

Strengthening Youth Partnerships in Florida: *Summary of Initial Meeting*

At the initiation of the First Jobs/First Wages Council of Workforce Florida, Inc. (WFI), a statewide meeting of agencies and organizations responsible for delivering youth programs was held in Destin, Florida July 31-August 1, 2003. The purpose of the meeting was clear: **“To enhance communication, coordination and planning among key organizations that play a role in developing Florida’s youth, particularly in the area of workforce skill attainment.”** At the request of WFI, *Market Street Services* provided research and facilitation services for the two-day meeting.

During the two-day meeting, more than two-dozen representatives from state agencies, nonprofit organizations, the business community, and educational institutions shared their perspectives and concerns about youth development in Florida (see page two for the full lists of meeting invitees and attendees). A summary of discussions and decisions from the meeting is provided below.

A Definition of Youth

Much of the discussion surrounding this topic was based on how different funding streams define youth. Meeting participants were asked to consider the different sources of funding behind various programs and services their

organizations and agencies deliver, and identify a target about funding streams led the group to determine that, while youth refers to anyone ages 0-24, resources might be maximized if the **collaborative effort focuses primarily on youth in a 14-24 age category.**

Expectations of Youth Partners:

- √ Create a synergy between agencies and organizations that prepare youth to participate in the world of work to reap positive results for both Florida’s youth and the participating agencies and organizations.
- √ Clearly define or redefine each agency’s role to contribute the most to value-added services so that public funds are invested wisely and not duplicated.
- √ Develop action-oriented approaches that will produce tangible results.
- √ Accrue more federal funds for the state through joint efforts.
- √ Identify shared priorities, strategies, gaps in services and action plans.
- √ Identify common challenges and strategies for serving the most at-risk youth.
- √ Develop a policy framework serving youth.

Overall Goal of Youth Partners

“Do everything possible to ensure every young person in Florida is ready and able to pursue a meaningful job path.”

Potential Gaps in Youth Programs:

1. Career counseling
2. Work experience opportunities for students
3. Career exposure for teachers
4. Information on existing programs
5. Funding
6. Aptitude testing
7. Awareness of the education/prosperity connection
8. Matching education and training to existing jobs
9. Awareness of the benefits of career and technical education

Potential Overlaps in Youth Programs:

1. Career counseling
2. Educating juvenile-justice youth
3. Program delivery by school districts and workforce investment boards
4. The delivery of multiple programs to “repeat” clients
5. Efforts to provide work experience opportunities to Florida’s youth

Key Issues Facing Youth Partners:

1. The training and education systems should be demand-driven.
2. Funding sources for youth development and career readiness programs need to be closely examined, particularly as they concern leveraging available funding, finding new sources of funding, and adjusting to federal funding changes.
3. Participants felt strongly that public policies related to youth workforce development should be clear and well-directed.
4. Cultural values were considered to be an integral component of the collaborative effort.
5. Finally, youth partners agreed that additional collaboration and networking among youth program providers is needed in order to fully understand all available resources and avoid gaps and overlaps in system delivery.

List of Participants

- David Armstrong, Department of Education/WFI Board
 - Curtis Austin, Workforce Florida, Inc.
 - William Bankhead, Department of Juvenile Justice/WFI Board
 - Charles Chervanik, Department of Juvenile Justice
 - Lonna Cichon, Department of Children and Families
 - J.B. Clark, Florida Electrical Workers Association/WFI Board
 - Nancy Cordill, Department of Education
 - Loretta Costin, Department of Vocational Education
 - Bruce Grant, Office of Drug Control
 - Lynda Hartnig, Department of Education
 - Cindy Keil, Department of Children and Families
 - Gary Leiffers, Lobbyist/Florida Chamber
 - Dehryl McCall, Agency for Workforce Innovation
 - Judy Meyer, Agency for Workforce Innovation
 - Mike Nilsson, Pasco County Health Department/WFI Board
 - Susan Pareigis, Agency for Workforce Innovation/WFI Board
 - Reuben Patrick, Agency for Workforce Innovation
 - David Pierson, Pierson A/C & Electrical Contractors/WFI Board
 - Susan Simpler, Agency for Workforce Innovation
 - Sharon Watley, General Scientific Manufacturing/WFI Board
 - Senator Stephen Wise, Florida Senate
- Workforce Florida, Inc. staff:**
- Andra Cornelius
 - Rosanne Heard
 - Freida Sheffield
- Market Street Services staff:**
- J. Mac Holladay
 - Kathy Young

List of Invitees

John O. Agwunobi, M.D., MBA, Secretary
Department of Health
Tallahassee, FL

Jim Horne, Secretary
Department of Education
Tallahassee, FL

David Pierson, President
Pierson A/C & Electrical Contractors
Jacksonville, FL

William Bankhead, Secretary
Department of Juvenile Justice
Tallahassee, FL

Jerry Regier, Secretary
Florida Dept. of Children & Families
Tallahassee, FL

Larry Strickler, Regional Manager
Bell South
Orlando, FL

Susan Pareigis
AWI Director
Tallahassee, FL

Frank Ryll, Jr., President
Florida Chamber of Commerce
Tallahassee, FL

Gail Campbell
Gov.'s Drug Free Communities
Tallahassee, FL

Ruben Patrick, State Coordinator
USDOL Job Corps
Tallahassee, FL

Joe Stephens
Youth Apprenticeship Coordinator
Department of Education
Tallahassee, FL

Jill Canono, Director
Volunteer Florida
Tallahassee, FL

J. B. Clark, Legislative Director
Florida Electrical Workers Assn.
Tallahassee, FL

William Mayville, President
Temp USA
Coral Gables, FL

Ana Lopez, Vice President
Camilo Office Furniture
Miami, FL

Nancy Cordill, Bureau Chief
Division of Workforce Dev.
Tallahassee, FL

Liza McFadden
Governor's Mentoring Initiative
Tallahassee, FL

Dr. Bill Maloy, Director
UWF, Office of Community Learning
Pensacola, FL

Loretta Costin, Division Director
Vocational Rehabilitation
Tallahassee, FL

Judy Meyer
Agency for Workforce Innovation
Tallahassee, FL

Senator Stephen Wise
The Florida Senate
Jacksonville, FL

James McDonough, Director
Governor's Office of Drug Control
Tallahassee, FL

Michael Nilsson
Pasco County Health Department
Dunedin, FL

Lynda Keever, Publisher
Florida Trend
St. Petersburg, FL

Ray Gilley, Board Chair
Workforce Florida Board
Orlando, FL

Mary Laura Openshaw, Director
Just Read, Florida
Tallahassee, FL