

To: New York Regional Economic Development Council
From: Joseph Tazewell, Director, and REDC-NYC
Date: June 15, 2014
Re: Workforce Development Workshop

Introduction:

As outlined in the 2014 Regional Economic Development Council (“REDC”) Guidebook, the REDCs have been asked to revisit the key industries identified in their five-year strategic plans and determine those that are still deemed regional priorities.

As suggested by the REDC Guidebook, the NYC REDC invited over 40 representatives from over twenty public agencies, educational institutions and business advocacy groups to participate in a workgroup meeting to discuss strategies and approaches for 1) enhancing the NYC’s workforce development programs and 2) establishing priorities for implementation.

The meeting was held on Tuesday, June 3, 2014 at the offices of Empire State Development.

Meeting Summary:

Dr. Suri Duitch, University Dean for Continuing Education and Deputy to the Senior University Dean for Academic Affairs City University of New York, facilitated the discussion. She started the discussion by addressing the council’s deep interest in the workforce development and reducing the skills gap in NYC’s working population. She also recognized the importance of following up with ever-changing job market trends and the growing demand for workers with technical skills.

Citing the example of Montefiore Medical Center not being able to fill 2,000 job openings, one participant mentioned that workforce training should be separated from the issue of education. Trade skills development was also emphasized. Other participants also agreed that reducing the skills gap issue was the major for distressed communities.

CUNY’s early college partnership was offered as an example of effective job training program for encouraging young, motivated high school students’ entry into the workforce. Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-TECH) was cited. P-TECH was founded by CUNY and IBM’s public-private partnership in 2011. P-TECH was the first school to incorporate CUNY’s unique 9-14 educational model, which is a 6-year curriculum designed to provide a hands-on, structured pathway for high school students to obtain an industry-focused skill set and practical working experience in the IT industry. However, one of the attendees inquired if the program was flexible enough to adjust its curriculum in accordance with NYC’s ever-changing working environment and climate. Since the program has been operating only about three years, this inquiry will have to be revisited when data is available.

Another participant voiced her opinion that it is just as important for potential employees to learn about the culture of their prospective corporate employer as it is to acquire the necessary technical skills to fill the job. It was emphasized that this is another important aspect of job training.

The next topic discussed was job training programs and higher education for inmates and people with criminal records. It was mentioned that Governor Cuomo recently launched an initiative for incorporating higher education into the NYS prison system. One participant highlighted the fact that existing social barriers in our society severely undermine active engagement and employment of people with criminal records. Other participants also posed the question of what can governmental agencies and non-profit organizations do to assist this population better.

Overall, there was a general consensus that NYC has to shift its focus from creating low-level jobs in service and hospitality sectors to high level jobs in technology and green/energy industries which are higher paying and often go unfilled. Several participants suggested that the NYC REDC develop a narrowly focused, city-wide conversation about how to target a specific industry's job market.

Several participants shared their insights on how to manage and publicize job opportunity pipelines to the public more strategically and effectively, particularly in the case of large scale development projects in distressed communities (i.e., East River Plaza and the Kingsbridge Armory development). Human capital management that matches each worker's skills and interests with corporate's needs is getting more costly. Often, small business owners do not know to where to find or how to reach out to qualified workers due to the lack of information and resources. Therefore, increasing the commitment of corporates to hire local residents and utilizing local economic and community development organizations would help significantly. A few best practices were cited by a few representatives of local development organizations.

The discussion then turned to the question of performance measures. There seemed to be universal agreement that there needs to be a reliable, accurate, and organized tracking system for employment trends based on the criteria of job creation and retention rates, local hiring rates, mobility within the organization, sector preference and incentives for companies who receive grant funding. Enhancing intermediary organizations' access to the Department of Labor's employment data and wage data was cited as a possible tool for tracking the progress of the workforce development in the long run. This is also referenced in the NYC REDC strategic plan.

Workforce Development Workshop Attendees

REDC-NYC

Zayne	Abdessalam	RWDSU
Marlon	Cintron	Bronx Overall EDC

State Resource Team

Allison	Auldridge	ESD
Cho Yeon	Kim	ESD - NYC REDC Intern
John	Moye	NYS DOL
Drew	Podgorski	ESD - NYC REDC Intern
Rose	Rodriguez	NYS DOL
Joseph	Tazewell	ESD

CUNY

Suri	Duitch	CUNY
Chowdhury	Najib	CUNY

Attendees

Dalsie	Andrade	NYC EDC
Katy	Belot	Partnership for NYC
Cass	Conrad	CUNY
Curtis	Dann-Messier	CUNY
Elizabeth	Demitriou	Southwest Brooklyn IDC
Evelyn A.	Fernandez-Ketcham	CUNY
Lisa	Gale Van Brackle	UMEZ
Liz	Gaynes	Osborne Association
Liz	Luskin	Long Island City Partnership
Jackie	Mallon	NYC Small Business Services
Marta	Nelson	CEO Works
Merrill	Pond	Partnership for NYC
Tom	Ryan	CEO Works
Denise	Ward	QCC-CUNY
Dave	Whitlinger	NYE HEALTH