



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

September 15, 2016

Meeting Notes

Team Members Attending: Susan Boardman, Kathi Cozzone, Trish Faidiga, Karen Kozachyn, Joe O'Brien, Ralf Weiser

Also Attending: Pat Bokovitz, Jim Lauckner, David Sciocchetti, Gary Smith

Kathi Cozzone

Welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked attendees to introduce themselves. Asked if there were comments on the meeting notes from the last meeting. No comments were offered.

Pat Bokovitz

Described recent engagement of the Central Pennsylvania Workforce Development Center as a new source for workforce information. Noted that the focus is on the data needed to better address issues like long term unemployment where local data is hard to come by. Added that we have a point person to whom specific questions can be addressed.

Trish Faidiga

Commented on the challenges faced by her company in a recent hiring effort. Noted that she attempted to use the available resources but was less than successful.

Jim Lauckner

Described recent effort involving CareerLink that involved 4 employers and 90 job openings. Noted that 18 potential employees were identified and 13 of them entered the hiring process.

Kathi Cozzone

Questioned the nature of the problem with the available resources.

Joe O'Brien

Commented that filters like educational level used to identify applicants can limit the pool.

Gary Smith

Asked T. Faidiga about her job needs.

Trish Faidiga

Responded that she was looking for 2-4 employees, mostly in Chester County and that she was offering incentives to attract them and still had trouble.

Kathi Cozzone

Stated that CareerLink was a source of data to be mined, but that all unemployed were not part of that data set. Added that the challenge was to identify them.

Ralf Weiser

Commented on how employers, workers and educational institutions all benefit when the system works as it should. Questioned whether each participant was recognizing current realities. Questioned whether employers have the data that will help them understand market conditions to better match workforce expectations.

Trish Faidiga

Agreed, noting that in the building maintenance area the pay scale was going up along with the technology requirement.

Ralf Weiser

Commented that manufacturing has the same issue, adding that "commoditized" jobs were gone. Noted that need to recognize the diverse nature of the current work force and "deal with it".

David Sciocchetti

Asked if there was a need for better information on local wage rates.

Ralf Weiser

Responded that it was tough to get but would be helpful.

David Sciocchetti

Asked a general question about the educational side of the current workforce generation process.

Joe O'Brien

Stated that there were hard educational truths and happy educational truths. The hard truths included things like the fact that you can become a welder in two years and get a good job. The happy educational truth was that you could get a college degree after four years and still not be able to find a good job. Added that progress was being made on explaining these realities to students.

Ralf Weiser

Added that there were many existing routes to a good job including internships and co-ops. Expressed concern that those designing training were still too focused on lagging indicators relative to job needs.

Jim Lauckner

Noted that the Department of Labor does do job projections.

Ralf Weiser

Expressed the need for industry specific information on where job needs are headed. Noted the need to plan for success and be ready for growth.

Karen Kozachyn

Noted the difficulty of keeping up with the real needs of companies. Mentioned that idea of transferable skills noting that individuals trained as teachers had the basic skills to be corporate trainers.

Joe O'Brien

Agreed with the challenges of understanding company needs but added that young people also have to better understand the market realities as well. Noted that 10 years ago there was a significant need for teachers and many were trained but that last year the demand was much less and fewer were trained. Suggested that young people do listen and can figure it out.

Pat Bokovitz

Commented that even in areas where there is no job growth, there can be significant need in terms of replacement.

Kathi Cozzone

Commented that with all the data being collected, the data we need must be somewhere. Suggested there may be a need to take a better look at the skill sets of boomers leaving the workforce and helping young people make good decisions regarding skill sets and job attributes that will position them better to fill those positions.

Joe O'Brien

Noted that the marketplace is changing. Added that when employers can't find workers that they make adjustments to who and how they hire.

David Sciocchetti

Asked if there was a mechanism to match skill sets rather than job titles.

Ralf Weiser

Commented that skill sets create a range of options with the possibility of new job titles.

Jim Lauckner

Described a process of cross-matching skill sets for a particular hiring process through Job Gateway.

Trish Faidiga

Added that the process of hiring now requires a broader focus on that total set of benefits of working at a company rather than a narrow focus on an hourly rate.

Ralf Weiser

Agreed and noted that at Aerezen many employees are there because they wanted work with a purpose, especially millennials.

Joe O'Brien

Commented that Aerezen's approach was "walking the walk" and responding to the changing dynamics of the workforce.

Kathi Cozzone

Commented that the Aerezen approach should be presented to other employers.

David Sciocchetti

Noted that depending on what you count there may be as many as 15,000 companies in Chester County. Noted the need to get more engaged and better informed.

Ralf Weiser

Noted that you have to start with those who are already engaged. Added that he was astounded at the number of companies that do not show up at meetings.

Kathi Cozzone

Agreed that it was a continuing challenge.

Ralf Weiser

Noted that for him, meetings need to justify his time with a value proposition that is focused on tangible outcomes. Added that things learned at meeting can result in a deeper dive that can have benefits for a company.

Joe O'Brien

Commented on the "show me" attitude of many employers who want to know that engaging will help them solve their problems.

Karen Kozachyn

Noted that there is a lot of employer engagement but it is sometimes stretched thin with many of the same people covering different boards and committees.

Jim Lauckner

Noted that CCEDC markets to 4,000 and has 578 engaged. Suggested that the message that you will get value by attending is not being heard. Suggested that this represents an opportunity to improve the messaging and marketing process.

Ralf Weiser

Suggested that one approach is to look more to social events emphasizing human "beings" not human "doings". Commented that happy hours and other innovations might broaden the mix of those engaged.

David Sciocchetti

Noted that more employers would lessen the fatigue factor for all participants. Added that next meeting would take a look at the follow up to the workforce summit.

Kathi Cozzone

Adjourned the meeting with a comment on the potential for using a venue as an added incentive to attend a future meeting.