



VISTA 2025 Goal 2:

Position Chester County as a magnet for attracting talent and a model for developing an employer ready workforce.

Initial VISTA 2025 Goal 2 Team Meeting

June 30, 2016

Meeting Notes

Team Members Attending: Kathi Cozzone, Andrea Devoti, Jennifer Duff, Trish Faidiga, Alisa Marie Jones, Jim Nemes, Jerry Parker, Joe O'Brien

Also Attending: Pat Bokovitz, Marybeth DiVincenzo, Jim Lauckner, David Sciocchetti

Joe O'Brien

Opened the meeting and asked everyone to introduce themselves. Called for comments on the meeting notes from the previous meeting. None were offered.

David Sciocchetti

Reviewed the concept of an economic demographer for Chester County and the critical nature of having the data needed to make informed decisions. Briefly discussed the job description for such a position obtained from Mark Lautman, author of "When the Boomers Bail". Noted the fact that significant data such as patents issued or businesses started in Chester County was not being collected or analyzed for predictive or measurement purposes.

Jerry Parker

Suggested that the job description might be overly ambitious. Noted that the goal is to have the right data for the right purpose. Added that the key will be finding the right person.

Pat Bokovitz

Commented that using a data firm might be an option, noting that we had been contacted by Chmura to explore their services.

Marybeth DiVincenzo

Suggested Gartner as another example. Added that the ability to use data to guide decisions is critical.

Jim Nemes

Stated that it was important to clearly define the problem before looking for a solution. Indicated that Penn State had developed a new program in data analytics that might help.

Joe O'Brien

Concurred that higher education definitely had a role to play in addressing the need to assemble and analyze data.

Jerry Parker

Suggested that we should first imagine the results in terms of what we are going to do with the data. He added that we need to think clearly about what we are going to do with the data focusing on whether it is actionable or not.

Kathi Cozzone

Noted that the County is looking at a possible "big data" initiative and that this may be helpful to our issue.

Joe O'Brien

Expressed support for a data person who would serve as the primary source for a range of critical data.

Kathi Cozzone

Suggested a narrow focus to get started.

Pat Bokovitz

Noted that having someone whose primary job is data focused is a good idea.

Jim Lauckner

Noted that availability of data from the state's Center for Workforce Statistics

Kathi Cozzone

Noted that we are not lacking for data but for a stronger focus on what data and how we will use it to advance our economic and employment strategies.

Joe O'Brien

Suggested that we start with data we know we want and add to it as we go forward.

Jennifer Duff

Commented that she was struggling with the purpose of the goal team. Questioned whether our role was to advise or to actually make it happen.

Gary Smith

Suggested that both roles could be in play depending on the issue.

Kathi Cozzone

Noted that the role of the goal teams was to assist with implementation of the strategies identified in VISTA 2025.

Joe O'Brien

Commented that our role is to provide recommendations to achieve the strategies which may involve all of us.

Kathi Cozzone

Stated that the County was willing to participate.

Jerry Parker

Agreed that the County had a key role.

Pat Bokovitz

Expanded on this issue by noting that this was a partnership of all parties that was focused on bringing workforce and economic development together.

Jim Nemes

Suggested that the initial focus should be on collection, noting that there was much more work to be done on the analytics side.

Trish Faidiga

Suggested a focus on a preliminary plan of action with specific next steps.

Kathi Cozzone

Agreed and suggested that the County would take the lead on identifying the next steps.

Marybeth DiVincenzo

Turned the focus to an update on action items identified at the workforce summit by reviewing a hand out with numerous specific actions targeted at the recommendations from the workforce summit.

Joe O'Brien

Added to the list noting a joint effort between CCIU and Aerezen on an apprenticeship program.

Marybeth DiVincenzo

Note that success will require this kind of partnership between education and the business community

Pat Bokovitz

Commented that some state funding for business and education partnerships was not going to be renewed which could pose challenge going forward.

Pat Bokovitz

Suggested that the pending update to Landscapes 3 could be an opportunity to highlight the need for partnerships with the business community noting their concern with the impact of affordable housing on their ability to recruit workers. He added that the voice of the business community can help drive needed policies.

Kathi Cozzone

Suggested that we are going to need "out of the box" ideas to address the affordable housing and transit challenges facing the county and its workforce. Mentioned an approach to create incentives to ride Scoot as an example. Added that we need to better explain value to garner more support.

Trish Faidiga

Offered the idea of a video of people who benefited from programs to better promote those programs.

Kathi Cozzone

Suggested that we need businesses to step up, adding that we struggle to get participation. Questioned whether our message is being heard.

Alisa Marie Jones

Commented that we might want to look carefully at how people are solving their problems right now giving the example of men biking to their jobs in the mushroom industry. Added that time is money and government sometimes works slower than the pace of business.

Jennifer Duff

Suggested that one big challenge is getting information on programs that are available and questioned whether that information was available via smart phone.

Kathi Cozzone

Commented that these are good ideas but that we still need to get ore of the larger employers at the table.

Marybeth DiVincenzo

Noted that this is an ongoing struggle. Added that business is investing in the industry partnerships where they see a direct return. Stated that incumbent worker training is the number one request of the business community and help with this will likely generate a larger return.

Andrea Devoti

Commented that too much is going on in the business world and that businesses want immediate action.

Jennifer Duff

Agreed and added that businesses are asking is there a return on my investment. Suggested that we may need to refine and clarify our requests of the business community.

Marybeth DiVincenzo

Described an “outside the box” concept of “bench recruiting”. Explained how a company could have five good recruits for one position with four being turned away. Asked how we can help/retain the other four. Gave example of one company that shared the resumes of the other four with other county companies. Suggested that there may be a way to build this concept into a Refer One approach similar to the Hire One model.

Jim Lauckner

Noted that Vanguard and SEI had piloted a similar concept where they shared their “silver medalist” job candidates.

Joe O’Brien

Commented that a consortium of companies sharing their “silver medalists” is a good idea.

Kathi Cozzone

Questioned the oft cited IT complaint that they can't find workers. Asked how many can be trained for those jobs.

Jerry Parker

Responded that all the education community needed to know was when and where.

Joe O'Brien

Thank the members of the goal team for the great dialogue and adjourned the meeting.

