Southwest Works Agenda

Friday, November 20th

3pm

1401 Hollins St

Present

Adenike Akintola (Clay Pots)

Ellen Craven (Paul’s Place)

Cindy McCabe (St Peter’s Adult Learning Center)

Marvin McKenstry (Westside Youth Opportunities Center)

Joanne Nathans (Jobs Opportunity Task Force)

Lou Packett (Gallery Church and Franklin Square)

Lisa Rawlings (SWP Education and Workforce Chair, UMB Workforce Initiatives)

Michael Seipp (Southwest Partnership)

Yusuf Shabazz (University of Maryland Medical System)

Holly Shook (CUPs Coffeehouse)

Megan Tschoepe (St Peter’s Adult Learning Center)

Elizabeth Weber (Southwest Partnership)

**Purpose of Southwest Works Roundtable**

Michael Seipp provided the following context for our first meeting.

This Roundtable is an offshoot of the Southwest Partnership Education and Workforce Development Committee and will focus on workforce development.

There are two main purposes for the Roundtable currently:

1. To develop and implement a system to place SWP area residents who have completed workforce training programs into jobs where employers have agreed to give preference to job-ready SWP area residents, and
2. To facilitate collaboration and resources sharing between area programs.

Portal:

Over the course of the summer the Committee developed the goal for 2016 of identifying 250 jobs that would be set aside by employers for residents of the Southwest Partnership neighborhoods. During the course of meeting with employers, including anchors and those met with as a result of the workforce needs assessment; the employers expressed both their support for hiring locally and their need to work with a single point of contact, rather than with all the workforce providers in the area separately.

Employers also expressed that many of the applicants referred to them from workforce development programs weren’t qualified to start work.

If the employers are going to give preference to SWP area residents in hiring, it is important that their concerns about the preparedness of applicants are addressed and that they have a single point of contact with whom to communicate.

The University of Maryland Medical Center has pledged to set aside up to 125 hires for area residents, and the BioPark hotel, which will break ground in 2016, will have 50-75 permanent jobs for residents.

The placement program (Portal) would consist of a staff person or two who would be responsible for interfacing between the providers and the employers. A family foundation has committed $20,000, which would need a match, and the SWP has entered into discussions with the Weinberg Foundation asking for $80,000.

Collaboration: The Roundtable will also provide more opportunities for the programs to work collaboratively and get to know other organizations, and learn from successes and struggles, share resources that will strengthen every organization. A question was raised about how this collaboration would look--one of the ways could be that the programs would identify a need affecting all of their clients and work together to identify ways to address that need.

The Roundtable discussed challenges in finding people who were ready to work and interested in a program, and challenges in outreach even to neighbors of programs.

Marvin explained that in his experience workforce development takes a long time and providers have to make themselves available to clients. He uses a lot of social media to recruit clients, and because the structure of his program (a two week comprehensive job readiness program which runs sequentially) the program and recruitment becomes systematic.

The Roundtable continued to discuss ways in which the workforce programs could collaborate.

Michael: three things that he heard discussed around the table were the need for:

1. accountability: sharing numbers and information about programs
2. support: including fundraising, recruiting board members, etc.
3. collaboration: so when large grants are available, such as the federal grants for Tech Training that One Baltimore is looking to focus in an area of the city, the SWP area has a strong case.

Barrier Removal (expungement, transportation, etc.) was suggested as an agenda item for the next meeting

**‘Portal’ Program Update**: the SWP needs commitments from each of the programs in the area that they will use/partner with the portal program so that when the SWP applies for grants they can share that information. The ‘portal director’ will be the point of contact between the employers and the workforce programs, will (along with Case Managers) provide support to placed residents, and will maintain the database which will provide feedback to the providers.

The SWP will send each of the providers background on and information about the program and ask for a letter of support.

**Anchor Initiatives and Programs**

The University of Maryland Medical System is partnering with the Department of Social Services to provide training and placement in environmental services to people who are receiving Temporary Cash Assistance. They have 20 slots to fill (10 per cycle) and the positions pay $10.74 an hour.

They are also working with the Healthcare Careers Alliance and are accepting 10 slots for 16-24 year olds who are out of the school and looking to get into healthcare.

UMMS would like to recruit from the neighborhood for these programs to eliminate the transportation barrier.

UMB, UMMS and other anchor institutions are working with Humanim on an administrative assistant job training program. The training is intensive and unpaid, but folks who complete it will be placed in entry level positions at the anchor institutions, which have great benefits including strong continuing education benefits.

**Workforce Needs Assessment**: The results have not been tallied yet, but about half of the survey teams were present at the meeting. Reported results have included:

* Small businesses are in need of a ready source of capital to make improvements,
* Employers generally have not had good experiences with job placement and temp agencies,
* Businesses struggle sometimes because government agencies are obliged to buy from lowest bidder and don’t get extra points for being local, and
* Many small businesses have their starting salary at the minimum wage.

Lisa thinks that it would be a good idea for the Roundtable to produce a position paper on how very low starting salaries will lead to turnover. The needs assessment team will review the results of the survey create a product to share with the group.

The next step will be an assessment of the workforce providers. Adenike and Marvin will develop a self-assessment, the results of which will be used to develop a one on one survey guide.

**Wrap-Up**

Michael: two things to be aware of

1. He has been meeting with two companies who would like to move to the area, bringing jobs with them but it is apparent that the SWP cannot use existing real estate in SW Baltimore to attract jobs without a fund to help businesses make needed improvements of their properties and cover differences in assessed values.
2. The SWP has engaged Profiles to be their public relations firm. Any and all good news stories--events, graduations, job successes, should be sent to Elizabeth ([elizabeth@southwestpartnershipbaltimore.org](http:///h)) to be sent to Profiles