobs, impacting the overall prosperity and quality of life of the nation.*

We brainstormed what we wanted as a better future for the workers, employers, and for the education system:

### Workers: Their Future

- Moved to a different job
- Have skills to compete

- Improved skill sets
- They are agile to be able to move across jobs
- They have motivation to acquire skills
- Improved quality of life
- Culture of motivation

#### Employer future

- Every job will have a qualified, motivated worker
- Can re-tool quickly
- Have a capacity to learn
- Higher productivity.

#### Education's future

- Moves at speed to meet business demand
- Globally competitive (more than a 70 grade)
- Same voice with employers/workers
- At the table

Concepts for the problem statement are:

- Vulnerable people are stuck in low wage jobs
- Lack of mobility
- Lack of competitiveness
- Lack of productivity gains

Points of consensus:

- People need higher skills
  - Higher wages
  - More flexibility/agility
  - Quality of life
- Employers need people with the *right* skills
  - Right skills
  - Higher productivity

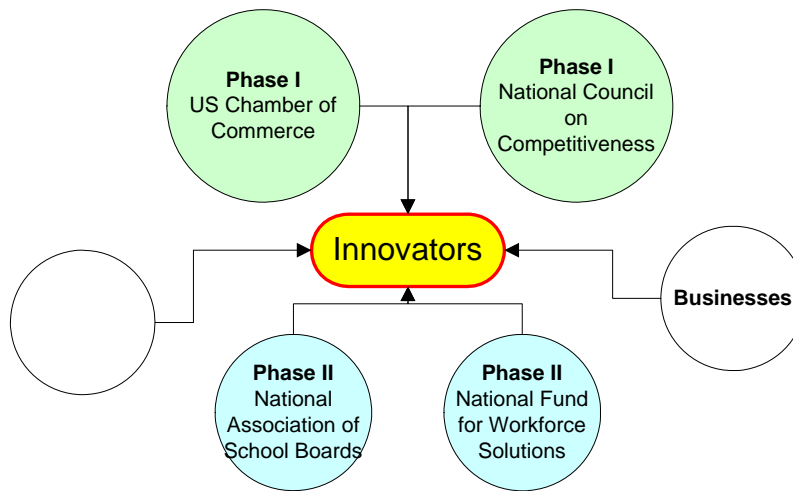
Essentially: There is a constant mismatch between the skills and the skill levels wanted/sought and the skills and skill levels needed. There is no culture of lifelong learning.

Skills2Compete is about two-years of post secondary education, but it stops too short. We need lifelong learning. Everybody has a stake in this: workers, employers, and communities. Everyone benefits from this better future. Economic prosperity and equality of opportunity are necessary for an improved quality of life. To support these three beneficiaries (employers, workers, and communities), the “systems” (workforce, education, supportive services) need to be agile and mobile.

Evidence-based solution:

- Lifelong learning. The RIGHT lifelong learning. Learning for:
  - o Workers - postsecondary education must be accessible, affordable, relevant, open entry/open exit.
  - o Employers - become enablers for employees; technologically savvy, visionaries, R&D, invest in workforce at same rate as facilities, equipment
  - o Communities - invest in their citizens, schools, environments that allow business to be innovative.

We need a charismatic advocate (Robert Reich was suggested). Our mission might be to “Build economic prosperity, agility, and competitiveness for every American worker, employer, and community.” Brad Bauler suggested identifying the alliances needed to make a campaign successful. These might be sought in phases, with entities such as the US Chamber of Commerce and National Council on Competitiveness in the first phase.



**Next Steps:**

CSW and DCA-Boston will collaborate to seek resources for a planning effort around the campaign to help us solidify the message we are trying to convey. [Steve Greeley, President of DCA and Jeannine LaPrad, President of CSW, are meeting March 25].

## National Fund for Workforce Solutions

Geri Scott from Jobs for the Future presented on the National Fund for Workforce Solutions. All members received the folder that included a copy of the power point.

Geri said the labor shortage pinch is not at the entry level, but at the mid-skill level of jobs. We must convince employers that their competitiveness is linked to training their entry level workers for higher skilled jobs. The National Fund believes people who work shouldn't be poor and seeks to align the multiple interventions needed to make the system work for low income adults. They are trying to make mid-skill jobs more accessible. There is a false belief that rapid attachment to the labor market and labor market forces will move individuals up. The system tends to operate at the rapid attachment level. The problem is how we deal with the working adult and longer term attachment.

Employers must be at the table to help design the interventions. Employers will stay at the table and contribute money if the solution *works*. But it takes a lot of work. Providers must be savvy with the companies' problem and know how to work with specific employers. They must know the right questions to ask. Communities need to invest in considerable staff capacity building.

The Fund is about a set of core principles rather than a model for solving problems. Solutions must be rooted in what you're already doing and grow from there. It is important when dealing with the job seeker that we emphasize getting the *next* job, not just getting *a job* today. The Fund provides only 20% of the total cost of a project, and is limited to \$100-150,000 per year. An RFP was released on February 15 for rural collaboratives. Rural areas need only identify \$400k in *resources* rather than \$600k *cash* like the metropolitan areas must do. You must be invited to apply, and the Fund will accept only a single application from a given community.

NFWS funds *funders* because they are trying to change the way funders invest. Additional information is available at <http://www.nfwsolutions.org/overview.html>.

## Leadership Academy

Larry Fitch presented a concept paper on an Institute for Workforce Innovation and Leadership. The paper is posted on the Innovators website under the Oklahoma City meeting summary (<http://www.skilledwork.org/innovate.html>). The academy is still very conceptual and funding is being sought for finalizing and implementing. The concept is supportive of our goal for systems change and would provide a platform for message campaigns such as the one we have been discussing for low-wage workers. [CSW and DCA-Boston may connect the two in a grant application].

Discussion ensued about how to make the Innovators meetings more "value-add." We've gone back and forth on the balance of subject matter experts (such as Brad Bauler, Geri Scott, Steve Bigari, Project Lead the Way speakers, etc) and internal sharing

(in Austin, we primarily did internal sharing). We'll try to hit the right balance and also afford more time for "digesting" what the speaker's message means for us. We will explore tools for communicating between meetings, beyond the website, the wiki, and e-mail.

We also discussed location and facility features, which led to a post meeting survey of the members with the following results:

- Maximum room rental: range was \$120-175. To accommodate everybody, we'd try to stay at the \$120 max level.
- Most desired hotel features:
  - Internet access in the rooms was a high priority, although folks don't seem to mind having to pay for it.
  - On-site restaurant was tops after internet service.
  - Shuttle service available from the airport was 3rd most important (although it was also 3rd least important. Nearly an even split, although leaning more towards the desirable end.
  - Pretty well split on the need for free breakfast, but lean a little more towards it being desirable.
  - Evenly split on desirability of shopping within walking distance, and didn't seem to care about a shuttle service for shopping.
  - Free parking and a lobby bar were the *least* desired elements (although a lobby bar was #1 priority for somebody out there!).
- Majority (71%) say it isn't at all important for the group dinner to be at a restaurant other than the hotel.
- Majority (71%) say it's very important to have an array of beverages available all day in the meeting room.
- Most (64%) say it is somewhat important to have snacks available in the meeting room.
- You were pretty evenly divided among the three types of snacks (sweet, salty, healthy), although if you take 2nd and 3rd preferences into consideration, salty just edges out ahead. We might divide it into sweet/healthy in the morning and salty in the afternoon).
- The majority (79%) said it is very or somewhat important to meet close to a major airport. 36% said it was *very* important, and only 21% said it was not at all important. We'll try to keep to meetings within hailing distance of international airports.
- Half of you (50%) are willing to drive 30-60 minutes from airport to meeting site. Close to a third (29%) are only willing to drive 15-30 minutes. The rest don't care or will drive up to 90 minutes. We'll try to stay at the 30-45 minute commute level.