



Chicago Cook Workforce Innovation Board

Meeting Minutes

June 27, 2023 10:30 am

PRESENT: Jacki Robinson-Ivy, Haven Allen, Colin Cosgrove, Proxy Ed Cabezas on behalf of Michel Fassnacht, Xochitl Flores, Adam Hecktman, Sylvia Jenkins (via videoconference), Dan Lyonsmith, Pam McDonough, Donovan Pepper, Proxy Andrea Kluger on behalf of Bob Reiter, Marc Shulman, Carrie Thomas, Proxy Sarah Lichtenstein-Walter on behalf of Juan Salgado, Jason Spigner (via videoconference), Proxy Mary Howard on behalf of Tracy Scott (via videoconference)

Quorum? Yes

Ms. Jacki Robinson-Ivy, called the meeting to order at 10:39 am and welcomed everyone to Chicago Cook Workforce Innovation Board meeting.

Jacki Robinson-Ivy called for a motion to approve the minutes of the March 28, 2023 Board meeting. Moved by Pam McDonough, seconded by Adam Hecktman. Motion passed unanimously.

George Wright provided an overview of his current role as CEO of the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership, noting that during his term as Co-Chair of the Workforce Innovation Board since 2015, he had the privilege of working with Dr. Ender and Ms. Jacki Robinson Ivy. During that time, he saw the great work of the staff, many of who are present today. They have consistently put forward programs for the benefit of our clients, our job seekers and those who want careers, working to connect those individuals with their goals. We are moving away from saying jobs and instead saying careers, as that changes the trajectory and leads to a long-term career.

I've been CEO at The Partnership for seven weeks so far. We have added our newest member, Ms. Ebony Jones, now Director of Human Resources. She is a wonderful addition to The Partnership.

George outlined his three buckets that he is focusing on, people, finances, and processing. We are looking for the right person for the right job, making sure our balance sheet is balanced and then making sure our processes are efficient as we look to improve those areas. At the same time, we are looking to ensure that our strong partners are taken care of by our staff. Staff are back in



the office at least 2 days per week and remote 3 days. We will continue to look for better ways to connect our staff. There was just a contest for clean and professional spaces, decorated and spruced up. This helped with togetherness of the staff. George also shared that he is in the process of meeting with every staff person individually. He will also be visiting every American Job Center (AJC) and then every Delegate Agency. He has already met with Madam President Preckwinkle and will be meeting with Mayor Johnson and his staff.

Question from Board Member: Previous iterations of the Leadership team has had a focus on program needs over strategy. Are those in your vision to build into the current Leadership team? George responded that it was an interesting question and really speaks to style. His style is to get inputs and recommendations from the Leadership team, encouraging them to step up as leaders.

Jacki Robinson-Ivy added that George didn't mention that he is also doing a listening tour with some of our funders and vendors. That is very important, so we know what's being said about The Partnership. Thank you, George, for getting out there.

Pam McDonough, Chair of the WIB Service Delivery Committee reported on the items that need approval from the WIB. These items were brought up at the Committee level and were voted on to move to the WIB for the final approval.

1. WIOA Funding Transfer of \$6.5M 1D Dislocated Worker to 1A Adult
2. WIOA Funding Recommendations for American Job Centers (AJC)
3. WIOA Funding Recommendations for Sector Centers

The Chatham Education and Workforce Center is due to be renewed and we are recommending level funding for this also.

Amy reported that there is a lower number of Dislocated Workers reaching out to the AJCs. It's hard to make the placement numbers when they don't come through our doors. Additionally, we will continue to provide technical assistance to these agencies. For Sector Centers, we are recommending continue funding for all with one sector center being put on a performance improvement plan due to being very late with many of their vouchers this past year. We believe they had some challenges with new staff and should be able to correct that easily.

For all funding recommendations we have established key benchmarks that are evaluated to ensure that each agency has established program goals, we review their actual results with their plans, consider compliance with fiscal goals and then review the WIOA mandated performance benchmarks.

Jacki Robinson-Ivy called for individual votes on each item.



1. Item 1. WIOA Funding Transfer of \$6.5M 1D Dislocated Worker to 1A Adult. Motion moved by Pam McDonough and seconded by Adam Hecktman. Motion passed with one abstention.
2. Item 2. WIOA Funding Recommendations for American Job Centers (AJC). Motion moved by Pam McDonough and seconded by Adam Hecktman. Motion passed with one abstention.
3. Item 3. WIOA Funding Recommendations for Sector Centers. Motion moved by Adam Hecktman and seconded by Donovan Pepper. Motion passed with one abstention.
4. Item 4. WIOA Funding Recommendation for the Chatham Education and Work Center. Funding to be level set. Motion moved by Carrie Thomas and seconded by Colin Cosgrove. Motion passed with one abstention.
5. Item 5. Training Provider Recertifications. Motion moved by Pam McDonough and seconded by Adam Hecktman. Motion passed with two abstentions.

Amy Santacaterina presented on the Youth Committee due to Monica Haslips absence.

Amy provided an overview of the PY23 WIOA Youth Funding Recommendations for the upcoming year. We received a slight increase in our youth funding of \$223,998 over last year. We also have some administrative funds of \$3.1 million that we are carrying into this year and intend to repurpose for programs to meet our new budget.

We are recommending to the Workforce Innovation Board funding for programs of \$9.2 million which will be divided up between in-school and out-of-school youth programs. Our American Job Centers (AJCs) are already funded so this funding focuses on delegate agencies. We are recommending level funding for AJC programs for youth in-school programs.

We have reserved funding for ITAs (Individual Training Accounts) in the amount of \$3,000,000. Over this last year we have seen an increase in ITA usage by youths.

From the Youth Delegate Agency RFP that was recently issued, The Partnership received 37 proposals, 30 of those were requesting out-of-school funding and 10 requested in-school funding. There were a few things that were changed with this RFP. We increased our base level funding to \$350,000 from the previous \$300,000. We added some priority populations that were identified in the RFP. Connecting youth to the justice system, focusing on youth with unstable housing and youth foster care are all included now. We also continue with parenting or pregnant youth. We looked for proposals that serve the LGBTQ population, youth in public housing, youth with disabilities and certainly youth in high need areas with high unemployment and low income.

The RFP review team evaluated proposals based on organizational structure and capacity, program description, past performance, planned outcomes and fiscal structure and plans. Once this data was reviewed the senior leadership did a further evaluation of each program and



presented the recommendations here for your approval. We are recommending 7 in-school youth proposals, although 2 of them had lower fiscal scores. They missed responding to key fiscal questions or documentation was missing. As we looked at these proposals, we feel that with our technical guidance they can achieve the fiscal improvement we are looking for. These 2 proposals also serve a priority population, which is needed. One program focuses on youth in the manufacturing center which is a high value to us.

For out-of-school youth proposals, we are presenting mostly current agencies for approval. We have 3 new organizations that we recommend funding. These 3 serve the West Englewood and the Chicago Lawn communities and have a strong history of serving minority youth from high need areas. We are also funding agencies in Chatham, and one centrally located downtown, but is very accessible to transportation to downtown Chicago.

For Sector Centers and American Job Centers, we are recommending continued funding; two AJCs will be on a performance improvement plans due to low compliance scores.

Angela Morrison asked about performance improvement plans. Amy responded that the performance measures are exit based; this AJC was newer to WIOA youth programs, so we do not have enough of a baseline for some of the youth measures for exiters to obtain WIOA performance measure results. The agency will have more exits next year that will provide more data.

Discussion regarding how The Partnership provides technical assistance for both program and fiscal performance. Amy reported that we meet with the agencies during the contract negotiation stage. Fiscal then manages the budget, ensuring that vouchers are submitted in a timely manner with established benchmarks. Some agencies with a lower fiscal score are due to the agency missing a response to some of the financial questions, but they are not considered a fiscal risk.

Jacki Robinson-Ivy called for a motion to approve the funding recommendations for youth. Moved by Pam McDonough, seconded by Adam Hecktman. Motion passed with one abstention.

Jose Mota provided an overview of the finances. With the new budget we have received an additional \$5.7 million compared to last year. Most of that increase is in Dislocated Worker funding of \$5.2 and \$535,000 in adult funding. This is a significant increase from last year to this year. These funding amounts are formula based according to factors such as the unemployment rate, layoffs and poverty levels.

A key point with our budgeting plan is that we can transfer money between the Dislocated Worker and the Adult funding streams. We are recommending transferring \$6.5 million from Dislocated Workers to the Adult funding due to seeing a high need among our adult population. The numbers of Dislocated Workers seeking services is still a lower number. We have received other funds that are specifically designated for Dislocated Workers, so that the transfer of funds to the Adult funding stream should not have an impact for us.



Jose also reported that we are budgeting \$750,000 for incumbent worker training to set aside for our worker training projects. The Individual Training Account (ITA) will have \$6.6 million for the adult funding and \$5.1 for Dislocated Worker funding. For On-the-Job Training (OJT) it will be \$1.5 million for adults and \$1.27 for Dislocated Worker.

Some funds will be reserved until October for the next round of Adult and Dislocated Worker delegate agencies and career pathways training. We propose continued level funding for all the current American Job Centers. The Chatham Education and Workforce Center is due to be renewed and we are recommending level funding for this also.

If we see a big need for funds throughout the year we can apply to the state for additional money for special projects.

Susan Massel shared the Communications report for Quarter 2 of this year. See PowerPoint for more details. She noted that all photos we use are actual photos of participants, employers and our community. We do not use stock photos. Our actual photos make such a big impact for us.

Hospitality Hires

Susan shared that one picture that she is sharing is that of a executive chef for Peaches' a community breakfast restaurant. He came into us with no job and no future; didn't know what he should do. He was given a job as a cook, but he's really an artist, a graphic designer who couldn't find a job. When I asked him recently if he missed being an artist, he told me to look down at my plate and I could see he was still an artist, my plate was gorgeous. So he has taken his love of art to food presentation.

Success stories like this are so important in getting the word out for what we do.

Cook County Career Pathway Navigator program

This program is aimed at job seekers with disabilities. ScaleLit assisted in the work on this. One participant, Justin, has Cerebral Palsy. When I met with him, I told him that he was inspirational. But he got a little offended. He replied, I'm not inspirational, I'm confident.

The Road Home

Cook County has helped us expand this program to people who are already home. We started with those who were still in incarceration, now we also serve them after they are home. We had a wonderful press conference about this. We also got nice media coverage with WTTW on this project.

Cook County Career Connector program



This year will be 6 to 8 events all in the suburbs matching job seekers with ready to hire employers. Media coverage here included Univision.

GED Graduates

Often GED graduates don't get the recognition for what they have accomplished by getting their GED. One of our agencies changed that by setting up a graduation party, with pictures, and a press release. This successful event, developed by the delegate agency tells us we are partnering with the right agencies.

Annual Report

Our most recent Annual Report is out and will be posted to our website at www.chicookworks.org. It will also be emailed to all WIB members. It's a great way to tell our story and help in our fundraising efforts. It can be used to make an impact with the private sector.

Marketing strategies

We have started doing PSA with Chicago, utilizing their digital billboards. In suburban Cook County we have ads on the PACE buses that focus on Opportunity Works, Opportunity Summer and Career Connector.

Susan encouraged all Board members to follow us on social media. All of our links are in the email signatures box at the bottom of our emails. Susan also thanked her team for all their hard work.

The Partnership sent out a press release once George came on board as CEO to The Partnership. It can be seen on our website. The press release provides a good background of George. He also received an award from LISC last week.

Jacki Robinson-Ivy encouraged everyone to review the annual report as a board member, so you are knowledgeable and able to share this information when it comes up. She added that its also important for all Board members to follow The Partnership on all our social media platforms. The more you share the more publicity we get.

Becky Raymond, ScaleLit, provided the One Stop Operator update. Last week they conducted a statewide meeting with over a hundred partners virtually. The goal of this event was to ensure we are all on the same page in terms of resources that we're making available. Additionally, we have engaged 97 organizations and stay in regular communications with them. We are doing cross training, and customer satisfaction surveys are underway. We have created a QR link that leads to a video and a playlist of training videos for our partners.



Our team is starting to launch business services and have conducted focus groups to do an inventory and assessment. This has also been shared with participants and staff in our network.

The platform that we are using to make referrals among partners within the American Job Centers (AJC) is called Air Table, which will allow for a referral process in the short term while we explore a more permanent option, such as Illinois WorkNet.

We are looking to assign ScaleLit Navigators at each AJC that will engage with the local IDES offices. Becky thanked David Swanson and his team for a great collaboration with the process.

George Wright thanked Dr. Sylvia Jenkins for her long-term participation in this Workforce Innovation Board. He added that she is now retiring from Prairie State College and this Board. Dr. Jenkins has been a beacon of light and hope for all of us. She has been a wonderful Board member, always willing to give of herself.

(Applause)

George added that he hopes she does not do what he did when he retired, which was to take another job a week later! Instead, he hopes that she enjoys her time off in whatever plans she has.

Dr. Sylvia Jenkins thanked George for his kind comments. She added that she has seen her friends that retire, but they fail retirement. She's going to do her best not to be like that! She shared that she has enjoyed her participation on the board and all the good work that the board has done to help the residents of Cook County. It's very important work, our students and community members need you. Thank you all again.

Jacki Robinson-Ivy called for public comment. No comments were made.

Jacki Robinson-Ivy led a brief discussion on the Open Meetings Act and how it affects us as a non-profit. She noted that although for many of us its more efficient to participate via zoom, we still need to abide by the rules of the Act. One thing to consider is hosting this meeting at a different location, such as the Chatham Education and Work Center.

Chairwoman Jacki Robinson-Ivy called for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:26 am. Moved by Colin Cosgrove, seconded by Xochitl Flores. Motion passed unanimously.