

PPA Workforce Committee Meeting
September 25, 2006
Clarke Central High School

After hearing about the proposed vision for a Prosperous Athens and the recommendations process, Workforce Committee members met to develop recommendations.

The vision statement pertaining to workforce:

A Prosperous Athens ... develops a skilled workforce which meets the demands of a global economy.

Chair Clay Gilbert opened the meeting, then turned it over to Jim Maloney who proposed that the committee brainstorm recommendations, use one as an example of how to refine it using the worksheet, and have people choose recommendations to work on. Jan Coyne and Angie Moon de Avila took notes.

This meeting was the beginning of a several-months process of making and refining recommendations as outlined in "Committee Recommendation Worksheet" and "Worksheet Guidelines." It is likely that people will need to work on recommendations outside the normal PPA meeting schedule. How will we (PPA) prioritize the recommendations? Staff will pull recommendations from other committees and see where we can pull together. We might have several pieces from different committees that fit together to address an issue.

The brainstorming session lasted the rest of the meeting, and there was no time to do a worksheet exercise. As people left, they signed up to work on recommendations. The recommendations are as follows:

- Provide food for children in After School Programs/Extended childcare settings. The Food Bank in partnership with other providers (Boys and Girls Club, etc.), could do what is done in other communities; for example Kid's Café, Garnett Ridge. After school programs are expensive, and providing meals would allow parents to continue to work while their children are being fed. It would also give them a small break on the cost of providing food for the family.
- Establish joint meeting(s) among PPA conveners, faith community, professional people, field workers, and subject matter experts to define a change in delivery mechanisms for various workforce development services and how they can be supported; also consider rewards and sanctions for programs. Develop a process to get recommendations to others. An example: childcare subsidies are frozen; people do not know what they are eligible for, because the eligibility criteria recently changed. Who should ACC address at the state or federal level to advocate for and address the need for childcare subsidies for low income families?
- Create a job readiness program for those in school. Incorporate job readiness instruction / soft skills instruction as part of the school curriculum.
- Create a job readiness program for those NOT in school.
- Continue/preserve/expand ESOL, and add Spanish language classes for English speakers.
- Develop formal internships with businesses for on-the-job training: HS age and older.

- Develop a program [or mechanism/process] to bridge gaps between current employer needs and existing programs. Identify training that is available and training that is needed. Get input from employers.
- Increase participation in existing programs for job readiness.
- Change the delivery model for programs. Use volunteers as well as traditional, funded programs for training. Provide programs at non-traditional times and non-traditional locations; for example, use a mobile lab that operates outside of the 9-6pm slot. Increase marketing for all existing/new programs to make sure all eligible clients know about them.
- Expand adult literacy programs in and out of the workplace, e.g. deliver in areas of poverty
- Solutions must consider service recipient characteristics: single, female with children, nontraditional hours, non-traditional locations. Childcare is a problem when working hours are nights/evenings. How do you convince fathers to pay child support (Child Support Recovery – loose driver’s license, end up in jail)? Carrot and stick approach: make sure to focus on rewards first; penalties need to be thought through to make sure they aren’t violating rights or doing unintentional harm in other areas.
- Expand mentoring programs and tutoring programs for youth and especially adults. Build on vocational model and include soft skills. Provide mentoring pre- and post-employment. **A comprehensive mentoring meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 17 at 10:00 at the Chamber of Commerce (246 W. Hancock Ave.).**
- Provide some kind of sick leave benefits for part-time work to allow single parents to deal with a child’s illness, for example, rather than losing pay.
- Basic vocational skills need to be re-emphasized in k-12: kids to work and kids to college (dual diploma track), e.g. UGA’s Empowered Youth Program (Gentlemen on the Move / Young Women Scholars). Students in dual vocational/college prep tracks do much better after graduation in both secondary education and employment.
- Offer tax incentives/deferrals for businesses that participate in recommended programs.
- Offer land grants/tax abatements to firms delivering services needed for people in need.
- Create a culture that supports work.
- Create a door to bring underemployed and unemployed people to employers and have ministers in community who will work with them through their first year of employment. This is currently underway; they have met 3 times.

The above recommendations have since been categorized under “learnings” and augmented with recommendations from earlier meetings.