

Minutes of Youth Forum ~ Wednesday ~September 10, 2008 ~ 1:00 pm

Attendees: Michael Herron, Advantage Valley, President- Region 2 Workforce Investment Board Youth Chair; Michelle Hunter, Chris May, Eddie Taylor- Cabell County Probation Department; Rhonda Bills-Cabell County DHHR; Micki Maley- WORKFORCE West Virginia State Youth Representative; Bob Morris- Mountaineer Challenge Academy; Michelle Perdue, Tim White-Huntington Housing Authority; Loyd Casto, Shawn Krajeski, David Mowery, Chris Hupp-Human Resource Development Foundation; Jake Hunt, Region 2 Workforce Investment Board Executive Director; Teresa Dailey, Region 2 Workforce Investment Board Performance Specialist/Program Monitor

I. Welcome and Introductions-

Mike Herron, Youth Council Chair

Goal: The goal of this forum is to increase the communication and understanding of established services for at risk youth. Two target groups have been identified as youth aging out of foster care and youth in the legal system.

Purpose: Invitation for one representative from each of the seven (7) counties in Region 2 to serve on the Region 2 Youth Council in addition to three (3) representatives for agencies serving at-risk youth.

II. W.I.A. Overview

Claude J. Hunt, Executive Director

a. Discussion of the Problem

Region 2 Workforce Investment Board (Region 2 WIB) will focus on out-of-school youth ages 18-21. Most employment opportunities in demand occupations require an individual be at least 18 years of age before hiring. The mission is to identify targeted youth, open communication and promote cooperation among service agencies and to develop referrals among agencies to provide wrap-around services for youth.

Workforce Investment Boards in Regions 2 and 6 are collaborating on ways to serve youth with Mountaineer Challenge Academy. Mr. Hunt visited Mountaineer Challenge Academy and was informed that 20 youth who had attended the Academy were from Region 2.

Mr. Herron reported a community and technical college consortium was established within Advantage Valley, consisting of West Virginia Tech., West Virginia State and Marshall to establish training needs for job specific industries. A shortage of skilled workers for chemical, natural gas, coal and timber industries will exist within the next five (5) years. Occupational training in these fields would benefit both industry and the skilled worker.

b. Available Services

Rhonda Bills, West Virginia DHHR

Approximately 40% of the current foster care youth will be aging out of the system in the next few years. Chafee Community Support Services offers two (2) programs for youth aging out of foster care six (6) months before their 18th birthday or six (6) months before leaving court involvement. These programs assist youth until 21 years of age with food voucher, housing assistance, and clothing vouchers. Assistance is available to complete admission for post secondary education, tuition waivers and other support.

III. Guest Speaker Robert Morris, Mountaineer Challenge Academy
Mountaineer Challenge Academy is affiliated with the National Guard for youth 16-19 years of age. The Academy is for teens at risk of not graduating from high school. This voluntary residential program is a very structured, military environment. Youth must be drug free before entering the program. Admissions are conducted in January and July. Funding for the academy is 60% federal and 40% state match. 71% of youth earn their GED. Youth who do not earn GEDs may be referred to the in- school or out-of-school youth program in Region 2.

IV. Round Table Discussion All Attendees
Information for referrals should be linked to the youth service workers in the various agencies. Request to present program information in staff meetings for youth service agencies, social work conferences, and link into family resource agencies.

Chris Hupp, Human Resource Development Foundation, informed the attendees of a new program for youth in transition. The program focuses on youth 16-24 years of age who are receiving Social Security Benefits. The goal is for youth to become employed or to enter vocational training while maintaining portions of their benefits.

V. Schedule Next Meeting Mike Herron, Youth Council Chair
Mr. Morris will contact a youth from this region who is a Mountaineer Challenge Academy Graduate to speak at the next meeting. Mr. Morris will coordinate with the Region 2 W.I.B. for scheduling. A meeting announcement will be forwarded.

VI. Adjourn