

## MEETING NOTES: Project GAIN

Heartland United Way

Monday, May 11, 2015

**Attendance:** John Hoggatt, Cindy Johnson, Sapna Purawat, Tammy Slater, Don Smith, Dave Taylor, Thomas Walker, Jr., Rob Winter, Audrey Lutz & Karen Rathke

### Information Packet

- EDGE Mission Advancement Infographic
- Job Descriptions
- Article
- Working Families Success Network
  - By bundling services, you have far more successful people emerging from a program.
- What does this program mean in our neighborhood?
  - Goodwill's mission extends to individuals with disabilities and barriers.
  - People who are on welfare would be individuals with barriers.
- Three things we need to identify are:
  - Who is our pool of candidates? People who are chronically unemployed (or underemployed). Workforce Development may be able to identify these individuals.
  - What is our Financial Opportunity Center?
  - How do we combine worker experience with the soft skills? This element will be crucial for beneficiaries to be successful in future jobs.
- What elements do we have in place now?
  - With the right elements in place, there are surely grant dollars out there. Examples could be the Sherwood, Kiewit or through other foundations.
  - We know best practices.
  - We will have partners.
  - We have the structure.
- With the financial knowledge and case management, there is a place for mental health services in Project GAIN.
- EDGE compiled its curriculum based on what the employers wanted.
- If we solicited the employer base we have, would they have \_\_\_\_\_ open positions if candidates looked like \_\_\_\_\_?
- The business survey will drill down some of these answers.
- In the EDGE program, participants went as long as four years in the Financial Opportunity Center.
- The key part of Career Pathways Institute's success was having committed facilitators and planners.
- Rob cautioned the group not to replicate CPI so much as to "reinvent the wheel."
- Where do you go to ask about open positions in industry that only require eight weeks of training? What is realistic for an hourly wage after Project GAIN training?
- We need to think about the question we are asking employers, and then think about who at each company we need to ask. Is it human resources? Is it management?
- Our community's issue is complicated.
  - We have a growing population, but the level of education is decreasing.
  - We have low unemployment, but the level of poverty is increasing.
- When we think about our ideal candidates, are they the entry level welders that could be promoted? Or, are they the "tough nut" individuals that need entry level work?
- Grand Island may be demographically different from Battle Creek. What is their demography?

- We are forgetting about other employers like Principal, Cabelas and Credit Management.
- What if we built this program on areas we wanted to grow into? What do we want to become?
  - Transportation/Distribution Hub
  - Warehousing
  - Call Centers
  - Recycling
- Where will the funding come from if there aren't currently these employers?
  - Grant funding will start the program, but sustainability may come as we replicate training and fill open positions with current employers.
- We are talking about a culture change of work ethic in Grand Island. We used to pride ourselves on how hard we worked. Is our strategic strength still in our workforce?

#### *Next Steps*

- We need to meet with our employers.
- Can we get data on our chronically unemployed or underemployed workers?
- We need to investigate what the possible end wage with benefits could be for participants. Can individuals get sufficient training for the open positions in our area?
- If we could offer qualified candidates, turnover may not be as big of an issue as it is now. We should ask employers, "If we design your key workforce, would you pay them \$\_\_\_\_\_/hour?"
- We should ask employers if they have individuals they would like to promote to open entry level positions.
- We need to focus on the holistic approach with our existing services

#### *Assignments*

Tammy Slater will:

- reach out to Goodwill in Texas, as they have a similar program.
- work with her sources for the Kellogg Foundation, as they want to be an international Goodwill partner.
- visit with Ken about the curriculum used in the EDGE program

Cindy Johnson will:

- investigate what the possible end wage with benefits could be for participants
- answer whether individuals can get sufficient training for the open positions in our area in 8 – 12 week program?

Thomas Walker

- will review the job placement success from CCC programs/degrees

Randy Kissinger

- will get data on our chronically unemployed or underemployed workers

Cindy , Dave and Randy

- will meet to answer supply and demand side for employers
- review workforce employer survey for relevant data to share with planning group

UW will compile information. Meet with Tammy Slater to review information and develop plan.