



VISTA 2025 Goal 2:

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

VISTA 2025 Goal 2 Team Meeting

September 6, 2017

Meeting Notes

Team Members Attending: Kathi Cozzone, Jennifer Duff, Trish Faidiga, Joe O'Brien, Jim Nemes, Kirk Putt

Also Attending: Pat Bokovitz, Marybeth DiVincenzo, Mike Grigalonis, David Sciocchetti

Kathi Cozzone

Welcomed the goal team members and asked if there were any comments on the meeting notes from the previous meeting. No comments were received.

Noted that the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was the new federal workforce law and that Chester County was required to prepare and submit a plan for using federal workforce funds as part of the law. Introduced Pat Bokovitz to provide information on the plan submitted by Chester County.

Pat Bokovitz

Reported that the Chester County plan was submitted on September 1, 2017 and was part of a six county southeast Philadelphia regional plan that included Berks, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia counties. Noted that the plan included \$452,801 for adult

programs, \$670,115 for dislocated worker programs, \$557,641 for youth programs and included adult education and literacy and vocational rehabilitation programs.

Kathi Cozzone

Commented that these programs are funded with federal funds that pass through the state to the counties.

Mike Grigalonis

Asked about the allocations to Philadelphia and Montgomery counties.

Pat Bokovitz

Responded that Philadelphia receives about ten times more than Chester County and Montgomery County about 50% more or better.

Indicated that goals of the program included establishing career pathways, expanding public-private investment in the pipeline of workers, increasing work-based learning opportunities engaging employers and strengthening data sharing.

Kathi Cozzone

Noted that the new act urges the consolidation of workforce development areas, adding that this could negatively impact Chester County.

Jennifer Duff

Stated that Chester County is already working as part of a region. Suggested that there was no need for consolidation as each county in the region identifies its unique challenges and develops its responses to those challenges.

Kirk Putt

Asked about how the funding amounts are determined.

Pat Bokovitz

Responded that the federal government uses a formula to determine allocations.

Marybeth DiVincenzo

Commented that the WIOA funding is need focused and prioritizes at risk populations.

Joe O'Brien

Asked how we compare to the rest of the region.

Pat Bokovitz

Responded that we compare pretty well.

Kathi Cozzone

Commented that there is a significant difference between choosing to work together and being forced to work together – and compete for funds.

Kirk Putt

Asked who was pushing consolidation.

Kathi Cozzone

Commented that that person had moved on.

Pat Bokovitz

Identified the regional plan goals:

- Enhance partner awareness
- Identify new funding opportunities
- Build a framework for collaboration
- Engage in a sustained outreach program
- Focus on employer engagement
- Facilitate employer and education connections
- Build awareness of in demand skills

Pat Bokovitz

Described the Chester County local goals:

- Job seekers have access to an array of services
- Employers have individuals prepared to fill job openings
- Chester County WDB will support industry diversity with a focus on key industry sectors
- Chester County WDB will cultivate a robust delivery of workforce services
- Chester County WDB will expand its utilization of data to make strategic decisions and proactively assess critical workforce issues

Commented that Chester County had the best numbers in the state with unemployment at 3.4%.

Pointed out additional notable Chester County data:

- 1,244 people were released from prison between 2013 and 2015
- 8.2% of the population has a disability
- 9,800 discouraged job seekers in the County of Chester
- 6,000 migrant and seasonal farmworkers in the County of Chester
- 1,621 persons experiencing homelessness were served by housing programs

Joe O'Brien

Asked why these data points were notable.

Kathi Cozzone

Responded that they were areas of emphasis under the WIOA program.

Marybeth DiVincenzo

Reported on a recent meeting where it was noted that it was more difficult to employ women with criminal records.

Trish Faidiga

Commented that she has made efforts to employ ex-offenders but that she ran into issues when certain large customers did not want persons with criminal records working on their properties.

Kathi Cozzone

Stated that she was familiar with one company who hired only female ex-offenders and was able to build trust relationships with her customers over time.

Kirk Putt

Added that R-V had been able to work with ex-offenders.

Pat Bokovitz

Reported on the “one stop shop” approach that combines the services of CareerLink and the United Way’s Financial Stability Center. Provided slide that identified many partners in the effort.

Reported on the **Platform to Employment (P2E)** program. Noted it was a five week “boot camp” for a cohort of 25 persons to help build employability skills that then moved to job development assistance and a 6 week wage subsidy. Indicated that

Kirk Putt

Noted that R-V was mirroring parts of the P2E program for its entry level positions – in effect paying for the development of certain skills.

Jennifer Duff

Commented that this was a generational issue where life basics training was part of the on-boarding process.

Kirk Putt

Commented that R-V also had an over age 50 educational process that helped employees understand things like Medicare.

Jennifer Duff

Noted that older unemployed workers need to keep working to make ends meet had impacts on younger workers looking for work.

Kathi Cozzone

Agreed and added that many older workers who lost jobs in the recession and used their savings to get by now have to keep working.

Pat Bokovitz

Reviewed a map that showed the percentages of families below the poverty level by zip code in Chester County. Noted that the high percentage in the Coatesville zip code.

Kathi Cozzone

Suggested that a map showing poverty versus sustainable wage could also be helpful.

Joe O'Brien

Commented that an ongoing problem is the ability to connect services with the people who need them.

Kathi Cozzone

Concurred adding that marketing to those in need was one of our biggest challenges.

Jennifer Duff

Commented that “push” marketing could help but that privacy laws limit what is possible.

Pat Bokovitz

Discussed a “Coatesville Works” initiative that could build on the work done as part of the Wells Fargo grant.

Kathi Cozzone

Stated that we need to continue to focus on connections. Suggested that we use the next Goal 2 team meeting to review approaches.

Marybeth DiVincenzo

Commented that WIOA comes at the issues from more of an employee perspective and the industry partnerships come from more of the employer perspective.

Kathi Cozzone

Indicated that the Goal 2 Team pulls these two elements together.

Marybeth DiVincenzo

Noted that only a small fraction of Chester County employers are involved in industry partnerships and other workforce efforts. Questioned how we can get more involved.

Trish Faidiga

Suggested identifying CFO's and HR personnel and providing them with information on available services to build awareness and interest.

Jennifer Duff

Suggested it needs to be a specific ask.

Kirk Putt

Suggested a reverse Linked In search might work.

Marybeth DiVincenzo

Suggested that peer-to-peer works best.

Provided two key statistics:

- 40% receiving unemployment compensation came from jobs making more than \$60,000
- With over 1,200 companies engaged, Chester County is #1 in incumbent worker training

Pat Bokovitz

Reported that the Southern Chester County Chamber of Commerce was taking a lead role in the response to the mushroom worker shortage.