

AGIA Training Plan i-Team Meeting
October 10, 2007
Minutes

Present:	Fred Esposito	Greg Cashen (telephonic)
	Guy Bell	Corine Geldhof
	Tom Nelson	Gerry Andrews
	Brynn Keith	Mike Shiffer

The meeting convened at 10:45.

The group discussed the draft plan. Mary Lou Madden and Fred Esposito spent a day going over the last draft and reviewing notes from previous meetings and incorporating the best ideas into a concise document. The Steering Committee and i-Team both have three meetings left. The rest of the time will hopefully be more focused on the specific occupations that Brynn Keith and Dave Matthews have helped to identify, and developing the bullets of the plan.

Corine Geldhof and Tom Nelson felt that the statement in the third paragraph on the first page of the draft that says the existing system is unable to meet current workforce development demands should be softened. The system has not failed; it just has not been able to completely fill the gap. Fred responded that at least one Steering Committee member at every meeting has felt that the demands were being met. The Construction Plan written for AWIB identifies a gap of 1,000 workers annually. Greg Cashen has taken on the task of examining how that gap has narrowed. Brynn Keith's first task was to identify where the gap is. Corine Geldhof suggested taking out "unable" and saying "the existing system is not meeting current demands."

Fred stated that the stage has to be set and a case has to be made for why there is a need for funding. The Steering Committee has been adamant about current needs. It may not be the Department of Labor's sole responsibility, but the Commissioner has said we are the ones who will try to take on the responsibility to help coordinate and adopt a system. The goal is to help prepare the workforce to meet the current and future needs.

Mike Shiffer expressed concern about describing the scope of the system. He is concerned about putting language in about examining the current system, and what not meeting industry needs means. Brynn Keith is also concerned about the paragraph that says the system has been examined. There needs to be a definition of what that system is. Fred Esposito noted that on page two of the draft plan there is an effort to describe the system and who is responsible.

Tom Nelson suggested the first thing the plan should say is there is an opportunity to fix this problem. Fred directed the group back to the first page where that is addressed. The first page suggests acknowledging this as an opportunity to identify unmet obligations of the current system, and turn it into a positive by moving on to an integrated system. This plan is being put together to drive policy and funding.

Corine Geldhof felt that on page two where it says the members have reached consensus on the following points, other issues should be tied in with this.

Gerry Andrews reported that he and John Hakala worked on another project for the AWIB meeting. It is a more accurate, unbiased approach from the apprenticeship point of view. It will be sent out to the i-Team members.

Fred Esposito explained that the i-Team is guiding and influencing the work of the Steering Committee. Fred asked the group to give the current document their best thinking and email written comments on the draft plan by Sunday so he can begin working on them Monday, October 15.

Corine Geldhof liked the paragraph on page two above the vision that says the state will grow its own, and that the plan will drive public policy.

Tom Nelson suggested the funding for awareness should come from outside of federal or state government. Marketing should come from general funds. Fred Esposito responded that the Steering Committee thinks that marketing needs to be a part of the public/private partnership. The Commissioner asked Fred to do a national search for similar plans. In a number of states, particularly Florida, they rely heavily on industry to market. Industry advertises jobs, and if people are not qualified when they inquire about jobs, they are directed to training providers.

The group broke for lunch at 11:45 and reconvened at 1:00. Greg Cashen was not reconnected to the meeting via teleconference.

Corine Geldhof reported that there was a teleconference for clarification on the parameters of the \$7.5 million investment from the US Department of Labor Employment & Training Administration. The US Department of Labor's understanding is that this project is only for two years as opposed to the five years they originally told us. If it is only for two years, there is no way to train the number of workers originally planned. The US Department of Labor wants it aligned with the Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) initiative. The \$7.5 million grant started on July 20. A quarterly report is due, but there is no activity to report. The funds can be used to purchase equipment for training. Corine will send out a link to the Southeast Governors consortium. Mike Shiffer noted that any other federal funding applications will be effected by the \$7.5 million grant.

Fred Esposito suggested that since this initiative needs to be aligned with the WIRED initiative, that information should be either woven into the plan or attached as an appendix to the plan.

Tom Nelson reported that he got input from DVR and DPA. Tom will include information about the \$325K received this year from the AGIA bill, and the \$600K next year that will include the credentialing piece and upgrades to ALEXsys. Tom will also mention the apprenticeship points of contact and explain its relationship with the rest of the system. Tom invited input and suggestions. Some of Tom's information may be good for the marketing piece in objective 3, or it could be used as an appendix. Fred Esposito asked Tom Nelson to take a look at the four strategies and see what roles the job centers and ALEXsys would play in those strategies.

Corine Geldhof suggested adding information on how the state has invested funds in the Youth First and High Growth initiatives. The big question is what will be done when all of these workers are trained to do construction and maintenance, and how the backfill of people leaving current jobs will be handled.

Fred Esposito informed the group that at the Steering Committee meetings there has been a lot discussion about the current skills gap and getting a better connected system so additional

investments can be requested. A lot of what will be done is training entry level workers in the workforce. If we are doing a good job of providing entry level workers, we would be better prepared to fill the jobs vacated by pipeline, because they will be looking for more experienced workers for pipeline work. The Steering Committee wants a strong statement that recommends the Legislature create a separated funding stream to bring career and technical education back to high schools.

Guy Bell was concerned that if the request gets too big, it may collapse under its own weight. To put career and technical education back in high schools would cost a lot and that may collapse it all. It would be better to be selective about what is requested. This is a long term training plan so a multiple year budget will need to be done. It is important to point out that some of these will be sustained investments not just one time investments. Guy stated that with each of these strategies there needs to be an investment matrix by year and also actions required by the Legislature to make the plan happen. How the current funding is going to fit in will need to be showed. Guy suggested that the funding should be connected with the strategy as best as possible.

Fred informed the group that the Steering Committee has based discussions around the premise of establishing a state skills standard. If programs are training to this standard they would be eligible for funding and the state would provide a certificate. The other issue is an umbrella of accreditation and getting schools and centers will take that step. What is most appropriate in the regions as far as infrastructure has not been determined yet.

Brynn Keith discussed activities and products in progress with R&A. One of R&A's economists, Brian Rae, made a trip to meet with H.C. Price. They went through the list of occupations and talked about the project from H.C. Price's perspective. When developing the list of core occupations and ancillary, what tasks would be required and how those transferred into occupations was looked at. Brynn expects to end up with 25 occupational groupings and will cross walk from that. The list should be completed within the next week. Gerry Andrews met with R&A on apprenticeship, and after much discussion it was decided an apprentice is considered employed, not in training. R&A is working on getting the social security numbers of the apprentices, and can then get an estimate of how apprentices are affecting the labor market. If R&A can get this data it probably will not be completed by the December deadline.

R&A is working on determining the career ladder for AGIA jobs. It is important for AGIA because some one who is in a less skilled occupation is on a career track for a more skilled occupation. This is cutting edge research for R&A. The career ladder data is not as readily available as the training data. Gerry Andrews suggested going to the labor organizations or contractor organizations to get some of that data.

Mike Shiffer and Corine Geldhof left at 2:45pm.

Brynn Keith will try to have the list of occupations available for the next Steering Committee meeting on October 17. The other thing R&A is doing is looking at people who used to work in AGIA related occupations and where they are working now. R&A will be plotting the skills sets in rural Alaska of people who have worked in a related occupation but currently work in a different occupation and may be enticed back into that occupation.

Providing timely and regional employment data as noted on page five of the draft was discussed. Guy feels it is a good component, but care should be taken while planning it.

A substantial number of Steering Committee members had a very strong opinion on including more regional employment data. Brynn felt that R&A should not do forecasting due to the data quality. Guy Bell suggested creating new survey techniques for the employers in the region. Tom Nelson suggested having the Department of Commerce forecast business growth. Brynn disagreed because Commerce would tinge their data with what they wanted to happen not necessarily what will happen. R&A does not distribute forecasts without saying, "This is what will happen if...." Fred Esposito suggested that if the info was presented as a series of "what ifs", it could give an idea of what the economy would look like. Brynn Keith disagreed because it would not be reliable data and people would rely on it. R&A's goal is to be conservative because people make a lot of economic decisions based on their data. They are going to forget the "ifs" and use the data to make their plans. To be more responsive to strategy 3, R&A could take data they have now and package it in a way this is more user friendly. That would require redirecting existing staff or adding additional staff. Guy suggested possibly adding an economist to focus on sub-state levels.

Guy Bell will put together a framework for the budget and get it out to the group. There is a lot of substantial investments in each of the strategies. Guy will think about a way to frame it that is simple enough to be understood. That would be a chance for Brynn to request additional R&A staff to meet the requests.

The group discussed the Department of Education and the CTE program. That program is not fully staffed anymore. That work is being done at the regional level to some extent instead of by the Department of Education. The Department of Education will not advocate for more CTE funding. As part of the AGIA plan it is a recommendation that there be categorical funding resurrected for CTE training in high schools.

Fred Esposito explained that there are three more Steering Committee meetings scheduled. The meeting on October 24 in Fairbanks will be focused on a coordinated effort with the regional training centers. Tom Nelson will give a 30 minute Work Keys presentation. Fred envisions the work of the Steering Committee now to be taking the recommendations the i-Team provides and using that as a means to start getting more specific on how the training plan addresses the need to fill a gap. Giving the Steering Committee the list of occupations will give them a start, but the gap data won't be available until December. Once the occupations are identified there is going to be some effort to break them into technical jobs and professional jobs and then figure out where the curriculum exists, who is providing that training, and where there is a need to develop or enhance existing programs. If they have time, the other issue the Steering Committee wants to address is putting more definition under each strategy.

The group agreed to cancel the i-Team meetings in November and work one on one instead. The i-Team members are invited to join the Steering Committee meeting on October 17.

The latest drafts will be posted on the AGIA resources website.

Meeting adjourned at 3:30.