Workforce Development Board of South Central Wisconsin

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Forging Strategic Partnerships for Economic Growth

Planning and Development Committee
January 9, 2015
8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Madison College
1701 Wright Street, Madison
Room C1435

Members Present: Ed Clarke & Kathy Cromey, Co-Chairs; Pam Christenson, Paul Dietmann, Nancy Elsing, Bob Kellerman, Barb LeDuc, Ann McNeary, Les Mirkin, Lynn Severson, Howard Teeter, Clay Tschillard, Terry Webb

Guests Present: Jon Danforth, Jason Frey

Staff Present: Pat Schramm, Seth Lentz, Erin Bechen, Jackie Hall, Tia Rice

Clarke called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m. and noted that the meeting was properly noticed.

Agenda Item 1 – Welcome and Introductions

Clarke welcomed everyone and everyone introduced themselves. Clarke reviewed the mission of the Planning and Development Committee. Clarke reminded members that the staff at the Board does not provide services but local contractors do, and that we have guests from those contracting agencies present.

Agenda Item 2 – Review and Approval of the January 29, 2014 Planning and Development Committee Meeting Minutes

Clarke asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the January 29, 2014 Planning and Development Committee meeting as presented. Teeter moved to approve the minutes as presented. Kellerman offered the second. No discussion followed on this motion. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

Agenda Item 3 – Legislative Update

Schramm shared that we have new legislation called the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). We were expected to get this mid-January 2015 but it has been delayed until the middle of April 2015. Until we get regulations, we don't have solid direction. We do see a footprints of our work, which is positive (i.e. Career Pathways, etc.). There are some youth funding changes that may impact our current program designs. The Board will need to submit a plan to the State in fall of 2015. The WIOA funds will begin on July 1, 2015 but complete programmatic implementation won't take place until July 1, 2016.

Mirkin shared that there will be a hearings for the public to attend to learn more the regulations.

Agenda Item 4 – New System Design Implementation Update and Discussion

Lentz reported that the goal for this section of the agenda will be to give some updates on the new system design as well as some strategies to improve performance.

Highlights of Changes from Old Model to New Model

The previous model was designed pre-recession and we had a lot of dislocated workers. We were pushing to provide some level of services to as many individuals as possible. As a result, this built a large volume (caseload) for staff. The new model design is more demand driven; focused on preparing individuals for the employment opportunities that are known. The new model also focuses on the consolidation of staff roles to reduce the number of client hand-offs. As a result staff need to be prepared to wear multiple hats and provide services from beginning to end (recruit, serve, follow up).

The new system also focuses on increasing accessibility by getting out into the community, in addition to being in Job Centers.

Clarke shared that we contracted with the technical colleges in the past to provide skill centers for participants but over the years we found that our customers weren't using the skill centers. In the new model, we didn't use these resources for skill centers.

Implementations to Date

Lentz reported that implementation has been slower than anticipated. New contractors were behind in hiring staff, old contractors having to maintain large caseloads and keep operations running, training of staff, etc. The first quarter was dedicated to getting everyone on their feet. In addition, anytime we had to transition a case from one staff to another, we wanted to be deliberate, thoughtful and careful. The second quarter did allow for more activity.

Lessons Learned

- Shifting to more of a demand driven model has been a larger task than anticipated. Staff are being required to take on new responsibilities and break old habits/processes which has been a challenge.
- Coordination comes with time. We have new and old contractors working together so the development of trust has taken time.
- Long-term cases impacting performance. We have cases that are in the program year after year. It is difficult to exit these cases and manage the negative impacts to contractual and programmatic performance.

Lentz directed members to the handout and he reviewed TABLE 1. The initial goals were based on 800 carryovers / 800 new enrollments / 800 exits.

Once we got into July 1, 2014, it was 1,100 cases that were carried over. Once we identified that, Board staff realized we weren't on pace with our activity. Contractors expressed concern over the implementation of the new system which is demand driven when staff have the existing case load (supply) of customers in hand under the old model.

TABLE 2 shows the distribution of the cases. The table shows 512 cases that were in the program over three years. The light blue shows the average distribution across the state. The data shows that the long term cases are the highest rate in the state and they are heavy on adults and dislocated workers.

The Board staff and contractors realized that they need to address this issue before being able to fully implement the design and strive towards program service goals.

Tschillard asked about the amount of contact with these individuals. The goal is contact monthly with individuals. Some of these individuals may not be responsive or actively engaged in the program but exiting them has negative performance impacts.

Lentz asked for questions.

Mirkin shared that it is important to find out what is really going in with the 512 cases. If these individuals are truly inactive, this shouldn't have an effect on the staff work time.

Clarke shared that when we saw the recession end and saw the decrease in dislocated workers – we didn't have enough people coming into the program to meet program needs. The goal was the 800 / 800 / 800.

Clarke shared there are various populations of people on the case load. There are four possible outcomes. 1) Folks that are no longer responsive. 2) Folks that are not interested in receiving any services. 3) Folks that are employed. 5) Folks that are not able to find a job and are still in need of services.

LeDuc shared that contract managers believe that staff always have the large caseloads on their minds (psychologically) so management needs to refocus the staff's mindset on this.

Mirkin stated that when you clear out the inactive cases, staff are able to be much more successful.

Recommendations

Lentz shared that we want to have some deliberate strategies reduce the large caseload and manage the performance implications of non-positive exits. Through this series of strategies, staff will push to exit as many cases as possible. If we are successful, we could reduce the caseload by almost 50%. This should significantly increase our contractors' capacity to increase employer engagement and develop/deliver services in the new demand-driven design.

Strategy 1

Reduce annual contractual recruitment goal for those contractors with significant long term cases to support the focus on participant exit strategies.

This strategy will allow staff time to focus on following strategies. The contractors already have activities planned and would continue. Other contractors (new) will still have ground to make up.

LeDuc asked about the implementation and development of a plan to complete the strategy. Lentz shared Board staff will work with contractors to implement. He stated that an 8 week benchmark would be good to evaluate the impact.

Strategy 2

Use the Unemployment Insurance database to research all long-term cases (25 months and older). The UI database gives us insight as to these individuals working status as it shows if earnings were reported by an employer.

He shared that staff have had success in finding 125 out of 300 long term lost cases and the majority of these were within that long term caseload. While their current employment status still needs to be verified the majority of these individuals can be exited with employment.

Mirkin did add that the data isn't 100% accurate but it is certainly helpful. It is also updated at the end of each quarter and is in delayed.

McNeary asked about the extent of people's employment in the database. Lentz said that it does share where they were employed and the earnings so we can gauge employment but verification of the information helps to get the full picture.

Christenson asked about the capacity of staff to be able to research these cases. Lentz shared that contracted staff did an experiment and within 3 days, staff were able to get through 300 cases. Now staff will outreach to those individuals to verify employment. Board staff will do this in coordination with contract staff.

LeDuc asked about those individuals who are contacted and not assuming that no additional services are needed. Staff may need to stress the importance of services that are available and timelines associated if re-enrollment is needed.

Strategy 3

Conduct intensive call strategy to reconnect. Staff have conducted these in the past with success. Staff have verified employment and exited those with employment. In addition, staff can identify those interested in reengaging and those who are not interested.

Christenson shared that Facebook may be an avenue to find people, in addition to LinkedIn.

Strategy 4

Board staff did some data sorting and identified that 259 of the 36+ individuals had participated in some level of training (13 still engaged). Staff need to evaluate content area or groupings as well as explore engagement with college to enhance prior engagement and capitalize on it. There may be an opportunity to contract with the college to provide additional training.

Teeter asked about the number of individuals in the pool (600+). Schramm shared that during the recession, we received kudos for not shutting down services. What we are seeing is relative to the large numbers in 2011 and 2012. Schramm shared that during the recession, we were able to serve customers short term and many have returned to employment. There are those with barriers, lack work experience and may not have taken advantage of training opportunities and now have larger barriers to contend with.

Teeter asked about the new demand driven model and the fact that there may be a large population that don't fit this model that we are serving. How do we manage their engagement with the new expectations.

Schramm stated that in hindsight, we should have kept two models working simultaneously. We could have had a team working with the new model design and dedicated a small team to work on this caseload older caseload who may struggle with the new model.

Strategy 5

Manage non-positive exits; those not located or contacted. Based on research, 125 are 55+ years and may have retired. The WDB staff must manage this across contracts to not compromise regional performance.

Strategy 6

Those remaining and interested in assistance are the hardest to serve. This may be a new reality for us and we need to be equipped to prepare them for employment. Staff need to focus on and conceptualize employability skill development and employment placement strategies for long-term unemployed, barriered, low skilled populations. Some strategies may include: development of boot camp style offerings (Skill Centers), exploration of staffing agencies partnership/alignment and issue a Request for Proposal if needed to solicit service providers to deliver specific strategies.

Elsing asked if there are things that can be services or benefits that can be taken away from long term unemployed to get then engaged. Lentz shared that we don't have that ability but some partner agencies may. Those individuals who want to work will engage and we may need to exit those who don't.

Mirkin stated that another way to conceptualize this is to research. One could encourage people to participate in research and be incentivized to engage them. Board members offered a lot of support for this idea.

McNeary asked if the typical client ideally would be 2 years or less? Schramm stated it depends on the age.

Webb stated that adaptable criteria would be helpful for contracted staff so they know it is okay to let go of this population.

Lentz shared that we will review these strategies with contractors and evaluate which staff are appropriate to work on these.

MOTION: Clarke asked for a motion to move adoption of these strategies. McNeary moved to approve the recommendation as presented. Teeter offered the second. No discussion followed on this motion. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

Agenda Item 4 – Adjournment

With no additional business for the Committee, Clarke moved to adjourn at 10:22 a.m.

Adjourned: 10:22 a.m.

Attachment for Board Records:

- Agenda
- Planning and Development Committee Meeting Minutes from January 29, 2014
- Recommended Strategies/Data Handout