

**Youth Council
Workforce Investment Board of Will County
Workforce Center of Will County
2400 Glenwood Avenue, Joliet, IL
January 7, 2016
Minutes**

Council Members					
Name	Present	Absent	Name	Present	Absent
Nancy Baldwin	X		Monica Lowe	X	
Dale Evans	X		Emilie McCallister	X	
Susan Flessner	X		Cheryl McCarthy	X	
Beth Gonzalez		X	Jim Moustis		X
Pam Heavens	X		Marieta Pergi	X	
Mike Hennessy	X		Caroline Portlock	X	
Mark Jepson		X	Laura Price	X	
Neal Kauffman	X		Jerry Staley		X
Elizabeth Kaufman	X		Anika Todd		X

Others Present: Meg Barton, Cody Dailey, Sue Davinger, Pat Fera and Mary Gajcak, Avis Hamilton, Erin Kohl, Keri Peter.

Welcome and Approval of Minutes

Cheryl McCarthy called the meeting to order. Susan gave a tour of the new Workforce Center.

McCarthy asked attendees to introduce themselves.

The minutes of the November 2015 meeting were approved on a motion by Susan Flessner, seconded by Emilie McCallister.

Connect to Your Future youth program

Pat Fera presented an overview of the Connect to Your Future program, comprised of GED Preparation and Occupational Skill Training. The PY15 Contract amount of \$1,493,993 is now funding youth ages 16 through 24. Efforts are in place to recruit older youth. Joliet Junior College Workforce Development is the contractor for this program. There are 50 participants in the GED program; 170 participants in Occupational Skills Training programming, 70 continuing and 100 new participants.

Marieta Pergi, Avis Hamilton, and Erin Kohl delivered a presentation of the GED programming, including student profiles, success stories, and specific services offered. There are two main goals for each customer; to achieve a GED and to obtain employment. Efforts in training and testing are individualized for maximized customer success. Leadership classes provide training in all areas of development necessary to attain and retain employment. Topics are student-driven, addressing specific issues that and barriers to success. Some barriers addressed are gang recruitment, single parenting, lack of family support, finances, transportation. Basic life skills, soft skills, social skills, interviewing skills, and financial literacy are among the goals for each student. There are at least ten (10) GED testings scheduled for the rest of this month.

Keri Peters, Meg Barton and Cody Dailey, of Joliet Junior College (JJC), presented on both the GED and Occupational Training components of the youth program. The focus of these classes is to prepare students for the workplace. Changes in the GED program allow students to take tests one at a time, making for a more individualized program for each student. There are four separate tests taken throughout the GED process, making for a much more successful program. JJC works very closely with WSD staff. Classes are available morning, afternoon and evening. For the Occupational Training program outreach and recruitment includes presentations for students in high schools, eligibility testing and training, FAFSA application assistance, career counseling and assessment, agency referrals, etc. Word of mouth referrals are very prevalent. Due to the success of recruiting efforts, a second case manager has been hired to help offset the volume of students.

Career Awareness project

Fera addressed the Career Awareness task force made up of Dale Evans, Susan Flessner, Mary Gajcak, Cheryl McCarthy, and Caroline Portlock to set a date to meet to discuss the project.

Youth Provider Summit

The Youth Provider Summit will highlight LinkedIn training. The speaker has offered to follow up with a training on LinkedIn for job seekers as well as mentors the following evening from 5-7:00.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Youth Council will be held on March 3rd at the Workforce Center of Will County, 2400 Glenwood, Joliet at 7:30 am.