

Onondaga Citizens League

Study Session #5: November 30, 2016

“How CNY Works: Examining the Diversity of Our Economic Base – Past, Present and Future”

Meeting topic: “Workforce Development: Connecting Community Members with Employment Opportunities.”

12-1:30 p.m., Mercy Works, The Clarence Jordan Vision Center

Presenters:

Lenore Sealy, Executive Director, CNY Works

Lanessa Owens, Esq., Staff Attorney New Start Program - Reentry Assistance, Homeless Advocacy & Prevention, Volunteer Lawyers Project of Onondaga County, Inc.

Rebecca Kohler, Director of On Point for Jobs, On Point for College, Inc.

Kira Crawford, Director of Industry Partnerships, Work Train, CenterState CEO

Michael Pasquale, Director of Reintegration Services, Center for Community Alternatives

April English Palozzola, Team Leader, Career Development, JOBSplus!

Cherylene "Twiggy" Billue, Program Coordinator, Build to Work, Jubilee Homes

Rhonda O'Connor, Director of Community Development, Visions for Change

Michael Irwin, Program Director, Greater Syracuse Works

Mari Ukleya, Director of Adult Education, OCM BOCES

Matt Tarolli, OCM BOCES - Coordinator of Training and Continuing Education for Adult Education, OCM BOCES

Mike Metzgar, Associate Vice President, Economic & Workforce Development, SUNY Onondaga Community College

The fifth study session featured a different format than previous sessions. Attendees sat at tables and presenters, from the various organizations represented, traveled from table to table to answer questions. A scribe at each table took notes on a large sheet of paper. At the conclusion of the session, there was a brief review and a discussion of a few common themes that emerged through the question and answer period.

The questions focused on five themes: Identity, Clients, Program, Results, and Rethinking the Situation (suggesting ways of improving services/results)

CNY Works

CNY Works is a workforce organization and receives funds to develop workforce initiatives. The organization reports to a board – board members are appointed by the major. The annual budget is \$5 million. There are 25 full-time staff and 60 employees.

CNY Works serves primarily Onondaga County. Individuals come to the center looking for help securing work.

The organization works with hundreds of area employees. It provides job listings, one-on-one help, workshops, computer skills training.

The outcome standards are different for each group served --- students, displaced workers, etc.

A needed change is workforce organizations focusing on what their primary strengths are. "One size fits all," doesn't work since people do not fit into spread sheets. This message needs to be communicated.

OCM BOCES, Adult Education

A wide range of services for clients throughout Central New York. A county-wide catalog is mailed three times a year.

OCM BOCES serves Onondaga, Cortland and Madison counties.

Biggest demand is from younger students who tried college/work but then needed technical training.

A total of 2,000 students, including full-time and part-time.

Receives funding from Federal government, New York State, Perkins Grants

Three distinct areas: Literacy, including ESL and Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC, formerly called GED) Full-time training (for specific trades/jobs) Part-time classes.

The budget is approximately \$7 million.

The staff number in literacy and training is 82.

OCM BOCES is a major adult education provider county-wide.

The organization is monitored annually for student retention. Retention rate must be over 60percent. Job Placement must be over 70 percent.

Welding program, HVAC and Healthcare programs all do very well.

Students successfully completing programs get jobs at between \$13 and \$20 per hour.

Major hurdles for students are problems with attendance due to child care issues and transportation problems.

BOCES will be adding a course in computer coding.

A change that is needed is better communication among the non-for-profit organizations. There is competition and duplication. There is good work being done but a lack of coordination.

Visions for Change

Works throughout the county, collaborates, performs outreach, serves individuals seeking employment.

There are three coaches, an outreach worker and a facilitator. The budget is \$500,000.

There is a computer lab and resume-building help.

The organization partners with employers in the area.

Most referrals are word-of-mouth. Clients have a full range of barriers.

The organization works with more than 100 people per year. Approximately 70 percent of the clients attain employment. Of those, 80 percent retain employment.

The cost to provide services is \$4,500 per person.

The goals are to move individuals out of poverty and maintain stability.

JOBSpus!

Serves the Department of Social Services with work readiness programs. The organization is motivated to find better solutions for at-risk clients.

Serves 4,000 families per year, including immigrant and refugee populations.

JOBSpus! Is an anti-poverty program, not an anti-welfare program.

Transportation is a major barrier for clients. Another issue is clients get frustrated with entry-level (low-paying) jobs.

Qualifying students can get subsidized childcare and transportation.

The budget is 3.8 million.

Work Train

Work Train uses a dual client model. It partners with CenterState.

It provides employer-tailored training (hard and soft skills) worker-centric solutions. The organization performs an initial assessment and then provides support.

For Work Train clients, child care is one of the biggest barriers to employment.

Healthcare jobs and manufacturing jobs are the major focus.

Build to Work Jubilee Homes

Clients are referred from a variety of different agencies, such as JOBSpus! and CNY Works.

The focus is to match clients and employment. The organization focuses on the Southwest quadrant of the City of Syracuse.

Transportation is a major barrier for clients. They are especially affected by CENTRO cuts.

The typical backstory is that the clients are not “work-ready.” They have a difficult time with paperwork, also many fail drug testing.

About 250 walk through the door (**ed note: not sure if this is monthly/annually**) of those 100 proceed through the program.

The cost to provide services is generally \$6200 per person.

The program provides recruitment, orientation, intake, assessment and also tracks individuals for 12-18 months, including job visits. There is an in-house TASC (formerly GED) program.

Soft skills training is an important need. Prospective employees need to be education about what to talk about at work, what not to talk about.

Issues the organization deals with: A perception that the neighborhood is not safe to live in/work in, also clients are often missing a personal support system.

Onondaga Community College

A staff of 16 up to 80 (flexes)

Aims to transition individuals out of poverty. Focusing on question – how do we incentivize work?

The workforce development program aims for participants to earn a living wage and achieve long-term success. Employers are promised well-trained workers, in particular workers who are trained in soft skills. There are training programs in food service, health care, and manufacturing. Their approach is holistic. There are job shadowing opportunities available.

On Point for Jobs

The On Point for College program aims to help underserved communities get into college. The organization has evolved to help students get work after school.

On Point serves individuals in Onondaga, Oneida, Madison and Herkimer counties.

The mission is to reduce all barriers to employment. There is ongoing personal case management. Programs also address confidence, mindset, values.

Approximately 40 percent of individuals going through program are employed.

The budget is \$250,000. There are three people on staff.

One change that would help is organizations coordinating services and an alignment of resources, “breaking down silos.”

Volunteer Lawyers Project

Serves individuals with criminal convictions. So far, 13 clients have been served with a 100 percent success rate. (In terms of removing criminal information that would prevent an individual from securing a job)

The organization is now serving 145 clients.

After an individual completes an educational or training program, Volunteer Lawyers Project is available to assist the individual, if there is a criminal history, in particular if the crime took place several years prior.

The budget is \$530,000. Clients come from a number of area agencies, such as Jubilee Homes, Mercy Works, OCC. Typical client is a single mother between the ages of 22 and 35, who has a conviction record (often of a petty crime). Other clients include men in their late 30's early 40's with a drug or assault charge.

Changes that would be helpful require education about bad data. If employers google a person's name, information they receive could be inaccurate. The re-entry population needs to be educated about career restrictions.

Vision Center

Serves young people, beginning at fourth grade, through college. Aims to work with children before they get into trouble in school/with law.

There are mentorship programs, computer training.

Last year, the organization served 176 students. An important goal is maintaining a relationship with the student, from a young age through higher education. Last year, 45 college students interned in a total of 20 companies. Internships were organized through the Vision Center/

Vision Center budget is "small and donor-oriented."

Center for Community Alternatives

Serves over 500 people per year. The job placement is approximately 66 percent. Of that there is a 50 percent retention rate after six months.

Serves individuals who are at risk for criminal cycles. Clients hear about CCA from word of mouth, also CNY Works, Jamesville Correctional.

The organization provides a two-week job readiness program, help with obtaining ID, bus passes.

A typical back story is that the individual has been in prison, which creates a huge barrier. The active caseload is between 100 and 300.

The budget is \$500,00 per year and there is a staff of 7 employees.

A wide range of jobs are obtained – many are over minimum wage.

Substance abuse is a major hurdle for many clients. Many clients lack long-range goals.

The organization collaborates with CNY Works and the Syracuse Housing Authority.

One change that would make an important difference would be “ban the box” legislation, a form of which Rochester and Buffalo already have. Individuals applying for jobs would not have to divulge any criminal history at the outset of applying.

Greater Syracuse Works

Meets once a month. Its mission is to make it easier for workforce developers to expand capacity. The organization does not run specific programs. It serves as a catalyst for other agencies providing direct services, and helps organizations do their jobs better.

Approximately 7-8 on staff. The budget fluctuates based on grant funding.

Uses QB (quick based) database to assist with case management and metrics. There are 14 member agencies, which service low-income and underemployed individuals.

One change that would make a big difference would be ongoing case management services. Another change is different attitude toward vocational training and changing the idea/focus that all students should aim for a college education. There should be more information available on jobs that pay well.