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Baltimore Workforce Investment Board September 8, 2009 Strategic Planning Session Overview

In September 2009, the Baltimore Workforce Investment Board held a strategic planning session. The purpose of the meeting was to review the board's 2008 – 2010 Strategic Plan, with an eye for assessing it and making appropriate revisions for the coming 2010 – 2012 planning cycle. The current Strategic Plan has five main priorities:

The BWIB's Current Strategic Priorities in Support of the Vision and Mission:

Priority 1: Build the City's Future Workforce

Priority 2: Increase the City's Labor Force Participation

Priority 3: Increase Business Engagement with the Public Workforce System

Priority 4: Build Better Connections Between and Among Business and Educational Institutions

Priority 5: Promote the Efficiency of Baltimore's Workforce System

Dr. Paul Harrington, noted labor market economist at Northeastern University, provided the BWIB with his thoughts about the overall strategic landscape in the Baltimore region. Key points made during these remarks included these recommendations for future consideration.

Baltimore must:

1. Address the overall job deficit.
2. Need to develop an effective "tool box" in order to deal with changes and challenges (e.g. increased federal support for job creation strategies – transitional jobs, on-the-job training, wage subsidies, innovative use of ARRA funds).
3. Build relationships with suburban areas (regional partnerships).
4. Never underestimate job development (robust and long-lasting relationships between One-Stop Career Centers and area businesses). Proactive relationships with employers really matter!!
5. Consider the proper role for entrepreneurship and small business in workforce development.
6. Be sure to target your resources – who gets priority for service dollars.
7. Consider how to change the attitude and work ethics of Baltimore youth.
8. Evaluate ... utilize existing data to validate the effectiveness of ongoing workforce development initiatives.

After this presentation, the BWIB broke into five discussion groups, one for each of the current Strategic Plan Priorities. The groups discussed each priority and how it could be retooled to accurately reflect today's environment. The remainder of this document outlines the notes taken by these individual discussion groups.

Priority 1: Build the City's Future Workforce

- ➔ Create new connections and new relationships for youth
- ➔ Employers into schools
- ➔ Employers into churches
- ➔ Open up new opportunities (job creation has a multiplier effect)
- ➔ Teach kids how to advocate for themselves
- ➔ It is not a given that parents will support children working-kids can be an entre' to the family as a unit (targeting limited resources on the best chance for success)
- ➔ Build partnerships between schools and private industry
- ➔ Jobs creation needs to be linked to relationship building
- ➔ The 3-5 biggest obstacles to success in employment
 - Positive attitudes and behavior
 - Responding well to authority
 - Create subsidized employment and on-the-job training
- ➔ Skill levels (computer literacy, reading, math, analytical skills), (employers taking on kids need to have realistic expectations)
- ➔ Provide mentorship training for employers
- ➔ When placing kids in employment, understand the family dynamic is an important factor

Priority 2: Increase the City's Labor Force Participation

- ➔ Goal #1
 - Instead of focusing on just ex-offenders, the goal should seek to encompass all of those populations that face barriers to employment.
 - Possible new wording of Goal #1: *Promote a broadening of education and training opportunities for individuals facing various barriers to employment.*
 - Then, for strategies, there could be one for each of the BWIB's areas of focus;
 - ex-offenders
 - high school drop-outs
 - those facing poverty
 - Ex-offender goal could possible reference advocacy for increased funding for education/training of currently incarcerated individuals.
- ➔ Goal #2
 - Work of Mature Worker Task Force, as envisioned upon its creation, has been completed.

- Work of this task force helped to facilitate Baltimore City’s collaboration with the County in a successful DOL grant proposal for older workers ... these efforts will commence soon.
- There was interest in rolling this topic area into a larger regional initiatives goal. This goal could have strategies such as;
 - Support the ongoing Baltimore Regional Employer Awards/Institute initiative
 - Support this new, regional older workers initiative (called Maturity Works)
 - Identify other opportunities for collaboration with the Baltimore County WIB and WIA agency
- Goal #3
 - Can this goal be used to get at the promotion of strategies for job creation?
 - If so, then some strategies could get into advocacy efforts in support of the use of public funds for creating job opportunities
 - e.g. transitional jobs (allowing flexibility in the law to support payment for such jobs, under WIA)
 - Promote the use of public works funding for job creation
 - ARRA funds???

Priority 3: Increase Business Engagement with the Public Workforce System

- Keep focus on targeted industries
- Strategy A: Add “and other hospitality facilities especially under lottery terminal facility”
- Strategy B: Make more generic to include pre-apprenticeship/non-apprenticeship and union/non-union
- Strategy D: Educate people to purchase local goods and services
- Strategy E: connect with retiree groups and use mature workers as mentors
- Strategy F:
 - Goal 2a: I9 and green card training etc, as security/background checks.
 - Add b: continue to promote, inform and create awareness about green jobs.

Priority 4: Build Better Connections Between and Among Business and Educational Institutions

- This group had lots of ideas but didn’t identify where in the goals/ strategies their discussion items fit

- They agreed that all the goals seem to still apply
- Goal 1- add to strategy A
 - Work with the new BCPS (CS) department” learning to work”
 - Students & teachers will visit businesses to enable students to learn about the work world by job shadowing, internships, .apprenticeships, etc. Teachers will go out in the real world and learn about the most current methodology for the job fields they are teaching. Get students engaged in the workforce by adding career days to the curriculum.
- Goal 2- Strategy A- Add - Research not only the current job growth sectors, but also the emerging Sectors and hone in on the gaps. Create new sectors. Get support from government to put people to work
- No discussion of where they fit, but strategies also included
- More intense contact with employers to promote/ benefit from- job growth.
- Working with business &, schools, Develop an alignment, and get buy –in for industry credential or at least industry standards.
- Promote more regional job creation strategies
- Include representation beyond BCCC- develop a new consortium of all working together.
- Have a Summit meeting of state (MHEC) and local community colleges and, schools etc. to collaborate on related issues.

Priority 5: Promote the Efficiency of Baltimore’s Workforce System

- Discussion was focused on a regional aspect and combination of long-term and short-term strategies.
- Information/data that would help BWIB members to make informative decisions:
 - Demographic/spatial indicators: place of residence versus place of work.
 - Data on paraprofessional education – trades.
 - Understanding of the flow of funds
 - Analysis of job losses due to capital substitution. Warnings from BWIB members on development or introduction of the new technology that could result in creation of jobs or loss of jobs,
 - Recession resistant occupations
 - Educational issues – dropouts.
 - Entrepreneurship role and initiatives.
 - Illegal jobs and possibility for local residents to occupy them
 - Ex-offenders