

Ministers and Employers Notes
October 16, 2006, 11:30 – 1:00
Department of Children and Family Services

Group opened in prayer and made introductions

Clay Gilbert asked for an update on issues discussed at previous meeting:

Transitioning Felons- David Sweat re-iterated that he wanted to keep this issue on the group's radar screen. That education for employers around what a felon charge entails, that an offense could have been changed to a felony administratively because of a violation- without judicial oversight. Still need another door for employees to enter to get jobs. Have two suggestions:

- 1) Have employers work with Athens Justice Project (Deborah Gowen) and DOL's TOPPSTEP program (Stanley Johnson) to accept their referred clients who are ready to work- have GEDs and skills, but need a chance.
- 2) For the 18-23 year olds who don't have GED/education/job experience need a program like Drug Court- possibly Jobs Court- to help them get connected with soft and hard skills training and jobs. Right now they're told to get a job and a GED and then turned out and only meet once a month with their parole officer.

Deborah Gowen added that this discussion needed to continue to find out what employers needed and to educate further about what a felony was. Need to support Ministers and Employers to create a bridge to getting people jobs.

Bart Freeman with Power Partners- employers want employees to have some outside/ hands-on relationship that goes beyond them getting the job- have long-term follow through. Maybe even a meeting every 2-weeks- meet before there is a problem.

Red Petrovs- do we need a group that could coordinate getting people mentoring and education and sitting down with employers to connect the pool of candidates to them.

Deborah said she has a file folder of people who need jobs, but isn't connected to employers.

Stanley Johnson said that he does some of this and has relationships with many employers.

Making a Change is a program with people still in prison- Tommy York. And, Stanley gets notification when a prisoner is being released and coming to Athens. Parole officers also refer all their new clients to Stanley- he has skilled people. If employers let him know what they need- he can send them a person.

David- Needs to be some sort of organization for the Employers and the Ministers.

Jobs for Life- a way of Mentoring Families through Employment Dr. Washington said that the Jobs for Life would provide this structure. He and Clay have a meeting with several Ministers and a few Employers, including Noramco, to discuss adopting the Jobs for Life program.

Jobs for Life will train people in soft skills and provides the connection with a church family that follows through for at least a year along with businesses. No one program will address every need, but this addresses the need that was most sighted by employers- soft skills.

Need partners to figure out how the curriculum will be implemented. There are teaching and leadership positions that need business representatives. By the next Ministers and Employers luncheon many of the details will be worked out.

This would provide structure and is open to everyone, not specifically felons although they can participate too.

Power Partners and St. Mary's- we will still need a GED.

Stanley- many felons have a GED already.

Need to identify the target population for the Jobs for Life program-
Department of Family and Children Services- can refer participants.

Deborah- If employers let AJP, TOPPSTEP, Jobs for Life- know what they are looking for, we can provide candidates. Maybe a survey could be created for employers to use- possibly we can work with the Society for H.R. professionals in town.

Advanced Earned Income Tax Credit- Red Petrovs asked if any companies have/would be willing to test drive the AEITC program for their clients.

DFCS is telling clients to ask their employers for it.

Need a community education program.

IRS said that they think \$20 million is being lost from Athens because people, who are eligible, are not applying.

Clay said that he would look into it for Thornton Brothers.

Next meeting will be on November 13, 11:30-1, at DFCS

Next meeting will focus on:

- 1) GED courses and Athens Tech Job Readiness Certificate- Church and Employer Role Discussion
- 2) Childcare- Church and Employer Role Discussion