

**Youth Committee Conference Call
Meeting Minutes
October 12, 2021**

The NCI Works Youth Committee Zoom Meeting was called to order at 4:0 p.m. by Chair Teresa Strum. Roll call was taken.

Name	Present	Absent	Name	Present	Absent
Jim Carlson	X		Aurora Medina		X
Emlee Dooley		X	Sarah McFarlane		X
Beth Dellatori	X		Kris Noble	X	
Abby Farrell		X	Teresa Strum	X	
Sally Hanrahan	X		Justin Wiggins		X
Beth Hubbard	X				

Others Present: Carrie Folken, Jo Ann Johnson, Randy Freeman, Rachel Curry

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Due to a lack of quorum, the June 8, 2021 Meeting Minutes were not approved. They will be presented at the next Youth Committee meeting.

Business Meeting

Update on Career Preparation/Life Skills Programs

Sally informed members that she reached out to Jennifer at the Safe School and they are interested in participating in the Career Preparation/Life Skills Program this year. Jennifer will be meeting with the teachers to get topics for what types of jobs the students want to learn about. Sally said that it sounded like they were interested in careers and work readiness where they can expose the students to different types of careers. Sally said that if any member was interested in talking with the students about their career to let her know.

Teresa reminded Sally that AHEC has the Virtual Job Shadow program available if she would be interested in sharing it with her students. Sally commented that she thought Jennifer would be interested and asked if Sally can share the availability of the program with other schools. Teresa agreed.

PY 20 Youth Provider Final Report

Sally informed members that the final youth report for PY 20 (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021) was included with the meeting materials. She told members that with the pandemic, none of the providers met their planned enrollment numbers. However, Sally did say that staff were excited that the students did as well as they did. She said that a lot of effort and extra work went into getting the students engaged. Sally reported that the outcomes for each of the programs was included on the final report.

Teresa commented that although the numbers were lower than expected students were served and benefits were gained.

Randy asked for information about the Work Study Program with the LaSalle County Regional Office of Education as he has someone that may be interested in enrolling in that program. Carrie suggested that Randy talk with Jim Carlson.

Update on PY 21 Youth Providers

Sally referred members to the PY 21 Youth Provider Update report that was included with the meeting materials. She said that the programs started July 1, 2021 so the numbers reported are cumulative through September 30, 2021. Sally pointed out that the Work Study Program with the LaSalle County Regional Office of Education did not start until September. The Education Outreach Program with the Regional Office of Education #47 started in August.

Jim Carlson with the Work Study Program reported that he is new to the operation of the program but feels that things are going well. He said that of the students that were carried in are not making the gains that he had hoped for. Jim said that there is a level of interest from the students and when they do attend great progress is made. Jim commented that there is not the social interaction with the students as there is in a traditional classroom.

Beth Hubbard with the Education Outreach Program told members that she has been disappointed with number of students reaching out for assistance. She said that she thought that there would be more phone calls to enroll in the program. Instead, Beth said, the calls are coming from the parents encouraging their son/daughter to attend. Beth commented that some of the students are experiencing anxiety and depression and she's having a difficult time getting them to commit to the program. On a good note, Beth said that there is a core group of students that are making progress. Four students will be testing this week and 3 tested last week and passed their tests. Beth said that other than enrollments, the program is good.

Youth Work-Based Learning Expenditure

Carrie reminded members that Work Based Learning expenditures are required to be at 20% by the end of a program year. She also told members that the grant has a two-year reporting period for BEST, Inc. to expend the funds. Carrie said that for the Program Year 20 grant the expenditure rate as of August 31, 2021 is 34%. Carrie said that staff can still enroll in Work Based Learning but we are above the 20% threshold. She told members that BEST has not started the PY 21 expenditure level since we have 2 years to reach the threshold.

Brainstorming Session (Future Projects)

Sally asked for input from members about doing a couple of youth programs in the coming year. She said that they could be short term or long term projects depending on what it would be. She asked members what kind of ideas they had for working with students ages 17-24 that would give them an opportunity to develop some work skills and habits. Sally provided members with some of the programs that were done in the past like the Carpenters Program where BEST hired

union carpenters to train students on making picnic tables, flower containers, gazebos, park benches that were donated to not-for profit agencies or municipalities. Another project was Workforce One where BEST hired a contractor who taught students how to paint fire hydrants, offices for a Tri-County Opportunities Council along with a few other projects. In each of these projects, Sally said, the materials were donated. One other project was WYB-TV where students worked in small groups using audio visual equipment to film events to create a movie.

Sally told members that these are some of the projects that we did in the past, but we are looking to get ideas for new projects to move forward. In the past, she said, they were mostly younger students, however we also have the 20-24 year age group that we could develop a program for also. Sally said that when the students come into the BEST office they want to work with their hands, but have never been exposed to tools. She said that some of the students are very creative and between music, painting, CDL and nursing there are plenty of interests.

A lengthy discussion followed with members offering suggestions. Kris suggested that we work with the Whiteside Area Career Center as they have many programs that are available. She also suggested the Woodlawn Arts Academy as a possibility to partner with. Kris also thought guaranteeing an interview to people who complete a project could be an incentive for them to participate.

Beth Dellatori said that she through the U of I Extension could help youth learn what was needed to pass the paraprofessional exam.

Carrie Folken shared her experience with the IL Valley Area Chamber of Commerce (IVAC) called IV Lead. She said that it provided individuals to learn about the communities surrounding the IVAC area.

Kris also told members that the Chamber sponsors "Workplace Wednesday" where business leaders and legislators select an area to visit with local businesses to learn about the business. She said that most businesses are eager to open their doors as they want the exposure.

Randy suggested putting together a spreadsheet of opportunities where young people could look at options that may be available to them.

Carrie comments that many unions are looking for young people that are interested in working with their hands. Kris echoed Carrie's comment saying that the Northwest Region has a large number of manufacturing companies hiring.

Sally thanked members for their input and said that she was thinking of starting out with something small and if it was successful we could build upon it. Teresa commented that Health Care are in need of employees.

Other Business

Member Updates

Teresa informed members that AHEC has partnered with SWAY Essay workshop to assist with writing of essays. She said that they will be holding virtual workshops to help write essays for college entrance, scholarships, etc. She also announced that KSB Hospital is having a drive thru flu shot clinic tomorrow if anyone was interested.

Sally told members that Sauk Valley Community College is not able to host the Work in the Real World event this year but hoping to next spring. She said she will talk with them in January. Sally reported that she did get a few calls from schools asking about the program so she knows the interest is there. Teresa asked about the possibility of a virtual session. Sally said that she thought the Regional Office of Education was putting together a series of videos that will be made available to schools. Kris informed members that the project was started a while ago between the Chamber and the Regional Office of Education and began working with the manufacturing industry but they have not gone live yet. Kris noted that the Chamber is partnering with Sterling High School working with juniors and seniors for a 6-week program for those that are interested in going into the workforce.

Sally commented that an idea arose for a “dirty jobs projects” that would have a student go into a worksite and interview and film the employees working on the job.

Youth Committee Membership List

Teresa informed members that an updated Youth Committee Membership List was included with the meeting materials. If anyone had any corrections, please let Jo Ann know.

Public Comments

Randy Freeman informed members that he has taken over as Chairman for Tri-County Opportunities Council and noted that they have the same concerns as the Youth Committee in terms of new enrollments. Carrie pointed out that Tri-County Opportunities Council covers the same area of LWIA #4 plus one additional county. Randy noted that Tri-County Opportunities Council will continue to meet via Zoom going forward.

Rachel Curry informed members that she and Mary Ann Rice with the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation Services will continue to participate as much as possible. She said that they will be getting a new supervisor to replace Jim Knauf.

After discussion about the December 14 meeting, it was agreed to cancel the meeting due to the holidays. The next Youth Committee meeting will be February 8, 2022 at 4:00 p.m.

Adjournment

With there being no further business, Kris Noble motioned to adjourn. Motion was seconded by Sally Hanrahan. Meeting adjourned at 5:02 p.m.

Jo Ann Johnson