

MINNESOTA SHARED VISION FOR YOUTH



SVY STATE TEAM MEETING Friday, September 20, 2013 9:30 am to Noon

LOCATION:

Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Twin Cities
2550 University Ave W, Suite 410N
St. Paul, MN 55114

MEETING NOTES

1. Welcome and Introductions

The following team members and guests attended the meeting: Cate Smith Edlund (Job Corps); Carrie Wasley (DPS-Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee); Alyssa Klein (DEED-Vocational Rehabilitation Services); Kathleen Hiniker (DHS-Adolescent Services); Lynn Douma, Nancy Waisanen and Larry Eisenstadt (DEED–Youth Services); Jayne Spain (MDE–Special Education Policy); Joe Baldwin (Junior Achievement); Brad Hasskamp (MDE-Adult Basic Education); Jenny Javitch (Big Brothers Big Sisters); Mary DesJarlais (DOLI – Apprenticeship); Nora Slawik and Melva Radtke (Autism Society of MN); Eric Billiet (MDE-Safe and Healthy Learners); Rick Roy (DEED-Workforce Systems Coordination)

2. Presentation from Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Twin Cities

Jenny Javitch from Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Twin Cities (BBBSGTC) provided the group with a brief overview of their services. BBBSGTC serves Hennepin, Ramsey, Northern Dakota and Washington Counties. The organization is traditionally known for their one-on-one community-based mentoring emphasis. Young people (“Littles”) are between the ages of 7-12 when they are first matched with a mentor (“Bigs”). They also have a school-based mentoring program in certain schools in their service area where high school students are matched with younger students. BBBSGTC also has a local Education and Enrichment program which is an add-on to the mentoring component for Littles ages 12-18 and their mentors and focuses on college access, workforce readiness and teen pregnancy prevention. BBBSGTC has found they have a niche in helping strengthen adult-child communication so their programming helps the Bigs support the Littles and their families in learning about these important topics. More information about the agency is available on their website: www.bigstwincities.org.

3. Presentation on WorkForce Center Online Services

Rick Roy from DEED’s Workforce Systems Coordination Office provided an overview of a project underway to bring the services of the WorkForce Center System, particularly the services of the resource areas which are available to all job seekers, to a larger audience through the use of online services. The idea is that job seekers will be able to complete a brief self-assessment online and be directed to the kinds of information and services that will be most relevant to them in their job search and career

planning. The intent is not to recreate sites that already exist but to integrate the information from multiple sources and provide a list of action steps that customers can take. They recognize that it is not feasible to create one site that meets the needs of all job seekers so they are considering how multiple portals designed to meet specific needs of system partners might serve a better purpose (i.e. Adult Basic Education, youth, etc.). Updates will be provided to the SVY team as the project progresses.

4. Autism Society of Minnesota (AuSM) Youth Employment Initiatives

Nora Slawik and Melva Radtke from AuSM shared information about the organization and their educational offerings for youth with autism. They highlighted a series of social skills classes for youth and young adults: Zoo Skillz, Art Skillz, Improv Skillz, and Job Skillz. Individuals on the autism spectrum face specific social challenges as part of their disability, with difficulty understanding social cues, making eye contact, etc. The Job Skillz program combines social skills training with job search strategies to improve the participants' social interaction skills, organization skills and executive function skills. Information about these classes and many other educational opportunities is available on the agency's website: www.ausm.org.

Nora also encouraged SVY team members to consider attending the upcoming "Autism & Employment Forum" on 10/24/13. Part of the day's events includes an information fair where individuals with autism who are seeking employment can gather techniques for resume writing and interviewing, participate in job-focused instructional sessions and access information resources. Additional information can be found on the AuSM website.

5. Minnesota Youth Council's Youth Advisory Committee to the Minnesota Department of Education

Eric Billiet from MDE's Office of Safe and Healthy Learners shared information with the team about the Department's Youth Advisory Committee. The Governor ordered the creation of a Youth Advisory Committee to MDE in the 2011-12 school year. The Department reached out to the Minnesota Alliance with Youth about using members of the Minnesota Youth Council as the MDE Youth Advisory Committee (YAC). Eric talked about the process of developing a committee that would have meaningful involvement from the youth and therefore be beneficial to the young people as well as the agency. The YAC (youth only) meets several times a year with the MDE Commissioner to share their insights and on a regular basis with their adult mentors.

6. Minnesota's Proposal for Model Intervention for Youth and Young Adults with Child Welfare Involvement At-Risk of Homelessness

Kathleen Hiniker from DHS reported that the agency has applied for a two-year planning grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, to build the capacity of Minnesota's child welfare system to prevent long-term homelessness among the most at-risk youth and young adults with child welfare involvement. The proposed project would design statewide strategies for ending youth homelessness that directly target youth/young adults in the following groups: 1) adolescents who enter foster care between ages 14 and 17; 2) young adults aging out of foster care; and 3) homeless youth/young adults with foster care histories up to age 21. The proposed project would focus on producing positive outcomes in the areas of: stable housing, permanent connections, education/employment, and social-emotional well-being.

Minnesota has requested a \$720,000 planning grant (\$260,000 per year for 2 years) and if successful will be eligible to apply for an implementation grant of up to \$1,000,000 per year for five years. Update: DHS learned in early October that they have been awarded the planning grant.

7. Registered Apprenticeship Update

Mary DesJarlais, Office of Apprenticeship, Department of Labor and Industry, provided an overview of career preparation through the apprenticeship training system. Mary's focus is on reducing the disparities in apprenticeship which has historically been dominated by white males. There are increasing opportunities in apprenticeship due to upcoming retirements of baby boomers, several large construction projects underway or forthcoming (Vikings stadium, St. Paul Saints stadium, light rail construction, etc.) and the updated goals established by the Minnesota Department of Human Rights for the percentage of total hours of employment and training of women and minorities on state-funded construction projects. Apprenticeship is an excellent option for hands-on learners and provides an opportunity to complete training with no tuition debt while earning standard graduated training wages, health and retirement benefits. She encourages team members to spread the word about apprenticeship as a viable training and career option and is happy to work with other SVY team members to promote apprenticeship.

8. Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) - Partners for Youth Update

Lynn Douma from DEED's Office of Youth Development updated the team on the progress of the DEI project, Partners for Youth. Minnesota is nearing the end of the first year of a three-year federal grant from the Department of Labor to facilitate significant improvements in the delivery of workforce development services to individuals with disabilities. Minnesota's grant is focused on youth, ages 14-24, with a disability and at least one additional risk factor (such as foster youth, teen parents, homeless youth, out-of-school youth, potential dropouts, juvenile offenders). The project began enrolling youth in August. An informational sheet about the project, including the three implementation site regions and the key service delivery strategies was included in the meeting packet and is available from the project website:

http://www.positivelyminnesota.com/All_Programs_Services/Office_of_Youth_Development/MN_DEI/index.aspx

9. Update on Job Corps

Cate Smith Edlund from the Humphrey Job Corps Center provided an update on the Center's enrollments. Due to sequestration, the Center is down from 292 slots to 228. There are currently some openings available. The Center hosts a tour and information session every Thursday at 8:30 am. Anyone who is interested in learning more about Job Corps is welcome to attend. The Humphrey Job Corps Center website is <http://huberthumphrey.jobcorps.gov/Home.aspx>

10. Update on Transition to New GED Test

Brad Hasskamp, Adult Basic Education Policy Specialist at MDE, provided a handout with frequently asked questions about the new 2014 GED Test. The new GED test will be used as of 1/2/14. Test takers who have not passed all tests of the 2002 GED as of 1/1/14 will need to restart GED registration, payment and testing under the 2014 test. It is not possible to earn a GED credential by passing some 2002 tests and some 2014 tests. The new test will also be given exclusively on the computer, except in very limited circumstances where an exception is given. The test is also timed but there may be accommodations given such as extended time to take the test if warranted.

Brad updated the team on a few issues of concern that MDE is working on related to the GED:

- 1) A major reduction in the number of designated testing centers. There are only about 15 approved testing centers in Minnesota for the 2014 GED. This is down from 50-100 centers for the 2002 GED. Many of the current centers have not reapplied because the requirements/process of being designated are more difficult for the new GED.

- 2) Preparing students adequately for the new format, which is online and more rigorous than the current version. Minnesota is ahead of other states in test preparation, but it is still a concern.
- 3) American Radio Works produced a documentary on the GED which aired on Minnesota Public Radio and contained misleading information about the GED in general. MDE is working to get a retraction and follow up story produced.