

**OPEN FOR BUSINESS:
A NEW STATE GOVERNMENT APPROACH TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
New York City Regional Economic Development Council**

**Human Capital Work Group
Tuesday, September 20, 2011, 1:30 p.m.
Empire State Development Corporation**

Meeting Summary

Facilitator

Dr. Suri Duitch, CUNY

Attending

Jay Hershenson, CUNY
John Eddey, Steiner Studios
Joseph Tazewell, Empire State Development
Raymond Sanchez, Bronx Borough President's Office
Andrew Steininger, Brooklyn Borough President's Office
Ted Houghton, Supportive Housing Network of New York
Zayne Abdessalam, Wholesale & Retail
Nnenna Lynch, Office of Deputy Mayor Robert Steel
Tara Colton, Mayor's Office of Adult Education
Merrill Pond, Partnership for New York City
Steven Grillo, SIEDC
David Meade, SBIDC
Alfred Ntoko, York College, CUNY
John Moyer, NYS DOL
Marion Philips, III, ESD
Daliz Perez-Cabezas, CUNY
Thomas Donaldson, NYC Council
Hugo Kijine, College of Staten Island, CUNY
Jeanette Nigro, Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce

The facilitator welcomed everyone at 1:30.

Bringing the process up-to-date, she noted that the full New York City regional council is now halfway through its planning process. It has a vision statement and fundamental ideas.

She added that the participants in this working group would now begin the process of "getting very concrete about plans and projects." She said that the participants are council members, representatives of council members -- and "important stakeholders" specifically invited to join in this conversation.

Meanwhile, the council itself, she said, is working towards developing a

five year economic plan as well as a strategy for competing with other regions across the state for new funds. It is also exploring how to apply for existing economic development funds by using a re-structured universal application. These new Consolidated Funding Applications (CFA) must be reviewed and rated by the council by November 14. More information regarding funding streams, available funds and other topics can be accessed on <http://nyworks.ny.gov/>

This working group will be reporting back to the entire council on October 4.

The facilitator invited participants to define "human capital development." She asked whether the human capital aspect of development is "an adjunct to other projects and policies, something we want to see wherever we can or are there human capital projects that stand on their own?" Later she added, "You don't want human capital development to be the tail that wags the dog...it might not by itself be generating economic activity and jobs."

Informally, many in the room seemed to agree that yes, "human capital," is something they would like to see as an element of many of other projects and policies. Some participants did speak about human capital projects that stand on their own.

The facilitator at one point said, "We are not going to reconcile all these things today but clearly we need to keep it all in mind. I am heading towards our next steps." In the middle of the session one speaker bemoaned, "We haven't answered the question of what's the major problem in terms of human capital. Is it lack of education, lack of affordable housing so you can bring someone in with the skill sets you need...?" Later the facilitator noted that, "the next human capital conversation will have something on paper with specific proposals."

Hanging on the wall, throughout the session, were some of the full council's criterion for action and projects. They include:

- Multi-region impact
- Five borough impact, especially in economically distressed areas/among economically distressed populations
- University partnerships
- Performance targets and performance management
- Number and types of jobs created
- Completion time frame
- When can the project start
- Other

A speaker added that this list should include "the ability to keep learning."

Topics discussed in relation to this list included:

- Training that results in jobs
- Affordable housing as a route to sustained employment
- Raising high school graduation rates
- Helping the long-term unemployed – and not merely working with people who are the easiest to train

- Encouraging entrepreneurs who provide jobs; assisting businesses that are having economic difficulties and giving them a voice.
- Using the health care industry as a model to examine problems regarding human capital
- “Piggybacking” on human capital programs that already exist but need a boost, such as those that attempt to raise high school graduation rates and offer GEDs
- Using community colleges as feeders, with four year institutions offering support
- New York City’s density of educational institutions and potential – but how this can also lead to duplication
- In regard to above: Planning a college-readiness summit
- NYC is already has many employment programs but unemployment is at 10 per cent, meaning these programs may not be working

The facilitator noted that education and training is a crucial aspect of human capital projects – and that such training should perhaps incorporate a career trajectory that insures long-term employment and advancement. There was a discussion of training individuals in both “hard” and “soft” workplace skills. Later, a speaker mentioned a program at CUNY’s New York City College of Technology to help “lower level” restaurant workers improve their English skills to help them become waiters and managers,

A participant said it was important to promote “Local job retention,” which he defined as endeavors that enable individuals to stay within their home boroughs to work -- “to live and work where they are from and not necessarily have to commute to another borough.”

Another participant noted a seemingly opposite phenomenon at Fordham University, where “people from all over the country wind up working in the Bronx.”

The need for affordable housing, as it connects to the ability to get and keep a job, was mentioned several times.

There was much discussion about raising high school graduation rates in New York City and raising the level of college readiness. The facilitator characterized this as “very important to the economic plan.”

As other speakers noted the long-term unemployed in the Maritime and manufacturing industries, the facilitator agree that part of the conversation should be about “specific populations, for example the chronically unemployed.” Another speaker mentioned the importance of updating people’s skill sets.

That entrepreneurs are also “human capital,” was discussed. A speaker said: “Who are these entrepreneurs who are going to start or re-locate their businesses in New York? So that our students have places and people to work for...” The facilitator later mentioned that one of the most popular majors at CUNY’s Baruch College is “entrepreneurism.”

The facilitator suggested using the health industry as a way to look at human capital issues. She noted that in that industry there are both unfilled jobs and people who cannot find employment or have lost jobs due to hospital closings. Later, another speaker said educating and attracting physicians is a way to insure there will be many other health care industry jobs. Another participant disagreed and there was a short discussion over how many health care industry jobs

one physician might generate. It was noted that although CUNY does not have medical school, it does have a new and extensive School of Public Health. Also, its long-established School of Social Work is relocating to East Harlem. The engineering industry was also discussed. While many schools are educating engineers, engineering firms say they have too many applicants.

A speaker mentioned that supported employment, along with job coaches – a model that often works for the mentally disabled – might work in other realms.

A speaker then added: "...in comparison to other regions of the state we have a greater density of institutions and a greater density of potential. I sometimes sit in rooms where I hear people from different organizations from the city talk about college readiness...they each have different grants. Everyone is doing college readiness in different areas of the universe." The speaker suggested a college readiness summit so that various institutions can share their common experiences.