

SWIC
Youth Council
June 16, 2011
Indiana Department of Workforce Development, Conference Room 1
Indianapolis, IN 46204
8:30 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.

Present: Dennis Wimer

Also Present: Leslie Crist, Brittany Dougherty, Elizabeth Darby and Lauren Kaminski of DWD Strategic Initiatives; Edmond O'Neal, Regions 2 and 3; Deb Waymire, Region 4; Tony Cross and Brianna Morse, Region 5; Barbara Street and Karen Bailey, Region 6; Mike Smith and Lisa Lee, Region 7; Bart Brown and Michele Bowman, Region 9; Jim Heck, Region 11; and Cheryl Musgrave, BOS-WIB.

Absent: Thomas Brink, David Entzian, Cathy Metcalf, Terry Rodino, Wayne Seybold, Bill Stanczykiewicz, Patrick Jamison, Matt Fleck, Sherry Siewart, Jim Hemmelgarn, and Robert Hayes

Chair Dennis Wimer welcomed members of the public as no members of the council were present. Introductions were made and several of the regional workforce areas attended. Regions in attendance were: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, and 11.

Chairman Wimer announced that Bill Stanczykiewicz will be the new chairman for the Youth Council. Because there were not enough council members present, minutes from the previous meeting will be approved at the next Youth Council meeting.

Chairman Wimer discussed the structural changes to the regions regarding converting to their own Workforce Investment Boards and new Balance of State Workforce Investment Board as well as discussed the important role Youth Councils will have in the regions, starting July 1. With the new structural changes, the Youth Council will focus at a higher level. He stated that he feels this change will be a good change and help have a strong focus on youth across Indiana.

Leslie Crist requested regions send new Youth Council members and meeting dates to her. Leslie offered assistance to each region through this transitional period and hopes to attend some of the regional Youth Council meetings with newly appointed chairman, Bill Stanczykiewicz.

An overview of the JAG program was presented to the council by Ms. Leslie Crist, Director of Strategic Initiatives. She commended the regions on their continued dedication to the JAG program and acknowledged the accomplishments of the past year. She spoke further about the high school graduation rates of JAG participants compared with the rest of the state's graduation rate of those students not in JAG. Leslie also announced that over 2,900 youth were served this past year in JAG Indiana. Ms. Crist

talked about the importance of giving the JAG participants an opportunity for employment and placement as well as focusing on job marketing and job development. An update was given on the JAG coordinator position in regards to funding, acknowledging that it is now being funded 100% by WIA Governor's Discretionary. A proposal is on the table to fund the positions 50%.

Regional Operator Tony Cross suggested writing letters of support for JAG coordinators and acknowledged the important role they play in their regions. Chair Wimer said he is a strong advocate for the coordinator position and asked that letters be sent to Leslie Crist prior to June 22.

Ms. Crist commented that DWD supports the JAG program and is proud of the 2011 JAG Indiana graduation rate of 88%. She recognized that there are still some challenges in schools, but is pleased with the JAG program outcomes statewide. Leslie announced that there are 50 JAG Specialists currently attending training and suggested that they recognize the specialists for their hard work and dedication to JAG. Chair Wimer and the rest of attendees went across the hall to say thank you.

Bart Brown from Regions 5 and 9 requested to consider a summit and additional ways to fund the coordinator positions and the JAG programs. He suggested someone from JAG National's office assist Indiana with sustainability ideas. Ms. Crist commented that Indiana was the only state that has JAG coordinator positions.

In regards to JAG, Chair Dennis Wimer brought the WIA component into the discussion encouraging the regions to understand the importance for Workforce Investment Boards to question what would happen if WIA were not reauthorized. With this discussion, he encouraged regions to be proactive now to help sustain programs already in place.

Bart Brown remarked that it is important to bring schools into the picture to help show the importance of the program and gain their support and understanding for JAG and the impact it is having on youth.

Leslie Crist announced to the council that she met with the Commission on Childhood Poverty to talk about the JAG program in schools and the impact it is having on Indiana's youth and discussed with them possible funding streams to help enhance program outcomes. The Department of Education was included in the discussion. Ms. Waymire, Region 4, remarked that a principal in one of the high schools in Region 4 said he was very impressed with the JAG students GPA.

Tony Cross wished Chair Wimer good luck in his new position. Furthermore, Mr. Cross said the JAG program stays consistent with a collaborative effort among all regions and that Chair Wimer and Leslie Crist and the rest of her team are doing a great job with JAG. He acknowledged that the JAG specialists should be commended for their hard work.

Chair Wimer discussed the Department of Labor's Youth Service Provider waiver and how this conversation is important for the Youth Council. He stated that 10 states have a waiver for Youth Service Providers in which three of the youth elements are not competitively procured, so the WIBs act as youth service providers for those elements. The three program elements included in the waiver are work experience, supportive services, and follow-up services. Leslie Crist stated that they are reaching out to Wisconsin to see how they utilized the waiver. After hearing feedback from Wisconsin, Leslie and her team may explore further.

Barbara Street, Executive Director of Region 6, mentioned that she supports the waiver. She stated that she and a regional staff member talked to their local youth council about considering the waiver, and were pleasantly surprised at the support and interest they have received. Attendees from the regions at the Youth Council meeting were supportive and interested.

Ms. Leslie Crist noted that the State would have to provide justification to pursue the waiver with the Department of Labor. It is further noted that in having this waiver, it has the ability to provide uniformity across the state. Additional comments were made on the benefits of the waiver and needs within the regions.

Brittany Dougherty of Strategic Initiatives provided an update for the council on the Summer Employment Program. Young Hoosier Conservation Corporation (YHCC) was launched at the beginning of May. Because the funding stream is Major Opportunities, YHCC targeted minorities and females to participate. The target age range was 18-30 years old. The program covers 24 weeks of employment at 37.5 hours per week. The Department of Natural Resources and Indiana Department of Transportation combined to make over 400 positions available for summer employment. Currently 73% of the positions are filled, and of the positions filled, 81% of the participants are females or minorities. The participants are being paid \$11-11.25/hourly. Some challenges of this program included DWD not being as involved as it has been in the past. Furthermore, the funding is not specifically targeted at low income participants or WIA youth/adults, but for minorities and females because of the new funding stream. Ms. Dougherty spoke about visiting Mississinewa State Park in Peru and provided an update on what YHCC participants are working on, including building a cell phone tower near one of the campsites and rebuilding a shelter. Participants at this site have a great supervisor that is teaching them construction skills, teamwork as well as other employability skills. The participants said they were excited and one commented that other people ask him what he is doing and where they can learn the things he is learning. Governor Mitch Daniels visited Pokagon State Park at the beginning of the program and told the participants appreciated all the great work they were doing.

Ms. Dougherty thanked the regions for proactively placing youth in summer employment and internships on their own. She remarked that it was great to see the regions take the initiative.

Elizabeth Darby of Strategic Initiatives gave an update on the Career Development Conference (CDC) that JAG students had the opportunity to participate in this spring. The JAG Specialists and regional coordinators said they saw great accomplishments by the students. An award of \$5,000 was given out to each finalist for the Outstanding Senior award because of their strong interviewing skills and the impact JAG has had on their lives. There were three students nominated for the outstanding junior award and they are all eligible for the National JAG Award. Collectively, \$45,000 was given to JAG students for continued education because of their outstanding work and participation in the CDC.

Leslie Crist encouraged each Youth Council attendee to reach out to judges from the Career Development Conference further stating that each judge from this past year said they wanted to participate as a judge in 2012.

Ms. Darby discussed the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI), a new grant opportunity being pursued currently. The DEI is an expansion of the Disability Program Navigator, but is not limited to regions that participated in the DPN. With this grant, Indiana would get federal funding from the Department of Labor to implement the Disability Employment Initiative regionally. The youth effort is the focus for the grant because with the success of the JAG program serving youth with disabilities, that will allow further expansion and implementation to serve a larger number of the target population. There are two primary goals for the DEI: 1) improve educational, training, and employment opportunities and outcomes of youth and adults with disabilities who are unemployed, underemployed, and/or receiving Social Security disability benefits; and 2) help these individuals with disabilities find a path into the middle class through exemplary and model service delivery by the public workforce system. Ms. Darby requested feedback from the regions about ideas on executing the initiative, as well as encouraged each region to participate because Indiana will likely be converting to this practice in the future. The Department of Labor would choose half of the WBS to be the Pilot group and the other half of the WBS to be the control group, to further explore and understand best practices and ways to enhance services in the future. A Disability Resource Coordinator would be hired in the pilot regions and be funded fully through this grant. An important aspect of this grant is the blending and braiding of funds to promote sustainability after the three year grant period. The Disability Employment Initiative has received support from the Commissioner to move forward. Furthermore, the Department of Labor encourages the states participating in this grant to create the solution to better serve youth with disabilities. Ms. Darby also encouraged the regions to review a newly released TEGE on working with youth with disabilities.

In closing, Ms. Leslie Crist of Strategic Initiatives thanked Mr. Dennis Wimer for his leadership, support, and time spent as chairman of the Youth Council. The meeting adjourned at 9:45 am.