

**Partners for a Prosperous Athens
May 22, 2006, Clarke Central High School
Workforce Citizen Committee
DRAFT SUMMARY**

The Partners for a Prosperous Athens Workforce Citizen Committee met for the third time on May 22, 2006 at Clarke Central. Chairman Clay Gilbert welcomed everyone to the meeting and briefly reviewed the previous meeting and work done throughout the month. At the previous meeting in April, committee members requested that a mission statement be created and sub-committees decided upon by the steering committee. Drafts of these had been made available via the Prosperous Athens website. Chairman Gilbert asked the committee members whether or not to adopt the mission statement. The members had some reservations about the language of the mission statement: for example it did not specifically address the poverty status of the workforce; it didn't explicitly address breaking the cycle of poverty; terminology used was too broad or not defined well; and it didn't address employers roles. Judy Goltzer read an alternate mission statement she had written. It was decided to table the mission statement discussion until the next meeting in order to give people a chance to consider the alternate mission statement. It is included below.

Workforce committee members were then introduced to the subgroup categories and asked to choose one of the four. Most members gravitated to the Skills Development and Special Populations groups. Each group chose a facilitator and note taker and spent time discussing issues and data needs. Toward the end of the meeting, each group presented a summary of their discussion to the rest of the workforce committee. The summaries are included below.

Original mission statement

Create implementation strategies to develop the ACC workforce so workers can find and keep jobs with wages that exceed the federal poverty level.

1. Workforce includes emerging workforce, existing workforce and nonworkers (those that have dropped out of the system).

Alternate mission statement

The Workforce Committee of the Partners for a Prosperous Athens seeks to reduce persistent poverty in the greater Athens area by focusing on employment initiatives that identify employment opportunities, match the under or unemployed to those positions and identify resources to improve skills and assist with barriers to employment.

These initiatives specifically focus on:

Identifying the skill requirements of current and potential employers in the greater Athens area;

Facilitating interviews between employers and skilled under and unemployed people;

Identifying job-training needs of under and unemployed people and improving their skills;

Identifying impediments to continuing employment including: attendance and work ethic, criminal history, child/elder care, drug abuse, disabilities, housing, money management, age, transportation;

Identifying sources for traditional and on the job training and coaching;

Identify and facilitating training, coaching and mentoring resources that support ongoing employment.

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WORKGROUP NOTES

Skills Development Workgroup

Attendees: Linda Lloyd, Anita F. Green, Luann Brown, Latosha Pittard, Wally Eberhard, Jim Wahlers, Jim Westphal, Don Duncan, Al Davison, Judy Goltzer, Jerry Barrow (facilitator), M. Goltzer (notes), Mike Ingram

Discussion Summary

Comments: divide prior feedback into Education, skills, Work Ethics, Survey Employers—training programs in place, needs.

- Need to identify needs of future employers, future industries.
- Basic skills of reading, writing, simple math
- Obtain data from Department of labor, Chamber of Commerce, etc. re: current and future work, skills, education needs.
- Liaison with education and economic development subcommittees
- Work ethic: mentoring

Data Needs

- Employer skill/education gap needs survey
- Forecast of future employer needs
- Survey of attitudes/work vision and skill sets of the unemployed/underemployed
- What data exists for unstated needs of employer, i.e. money management?
- Literacy level
- How many fail entrance requirements: physical, drug screen, background check?
- How many employers pay less than living wage? Who are they?

Actions to be taken

- Collect data
- Begin analysis

Review items not discussed: teen job training

Environment Workgroup

Attendees: Annette Nelson, Dexter Fisher, Monja Randolph (notes), Ed Graham

Discussion Summary

Perception of poverty is a road block and has been a roadblock for people in this community to rally addressing the root of poverty

We have decided that we need to gather more stats and gather information from employers re: adequacy of compensation, benefits and quality of working conditions, training, employer policies.

Include a survey of people's perception of poverty in relation to workforce

- Working poor, underemployed
- Employers

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How many working poor are there? What is the makeup? Who are they?

Data Needs

- Statistics on poverty
- Federal standards
- Athens cost of living
- Benefits
- How many poor people are working?

Actions to be taken

- Talk to employers

Special Populations Workgroup

Introductions

David Sweat: Judge

Magally Smith: Interpreter

Humberto: mechanic, plays music

Jesus

Homero

David Roman: UGA Professor, Romance Languages

Nicolas: student at UGA

Roberto: Trabaja con la comunidad (community volunteer); landscaping

Florindo: Build swimming pools

Javier: Landscaping

Jose: Construction

Luz: 7 months, MS, cannot find a job; studies English

Sean Gladden: artist, airbrush, portraits, acrylics, airbrush

Harriett Collins: DOL, ex-offenders (youth and adult)

Angie Moon de Avila: Clarke County School District

Former careers of participants: Lawyer, Hardware/Furniture Sales, Accountant, Agronomist, Engineer

**Many participants only wanted their first name included in the notes.*

Contact information for ensuring that Latino representatives are invited to the next meeting:

Nicolas Stanojevich – 770-757-9237, moose77@uga.edu

Luis Vega: 706-207-5109, levy1378582@yahoo.com

ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

WHAT CAN BE DONE FOR SPECIAL GROUPS SO THAT THEY MAY FIND/KEEP BETTER PAYING JOBS?

What do we consider Special Populations? (the group brainstormed a list of who the Special Populations group should address)

- Youth
- Seniors
- Ex-Offenders

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- Disabilities
- Undocumented / Documented Immigrants (minors and adults)
- Others? Single Mothers, Substance Abusers, High School Dropouts, People with Low Literacy Levels, Non-English Speakers

What are the things that keep the special pops from getting a job? Why do these groups have difficulty finding employment?

- EX: Home Depot – gave opp for people to get a job; solicitando que otros empresas pongan un sitio para que fuera gente; muchas contraccdores – se juntan todos (it was commented that the covered location outside of the Lowes is very crowded...when a contractor arrives for workers everyone crowds up...they suggested constructing a similar covered hut somewhere else to spread out more).
- Lot going on with **immigration issues** (way the president is handling the situation)
- Problem is people are under the radar...**hide and miss information** that need to get into the workforce; there are many resources but when **can't speak English, low literacy, lack of ed**, and therefore don't know about services
- **needs to be a better way for people to get information**; people stay out of the system, and later **get into the system the wrong way**; maybe you could get the info to the underworld (hiding from child support, the law, etc.)
- There are people who are not participating who are **afraid to engage** in traditional outlets (work, banking, housing)
- **Fear** what don't understand or know
- Ex Offenders: **80% in prison do not have a high school diploma**; employers will not hire them; when released **don't know what to do**...they have never worked;
- Some is part of the **employers perception/view point**; don't hire non-English speakers
- Hiding from child support
- One friend has a warrant – he should go to the public defenders office on Wed (have interpreter)
- We may have questions that need to be answered; if can talk about what info need to begin to develop solutions;

DATA NEEDS

- How many people are we talking about
 - o Ex offenders?
 - o # Latinos?
 - o **Need PPA info in Spanish (Flyers, meeting notes, agenda, etc).**

- **People are hiding all of the time**; how access?
- What is needed to get them to work?
 - o **English; Need opp to go to school**
- **How hard is it to get a job without papers?**
- **How can we get integrated into the labor force with our “real skills”?** (many of the participants had careers and trades in other areas- there was a Lawyer, Hardware/Furniture Salesperson, Accountant, Agronomist, Engineer)

- Labor Commissioner came by to briefly visit with the Special Populations subgroup

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- We provide services in Spanish;
- do you have to have documentation to utilize DOL resources and services?
- Have Spanish speaking employees; have full range of services; training is done by another agency (DTAE)
- How inform fathers with child support issues about the programs?
- **Radio program: invite individuals to speak on the radio to communicate important information about PPA**
- If there is an employer who refuses to pay a worker, how sue?
 - DOL does not get involved, but the wage and hour does
- **Could survey employers regarding training and policies, working poor and unemployed regarding their needs**

Resources workgroup

Attendees: Alicia Battle, Ray MacNair, Kurt Genteman, Eddie Kelly (notes)

How do we find the people who aren't already in the system? There are people who never get into the system

- Won't go to Department of Labor
- May be on drugs
- May be illegal
- May be undocumented
- Idle workers
- Mental issues
- Under-educated

If people are in the system, they can get help.

How do we identify the underemployed? Identify people who want jobs. Why won't people seek educational opportunities or training?

Identify skill gaps

- Root problems: what can we do about motivating people to work toward personal/professional development?
- What employer policies need to be addressed?
- Need to take incremental steps
- Go to agencies that support these individuals
- Mentors

Identify resources

- How do we pull people into the available resources?
- Current programs are too formal, too structured
- Governmental training programs, e.g. JTPA
- Programs that treat people with respect
- Mentoring programs: formal/informal

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Ways to market job opportunities

- Department of Labor
- Resume writing
- Goodwill Career Center
- Interview training
- Churches
- Small business round table

Data needed:

Names of 15 small businesses for a small business round table