

Region 8 Prosperity Committee

Education Subcommittee – January 17, 2017

Attendees: Michael Evans, Ken Jones, Grant Fletcher, Jakki Bibb, Sandi Standish, John Egelhaaf, Lee Adams, Karen Carlisle, Deb Miller

The education subcommittee was convened to discuss the 2017 RPI priority goal for education. After some discussion the group found that goals #4 and #5 were both widely supported.

4. Encourage infrastructure development and interconnectivity to better support education, training, and employment

- Increase mobility: transit and non-motorized
- Increase access to technology: broadband and access to equipment

5. Support work of existing organizations in the following areas:

- Adult education
- Credential acquisition
- Career exploration
- Functional literacy
- Skilled trades
- Employers

Coordination of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) regional groups represents an opportunity. We have the chance to go beyond merely an inventory of the potential partners throughout the region. What can be done in common between the partners – where are the advantages when they’re linked?

WIOA has a common tracking for each service provider and a way to know about the individual’s end result. An assessment across each service provider is too burdensome for the client. Systems are attempting to be streamlined into a “system” not individual pieces. “No wrong door” for client entry is the optimum along with shared measurements for success.

The Bronson hospital experience is to hire entry level employees in and allow them to learn and work at the same time. The entry level employees then have the opportunity to graduate through the hospital into other positions that represent progressively better fit.

Along with skills training, basic “employability skills” also need to be provided. These are basic skills that would be required for any job in the workforce. A customer-centered design project could provide personalized interaction with people as the client progresses through the options available. “Navigators” could provide this personal attention. These kinds of service could be augmented with a kind of digital “resource fare” to best connect clients with assets.

The big idea? – Generally: pursue goal #4 to get to goal #5.

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The big idea? – Specifically: There is a sweet spot for high school grads and college students when they can pursue their interests through internships. This sweet spot doesn't necessarily exist for those not enrolled in college and it doesn't tend to exist for those who have graduated from college. Is it possible to recreate that job carousel for all segments of the labor force? Can we recreate the “gig economy” notion as a way of providing experience in the workforce to sample various jobs that might help an individual find the right fit? Workers get valuable experience and pay. Employers get important work done.

The gig economy essentially links people for nodes of time for a single project. WMU is working on a similar idea and through their platform it might be possible to:

- Have the laborer and employer RATE one another
- Develop a carousel of jobs and skills
- Give oneself an internship skill-building experience
- Include a developmental module in which participants can be virtually linked to coaches who can help provide input on particular skill sets.