



FPWA Workforce Development Task Force Meeting March 17, 2008

Meeting Summary

In attendance:

FPWA Member Agencies

Talia Nagar, Phipps CDC
Marina Niceta, Stanley Isaacs Neighborhood Center
Lauren Quinones, Stanley Isaacs Neighborhood Center
Richard Larson, Children's Village
Anne Alfred, YWCA of NYC
Lanish Alston, Greenhope Services for Women
Anita Mackey, Neighborhood Initiatives Development Corp.
Amy Pacifici, New Alternatives for Children
Melissa Motroni, Big Brothers Big Sisters NYC
Emily Sims, Getting Out and Staying Out
Kendall Glaspie, Henry St. Settlement
Andrea Vaghy Benyola, The Door

FPWA Staff

Bich Ha Pham
Jill Poklemba
Angela Spruill
Judy Milone
April Banks

Other Agencies

Emily May, Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow
Oliver Perry, JobsFirst NYC
Mary Sprague, VIP Community Services
Kathleen Culhane, Nontraditional Employment for Women
Zoe Sullivan, Queens Community House
Saroya Friedman-Gonzalez, Seedco
Jose Vazquez, Osborne Association
Gemma Pujadas-Ribeiro, Child Welfare Organizing Project
Jose Batista, HANAC
Charmaine Peart-Hosang, Year Up NYC
Sandya Swamy, Dept. of Small Business Services (SBS), Community & Strategic Partnerships
Leonard Battle, SBS, Community & Strategic Partnerships
Millard "Mitty" Owens, Dept. of Consumer Affairs, Office of Financial Empowerment (OFE)
Seema Shah, OFE

1. **Andrea Vaghy Benyola of The Door** (FPWA Member Agency) gave a brief overview of the workforce development services The Door provides to youth, including: education, GED preparation, employment, training, work readiness, internships, college advisement, career development and other supportive services.

The Door Website: www.door.org

2. **Sandya Swamy & Leonard Battle of SBS** gave a brief overview of the City's **Workforce 1 Career Center system**, a network of six Centers located throughout all NYC boroughs, which directs job seekers into training programs to build a career path. Under an ideal situation, clients are directed to a Center for job placement, employers can accept job candidates directly from a Center, large job orders can be filled, and businesses can receive Business Solutions Training Grants to cover part of the cost of training their workforce. In this way, the demand for labor (employer) is met by the supply (job seeker).

SBS presenters then gave an overview of the **Community-Based Outreach Initiative**, one of the Center on Economic Opportunity (CEO) initiatives being administered by SBS:

- **Community Partners** – Centers are expanding outreach to community-based organizations (CBOs) to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of workforce development services. The CBO and Center partnership allows job candidates to be pre-screened to ensure their readiness for work before referring them to the Center. Once they are ready, these candidates can be directed straight to the employer for the job interview, bypassing the lengthy assessment process. When candidates referred to the Center are not job ready or do not follow through with an appointment, feedback is provided to the CBO. This strengthens the partnership and helps the CBO improve upon its methods of working with clients.
- **Community Outreach Teams** – These teams provide a direct link between the Center and CBO to build a pipeline of job seekers for immediate job placement. Under the partner strategy, at least 70% of clients must come from high-poverty communities. To accomplish this, networking between Centers and local CBOs is essential. Teams can come to the CBO and help CBO enter into Partner Network Agreement with Center. The Centers are built upon “universal access.” In partnerships, CBO is responsible for conducting pre-screening of clients based on employer requirements of job candidates.
- **Individual Training Grant (ITG) Process** – Centers seek to exhaust all available free training first, including Center-based training. CUNY-based literacy programs are also available and are geared to help job seekers quickly obtain a credential and qualify for employment. ESL and GED preparation classes are directly linked to employment preparation services. If clients need to combine education with immediate job placement, the Centers will work with them to design a schedule that works for them.

SBS Workforce 1 Career Centers Website:

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/sbs/wf1/html/about/about.shtml>

3. **Andrea V. (The Door) & Sandya S. (SBS)** discussed the partnership between The Door and the Brooklyn Workforce 1 Career Center. The Door met with staff from the Brooklyn Center to refer youth for job placement services. Through this partnership, they were able to fill large job orders with specific employers. For example, Delta Airport directly communicates with staff at the Brooklyn Center and explains the requirements for job openings. The Door pre-screens youth to refer only those who are qualified.

Andrea and Sandya discussed how to address some issues that have arisen, including:

- **Jobs not appropriate for youth** – CBO can do pre-screening first
- **Jobs for those without a GED or high school diploma** – Entry-level jobs are available which are appropriate for youth, including youth in school
- **Length of time for intake/registration** – Pre-screening by CBO reduces time
- **Time between intake and interview** – Job seekers must be job ready to minimize time
- **Feedback** – Good communication/feedback between helps CBO provide better services and refer only clients who are job ready; even when feedback is negative (e.g. client did not show up for interview), feedback strengthens partnership between Center and CBO.
- **Lack of supports** – Extra services are available including: GED/ESL classes, computer trainings, career advising, etc.

4. **Mitty Owens & Seema Shah** of OFE gave a presentation about resources to help low-income families and individuals claim the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), including:

- **NYC EITC Campaign** – Began in 2002; one of the biggest coalitions in the U.S. For Tax Year 2007, the average combined EITC (Fed, State & City) = \$2,600; maximum = \$6,367.
- **VITA Sites** – Provide free assistance to help clients claim the EITC and other tax credits. Dial 311 to get a listing or visit: <http://www.otda.state.ny.us/main/reform/vitasites.asp>. VITA sites only serve 10% of EITC claimants. In NYC, approximately 200,000 eligible for the EITC are not claiming it – so more work needs to be done to reach those households.
- **Tax Prep Plus (New in 2008)** – “No Refund Anticipation Loans (RALs)!” Partnership with CBOs and H&R Block. Low cost: \$20 peak (thru mid-February); \$10 afterwards. Tax assistance plus benefits screening.

- **Consumer Bill of Rights** to ensure clients' rights are protected when using services of private tax preparers.
- **NEW: NYC Child Care Tax Credit** – Helps families with income under \$30,000 afford the costs of child care.

OFE EITC Coalition Website: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dca/html/initiatives/eitc.shtml>

5. **Talia Nagar of Phipps CDC & Lauren Quinones of Stanley Isaacs Neighborhood Center** (FPWA Member Agencies) gave a brief overview about the experiences of staff at their agencies who participated in FPWA's 2008 State Advocacy Day in Albany on February 26:
- **Ayah Mahgoub (Phipps)** – Discussed importance of GED to College and Transitional Jobs programs in meetings with legislative staff, made critical links to expanding opportunities for clients to access education and training, learned more about the legislative process and what it is like to meet in person with State officials to advocate for our policy goals.
 - **Manny Mendoza (Stanley Isaacs)** – Explained what it is like to be a young worker struggling to help his family make ends meet and the importance of expanding the State EITC to include young workers without children. Manny enjoyed the experience and was impressed by the response from staff and interest in hearing his story.

***Both Ayah and Manny were invaluable assets to FPWA as part of Advocacy Day 2008.** All member agencies are encouraged to join us in coming up to Albany next year!

6. **Jill provided an update on the State & City Budget Outlook:** Due to large budget gaps as a result of the downturn in the economy, both the State and City budgets for FY 2008-09 are geared toward making significant cuts, rather than funding essential programs. FPWA State & City Budget Testimony is available at: <http://www.fpwa.org/cgi-bin/iowa/policy/article/130.html>

2008 FPWA State & City Workforce Development Policy Agenda:

- **State: Advocacy Day in Albany – Feb. 26:** we met with legislative staff in the Assembly & Senate to advocate for the following Workforce Development priorities:
 - Youth Worker EITC
 - GED to College Transition Program

- **Transitional Jobs**
- **TANF-Funded Programs** providing education, training, and employment services
- **City: FPWA 2008 City Legislative Breakfast – Feb. 14:** City Council members urged CBOs to speak out at budget hearings to describe impact of budget cuts on low-income communities, services providers, and families in need.

Adult Priorities:

- **Contextualized Adult Literacy**
 - Gathering information from Kingsborough Community College implementing new “No Limits Vocational ESL Project” contextualized learning program.
- **Adult Literacy Services (DYCD) – FY09 Preliminary Budget: \$5.3M**
 - Supporting increase and expansion of adult literacy services.
- **Mayor’s Commission on Construction Opportunity Initiatives (SBS) – FY09 Preliminary Budget: \$0 (\$42,000 PEG in FY08)**
 - Gathering information about City partnerships with STRIVE, NEW & Construction Skills 2000 to help economically disadvantaged, women, and youth obtain pre-apprenticeship opportunities in construction.
- **Training for Green Collar Jobs**
 - Working with the Urban Agenda to research opportunities to expand training for green collar jobs in the emerging energy efficiency market.
 - Submitting proposal for session at NYCETC Workforce Summit on May 2.

Youth Priorities:

- **Young Adult Internship Program (DYCD) – FY 09 Preliminary Budget: \$0**
 - Gathering information about programs operated by SCAN NY and Henry St. Settlement to provide training, internships and continuing education to disconnected youth.
- **CUNY Prep (CUNY) – FY 09 Preliminary Budget: \$0**
 - Gathering information about educational program that supports disconnected youth through a curriculum to earn their GED and receive immediate college access (through CUNY College Now) and advisement to make the transition to higher education.

***2008 City Budget Hearings Coming Up - Important to speak out!**

City Council Calendar: http://www.nycouncil.info/html/calendar/calendar_new.cfm

- First Round (Preliminary Budget) – March 2008
- **Second Round (Executive Budget) – May 2008:**
 - Please send us stories about the impact of budget cuts on clients and CBO programs and services.
 - Jill will send announcements about upcoming hearings and provide assistance in drafting testimony to FPWA member agencies if needed.

7. Participant Survey: The group provided feedback by filling out a brief survey at the end of the meeting. Results are being compiled and will be used to develop future meeting topics.

If you would like to be a presenter to discuss an effective employment, education or training model; workforce research finding or policy idea; information about funding sources; or other workforce development topic at a future Task Force meeting, please contact: Jill Poklemba at jpoklemba@fpwa.org.

The **Next Task Force Meeting** will be a special forum event, sponsored in collaboration with the FPWA Child Welfare Task Force and Youth Services Network:

“New Directions for Disconnected Youth”

Friday, June 6, 2008

9:00am – 12noon

Baruch College

Go to our website for more information: www.fpwa.org

VITA sites by borough of NYC:

Manhattan:

<http://www.otda.state.ny.us/main/reform/vita/Manhattan%20County%20VITA%20sites.pdf>

Brooklyn:

<http://www.otda.state.ny.us/main/reform/vita/Brooklyn%20County%20VITA%20sites.pdf>

Bronx:

<http://www.otda.state.ny.us/main/reform/vita/Bronx%20County%20VITA%20sites.pdf>

Queens:

<http://www.otda.state.ny.us/main/reform/vita/Queens%20County%20VITA%20sites.pdf>

Staten Island:

<http://www.otda.state.ny.us/main/reform/vita/Staten%20Island%20County%20VITA%20sites.pdf>