

## **Worcester Jobs Fund Oversight Committee**

August 8, 2018

10:00 am

CMWIB, 340 Main Street Suite 400 Worcester, MA 01608

### **Meeting Minutes**

WJF Oversight Committee Attendance: Karen Pelletier, David Minasian, Maritza Cruz, Karen King, Frank Kartheiser, and Jeffrey Turgeon.

WJF Program Director: Kelsey Lamoureux

- The meeting was called to order after a quorum was established.

Welcome and Introductions:

- All attendees introduced themselves, their positions and their organizations.

Approval of Consent Agenda:

- The Consent Agenda including the meeting minutes from July 11, 2018 at 242 Mill Street, the monthly Financial Report, and the Director's Report were reviewed and unanimously accepted via a motion by F. Kartheiser and a second by K. King.

Discussion of FY 19 Planning:

- K. Lamoureux presented labor market data for Central MA relevant to the annual planning for Worcester Jobs Fund programming. F. Kartheiser noted that the minimum wage will rise to \$15 per hour by 2023 and future planning by the committee should consider this information. J. Turgeon noted that this increase in wages is accompanied by the elimination of time and a half pay on Sundays and increased pressure to consider possible wage increases for industries that currently pay above minimum wage.
- J. Turgeon highlighted the key takeaways from the Central MA Regional Workforce Blueprint, 2018-2022. It was also noted that the work of the Jobs Fund is already aligned with the top three regional workforce priorities and top occupational groups identified in the blueprint.
- K. Lamoureux opened the conversation about various industries and occupations to consider. J. Turgeon noted that there is currently a labor market shortage for medical secretary positions and a local school building a curriculum to train individuals with this skill. D. Minasian noted that many clerical positions often benefit from on-the-job training and K. Lamoureux suggested exploring offering a short course accompanied by a few weeks of internship for this industry. K. King explained that this profession would be an attractive option for clients residing in shelter and M. Cruz agreed that many local bilingual candidates would be well suited for these positions.
- F. Kartheiser suggested increased employer engagement with local CDL companies, especially to those who are currently offering sign-on bonuses and appear to have a high need for qualified

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drivers. J. Turgeon suggested exploring the entry level mental health occupations such as residential counselors as another program option. J. Turgeon also suggested drafting a press release to inform local employers about the opportunities for increased collaboration with the Worcester Jobs Fund.

- K. Lamoureux noted that some industries such as IT and HVAC appear to be in high demand, but large education costs prevent the Jobs Fund from sponsoring a class in this area. M. Cruz noted that many individuals who receive the training necessary to enter these fields remain disconnected from available opportunities because of limited soft skills. K. Pelletier confirmed that local employers consistently stress the importance of increased soft skills amongst their workforce. K. Lamoureux suggested the Jobs Fund partner with local educational institutions such as local community colleges, trade schools, and non-profit organizations who are already offering skilled trainings in high demand occupations to assist Worcester residents with additional soft skills instruction and job search assistance. F. Kartheiser noted the importance of screening participants for these services to ensure they are in the Jobs Fund's targeted population. K. Lamoureux suggested creating a participant application process similar to the current job training selection process that includes screening for income eligibility and residency. D. Minasian suggested collaborating with other organizations to evaluate the current placement gap for local programs. K. Lamoureux noted that by partnering with other job training organizations, the Jobs Fund could increase services offered to unemployed and underemployed clients and leverage local, state, and federal funding to serve additional clients.

Adjourn:

- A motion to adjourn was made by J. Turgeon, was seconded by K. Pelletier and was unanimously approved.

The next monthly meeting will be held Wednesday September 12, 2018 at 10:00 a.m.