

**Youth Committee Conference Call
Meeting Minutes
April 14, 2020**

The NCI Works Youth Committee Meeting was called to order at 4:02 p.m. by Chair Teresa Strum. Roll call was taken.

Name	Present	Absent	Name	Present	Absent
Tera Armstrong	X		Beth Hubbard	X	
Jim Carlson		X	Aurora Medina		X
Emlee Dooley		X	Sarah McFarlane	X	
Abby Farrell	X		Kris Noble	X	
Jill Guynn		X	Teresa Strum	X	
Sally Hanrahan	X		Justin Wiggins		X

Others Present: Pam Furlan, Jo Ann Johnson, Dianna Schuler

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Kris Noble motioned to approve the October 8, 2019 Meeting Minutes. Motion was seconded by Teresa Strum and carried.

Business Meeting

Update on Current Youth Providers

Sally informed members that update on the current Youth Providers was included with the meeting materials. She said that the report indicates the number of youth enrolled through the end of March. She said that she also included some information on each of the projects letting members know how the programs are doing in light of the COVID 19 crisis. Sally said that although instructors are not able to meet with the students in person they are connecting with them on a continual basis through electronic means. As an example, Sally said that the Education Outreach Program is meeting with students through Zoom. Beth commented that they have made some adjustments in meeting with the students since most of them prefer to meet with the instructor one-on-one and not in a group setting. She told members that the Education Outreach Program is now scheduling individual appointment to meet with their students.

Sally noted that some of the youth providers have indicated that the students do not have the technology they need to connect with the instructors. Beth concurred saying that I-Pathways (online high school equivalency test prep program) is difficult to use with cellular phones. She said that even with the devices that the students have they do not have the capability of connecting to by a telephone or WIFI therefore making it difficult for them to work on their projects. Beth said that for their program they are also sending the students packets with things for them to do in order to continue with their studies. She also noted that one of the instructors is communicating with the students through Facebook and Facebook messenger. Instructors, Beth said, are learning to be creative to connect with their students but it is difficult with technology and they are reluctant to use it. Sarah said that the instructors at SVCC are using Zoom and Google Hangouts as well as mailing packets to students to try to keep them motivated. She said that at this time, GED tests are not being given, although they are looking at creating a home test. Sarah said that she understands that the student would need laptop with camera so

that it would be proctored. Sally commented that some of her students received a survey from GED asking them if they had the availability of computer, camera, WIFI and internet connection speed. Pam stated that a family member who attends school at the University of Iowa had to show the proctor around her room to using her cell phone to ensure the requirements for the testing was in compliance with the guidelines established.

Contract Modification from Bureau Henry Stark Regional Office of Education

Pam informed members that the Bureau, Henry Stark Regional Office of Education has submitted a request to modify their PY 19 contract. She said that a copy of their official letter of request was included with the meeting materials. Pam told members that our policy states that if any youth provider has any changes to key personnel that are a part of the contract that a modification needs to be submitted and approved by the Youth Committee and NCI Works. In the case of Bureau, Henry Stark Regional Office of Education, they did have a change in key personnel and it was confirmed that the new individual does meet the qualifications for the position. Pam noted that this change was effective February 24, 2020. Teresa Strum motioned to approve the modification request from Bureau Henry Stark Regional Office of Education effective February 24, 2020. Motion was seconded by Sally Hanrahan and carried.

Youth Committee Initiative

Pam told members that she participated in a webinar earlier today and learned that the Youth Apprenticeship Notice of Funding Opportunities will be available soon. She reminded members that a while ago the Youth Committee did talk about establishing pre-apprenticeships for youth linking them with Area Career Centers and possibly University of Illinois Extension Services throughout the area. Pam said that the NOFO for that type of program has not yet been released, but it appears that they are still pushing for apprenticeship opportunities. She said that once staff receive the NOFO they will review it to see if it's applicable to the types of programs and services the local area was hoping to establish. Pam said that hopefully, this topic could be addressed at the next Youth Committee meeting.

Youth Work-Based Learning Expenditure

Pam reported that as of February 29, 2020 the required Work Based Learning expenditure percentage was at 28.6%. Projecting out to June 30, Pam said that with all of the changes we have been experiencing due to the COVID-19 crisis we are just under 20% (19.3%). Depending on how long the State continues the Stay in Place order, Pam said that we may be able to increase the projected percentage if we would have enough time for summer activities.

Pam also noted that the Department of Labor is actively considering suspending expenditure requirements for the WIOA program. Since WIOA is a national program, they recognize that the COVID-19 crisis is making it very challenging to meet the expenditure requirements. Locally, Pam said that we are hovering just under 20% so we are not too far off from the requirement.

Review & Approval of PY 2020 Youth Projects

Sally reminded members that Request for Proposals (RFPs) were submitted to potential youth providers in February. She said that they were given the opportunity to put together a project and submit their proposal by the middle of March. Sally said that 4 projects were received. Three of the projects were from the current providers and 1 was from West Carroll School District. She said that the proposal from

West Carroll did not meet the minimum specifications of the proposal, but they are interested in hiring summer workers. Sally said that staff will reach out to West Carroll School District as soon as they are back in session to work with them to get them some workers.

In reviewing the changes to the Request for Proposal for PY 20, Sally said that WIOA requires us to make available 14 services or “elements” to youth. In the past, she said, we have included all 14 elements in the RFP and asked bidders to address each one of those elements. This year, we chose to remove two elements from the list. Those two elements are paid work experiences and occupational training. Sally told members that youth will still be able to get those services but going forward they will be provided by BEST staff instead of contractors.

The other change we made this year in the RFP was to request that bidders provide information about duplication of services. WIOA emphasizes non-duplication of services among workforce partners so if a proposal is written to include services that are provided through a partnering program, then we asked bidders to explain how duplication of services are not being offered.

Pam informed members that PY 20 Allocations have not been released, so funding for the proposed projects would be conditional based on funding levels.

Sally pointed out that the project’s rating summaries were included with the meeting materials. She then provided members with an overview of each of the projects.

Bureau Henry Stark Regional Office of Education

Sally said that the Step Ahead project will provide high school equivalency instruction and credit recovery to youth who live in Bureau County. She said that they will also provide follow up services to youth who have completed the program and have been exited from the program. Sally told members that 4 reviewers recommended approving the proposal for next year with negotiations and one person recommended approval. Summarizing some the comments, Sally said that it looks like that the proposal did not explain duplication of services as was requested and they listed 14 elements instead of just the 12 that was in the RFP. She said that there is also some confusion about the number of youth they intend to serve between new, carried forward and those in follow up. During discussion regarding the Step Ahead project, members suggested that prior to negotiations the provider be asked to address the concerns outlined by the raters. Pam stated that if the explanation is not appropriate then it can be discussed at the NCI Works meeting in May. Teresa Strum motioned to approve the Bureau Henry Stark Regional Office of Education proposal based on negotiations and addressing the issues discussed. Motion was seconded by Sarah McFarlane and carried. Beth Hubbard abstained from discussion and voting as she submitted a competitive proposal.

Regional Office of Education #35

Sally told members that the Regional Work Study project will provide credit recovery and follow up to youth who live in Putnam and LaSalle counties. She said that they have location at both campuses (Ottawa/Oglesby) of IL Valley Community College and the Mendota Library. She said that 3 reviewers recommended approving project with negotiations and two recommended approving the proposal as is. Sally said that comments include lowering costs. She said that there was also a comment asking “how youth who are 22-24 years old are served in this project. The proposal says that the State of Illinois will not award a high school diploma to anyone 22 or older?” Sally told members that when someone hits 22 years old, they are no longer eligible for a high school diploma but could earn a high school

equivalency. She said that Regional Work Study program only works with youth who are 21 and younger for that reason. Sally noted that once BEST receives their allocation all contractors will be asked to make changes to their budget. Teresa Strum motioned to approve the Regional Office of Education #35 proposal based on what was discussed and negotiations. Motion was seconded by Sally Hanrahan and carried. Beth Hubbard abstained from discussion and voting as she submitted a competitive proposal.

Regional Office of Education #47

The Education Outreach Program, Sally said, will provide high school equivalency preparation, work readiness and follow up to youth who live in Lee, Ogle and Whiteside counties. She said that 3 reviewers recommended approving the project with negotiations and two recommended approving the proposal as is. Sally told members that comments on this project include a question about using the American Job Center in Sterling for GED; a question about the number of hours staff work per week; and a comment that the allocation could affect available funding. Teresa, as one of the reviewers, commented that the Education Outreach Program proposal was very clear in determining the number of enrollments and funding request. Teresa Strum motioned to approve the Regional Office of Education #47 proposal based on negotiations. Motion was seconded by Kris Noble and carried. Beth Hubbard abstained from discussion and voting as she submitted a competitive proposal.

Sally reiterated her previous comment regarding the proposal submitted by West Carroll School District. She said that the provider did not meet minimum specifications for proposal to be considered. She said that they are looking to hire youth during the summer months in a work experience capacity. Sally told members that she and Judy Fitzpatrick of the BEST staff will follow up with them once they return from the COVID-19 crisis.

Other Business

COVID-19 Impact on our Youth Population in LWIA #4

For discussion purposes, Pam asked members for their comments and/or thoughts about developing a plan of action when we begin to recover from the COVID-19 crisis. Beth commented that they should have been more prepared for distance learning. She said that when the crisis hit, there was not a lot of time to prepare and they had to start from scratch. Kris noted that there are still a lot of barriers in rural Illinois in regards to widespread internet connections. Beth said that she was thinking more in terms of her students not being able to get to class and not have the capability of accessing the learning remotely. Sarah stated that for the students that are excelling in distance learning we should find a way to keep it going. Not all students, Sarah said, can function in this environment. She said that they (SVCC) have lost a lot of students due to fear and anxiety regarding distance learning. Members all agreed that the biggest challenge is available service for students. Not all have access to internet connection or their mobile devices have limited capabilities for such distance learning activities. Pam commented that some students have adapted well to distance learning while others have interruptions with children at home or remote access may not always be available. Pam said that there are pros and cons with distance learning and work-based learning activities. However, she said that we want to keep the options in the forefront since we have heard that a second wave is expected in the fall. Pam told members that everyone is participating in webinars to learn what can be done for the future and emails are received daily with up to date information. She asked members that if they have anything that they would like shared to send it to Jo Ann so that it could be included on the next meeting Agenda.

Public Comments

Teresa congratulated Pam on her upcoming retirement and asked if this would be her last meeting. Pam responding by saying that the BEST Board of Director's Search Committee was not able to conduct in-person interviews for the Executive Director position and therefore, she will be remaining with BEST, Inc. until May 29. Although this would be her last Youth Committee meeting, Pam said that she is hoping to see most of the members at the NCI Works meeting at the end of May. Teresa thanked Pam for extending her time and extended her appreciation for everything that Pam has done for the Youth Committee, NCI Works Board and its Executive Committee. Pam thanked Teresa for her kind words.

Adjournment

With there being no further business, Kris Noble motioned to adjourn. Motion was seconded by Teresa Strum and carried. Meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Jo Ann Johnson