



AUGUST 2010 *Local Government Council*

WIB and DOL Workforce Development Programs & Services

By Kimberly G. Finnigan, Esq.
Cooper Erving & Savage, LLP

On June 22, 2010, Gail Breen, Executive Director of the Fulton Montgomery Schoharie Counties Workforce Investment Board; Dan Gentile, Executive Director of the Capital Region Workforce Investment Board; and Ann Luby, Commissioner's Capital Region Representative, New York State Department of Labor, joined the Local Government Council to highlight programs offered by the Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) and Department of Labor (DOL). In answering the question as to why workforce development is critical to our communities, Mr. Gentile responded that workforce development is economic development.

CEG in collaboration with its partners has succeeded in its mission to attract high technology companies to the area. As a result, the region is in the midst of significant change in the composition of its workforce and demand occupations and faces the challenge of developing a workforce system that can effectively respond to these changes and new opportunities. Regional initiatives are underway that will offer solutions, including career mapping, developing industry-specific training programs, and addressing the "soft skills" companies are requiring.

The WIBs' services are delivered primarily through One Stop Career Centers, which offer universally accessible, integrated systems of labor market information and education programs. Services include job search assistance (resumes, interviewing), employee search assistance for

employers, a resource library (including computers), free office resources (telephone, fax, copies), support services, and training. For example, Career Centers offer the Department of Labor's ground-breaking, web-based Skills Matching and Referral Technology (SMART) 2010 program that analyzes resumes for skills and work experience, then electronically contacts unemployed New Yorkers via e-mail, recommending area job openings based on past work history, experience and skills. Once a resume is completed in an electronic format, a Labor Department counselor will feed the resume into the SMART 2010 system. Within 24 hours of submitting a resume, the individual will receive an e-mail containing 1 to 10 job matches from the Department of Labor's database of employment opportunities.

According to recent statistics, currently about 62% of all jobs are high pay, high skills jobs. This percentage is expected to increase to about 74%. To put this number in perspective, in 1956, only about 5% of jobs were in advanced manufacturing. Therefore, it is imperative that our region collaborate in private/public endeavors to assure that where there are jobs available, there will be a cohort of people who are trained and capable of filling those jobs. Representatives from government, economic development agencies, educational institutions, and businesses agree that in order to increase the skill level of our population to the point where we can meet the 74% need, we must focus our efforts starting as early as the K-12 level. >>

Year in Review

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This newsletter wraps up another successful and informative year for LGC members. Members had the opportunity to hear from and network with not only their peers but with experts from around the region, state, and world. Speakers included: (1) Joseph Garba, Deputy Director, and James Hanson, Director of Regional Affairs, NYS Office of Taxpayer Accountability (program

highlights); (2) Brian McMahon, Executive Director, NYSEDC; Peter Wohl, Regional Director, ESDC (Empire Zone program and alternatives); (3) EJ McMahon, Director, Empire Center for New York State Policy; Peter Baynes, Executive Director, NYCOM; Timothy Kremer, Executive Director, NYSSBA (pension reform); (4) Margaret Moore, Director of Federal Affairs, Business Council of New York State (budget and economic development implications of health care costs); (5) Sandra Allen, Director of >>

The Local Government Council (LGC) was founded in 1997 to give local government leaders a forum to identify issues of importance to municipalities, to discuss opportunities for regional cooperation and to foster working relationships among local leaders.



Co-Chair
Gerald D. Jennings
Mayor of Albany



Co-Chair
Kathleen M. Jimino
Rensselaer County
Executive

Upcoming LGC Meetings

Speaker: Gerald Benjamin, Distinguished Professor of Political Science at SUNY New Paltz

Topic: NY State Constitutional Convention
September 28th 2010 | 11:30am – 1:15pm
United Way of the Greater Capital Region, Albany

Speaker: Dr. John B. King, Jr., Senior Deputy Commissioner for P-12 Education, NY State Education Department

Topic: P-12 Education Initiatives
October 26th 2010 | 11:30am – 1:15pm
United Way of the Greater Capital Region, Albany

Membership Matters

Membership ensures CEG has the funding to continue to staff the Local Government Council with topics and presenters that engage and educate the members on key issues, in addition to supporting continued regional growth activities in the 11-county region.

To join, contact Brian Hannafin, Executive Vice President of Business Development and Marketing at brianh@ceg.org or (518) 465 - 8975



WIB & DOL Services Cont'd

While helpful, it is not enough to focus solely on the underemployed, unemployed, and recently graduated population for the workforce pipeline that current industry demands. WIBs are also turning their attention to ex-offenders, disabled workers, and retirees who either do not want to, or cannot, retire. The major challenge facing education and training of the K-12 population will be modifying parents', teachers' and guidance counselors' perceptions that a four-year college program is always the best bet.

The WIBs are faced with the challenge of training the workforce with less money. With significant decreases in funding and an increase in the number of individuals served, the question whether our region will have the funding to train a high tech workforce when we need it cannot be ignored. For example, Ms. Breen stated that the Fulton Montgomery Schoharie Counties WIB has only 52% of the funding it had in 2002. The quandary is whether it is best to serve the same number of people with less dollars and a lower level of service, or serve less people with the same number of dollars and level of service.

To address the soft skills needs of employers, the WIBs are collaborating to create a common "work readiness" credential or certification program that will demonstrate to employers that the individual is prepared to handle the intangible aspects of the job. At a minimum, these skills will include taking responsibility, arriving promptly, staying all day, respecting management and colleagues, and understanding workplace privacy issues.

Some initiatives also include teacher externship programs with Tech Valley High and with CareerZone, an innovative online career exploration and planning system designed especially for today's high tech youth in New York State. CareerZone presents relevant occupational and labor market information in a clear and interesting way, making career exploration and planning fun and easy. CareerZone provides information on 800 occupations, the latest labor market information from the DOL, and interactive middle and high

school career portfolios aligned with the NYS Education Department Career Plan initiative. Links to college exploration and planning resources help youth begin their life/work journey. Over 450 career videos provide a visual of the workplace and bring careers to life. Up-to-date job postings provide a glimpse into the local labor market and the ability to apply for positions. The expanded resume builder helps youth prepare one of the most important tools needed for a successful job search. To access the system, go to <http://www.careerzone.ny.gov/stemventure/>. Organizations are also exploring Second Life, <http://secondlife.com>, as a resource for creating virtual workplaces, classrooms and laboratories to demonstrate what a typical day in a high tech job may entail and to teach students and job seekers certain skills required for those jobs.

Ms. Luby explained that as part of the Department of Labor's Government Relations Office, she and her staff offer no-charge services that help align workforce development with economic development. Her office offers a monthly Labor Market Overview newsletter, business attraction services (including packages tailored to specific businesses with information on commuting patterns, workforce availability, etc.), useful data for grant applications, advertising to fill job openings, and constituent services.

Particularly useful to many regional businesses is the DOL's On-the-Job Training (OJT) program, available to businesses to encourage new hiring (especially of individuals who are long-term unemployed) and assist with the training needs of these new hires. An OJT grant reimburses up to 30% of the newly hired trainee's pay until the employee is proficient in his or her new job. Another 20% of pay is allowed if the newly hired employee has been unemployed for a long period of time, for a total of 50%. This helps the employer cover the high cost of training. \$2.8 million in federal funds have been set aside to support the OJT Program. These funds are made available to the State under the federal government's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Private sector, for-profit and not-for-profit businesses are eligible to apply for up to \$50,000 in OJT grants. Each training plan is capped at \$5,000 per trainee. Intermediaries that represent a

business membership are also eligible. The training must take place at a physical business location in New York State. The job the employee is training for must be a full-time job (35 hours or more per week) and pay at least \$10.00 an hour. Businesses interested in more information about applying for On-the-Job Training grants should send an email to: StateOJT@labor.ny.gov. □

Year in Review Cont'd

Policy and Planning, NYS EFC; William Flaherty, Regional Executive Director for Energy Solutions Services, National Grid; Mary Ivey, Regional Director, NYS DOT (infrastructure challenges facing municipalities); (6) Rick Whitney, President and CEO, M+W Americas; Michael Russo, Director, U.S. Governmental Relations and Regulatory Affairs, GLOBALFOUNDRIES; Tricia King, Tenant Liaison, STEP/NYSERDA (economic impact of GLOBALFOUNDRIES chip fab update); (7) Dr. Carolyn Curtis, VP Academic Affairs, HVCC; Dean Philip White, School of Business and School of Engineering and Industrial Technology, HVCC; Denise Brucker, Acting Dean of Workforce Development, SCCC; Penny Haynes, Dean of Academic Affairs, SCCC; Dr. Greg Truckenmiller, Provost and VP of Academic Affairs, FMCC (workforce development programs at regional community colleges); (8) Dr. Martin Gillo, Parliament Member and Former Minister of Economic Affairs, Saxony, Germany; David Lawrence, Principal, Lawrence Resources, Hillsboro, Oregon (lessons learned from regional technology clusters in Germany and Oregon); and (9) Gail Breen, Executive Director, Fulton Montgomery Schoharie Counties WIB; Dan Gentile, Executive Director, Capital Region WIB; Ann Luby, Commissioner's Capital Region Representative, NYS DOL (WIB and DOL program updates).

Also included at each meeting were legislative updates and summaries about relevant issues for the LGC, including legal developments in land use and development, government affairs, revitalization and grant opportunities, and high speed rail funding. □

