

***Increasing Employer Engagement:
Facing the Challenges and Realities***

**Meeting Summary
CCRY Network Summer Meeting
Hartford, Connecticut**

June 11-12, 2007

MONDAY, JUNE 11

Mayor Eddie A. Perez welcomed the group and highlighted the importance of collaborating across systems and providing a continuum of services for Hartford's youth.

Panel on Apprenticeship and Pipeline Models: Developing Partnerships with Business to Create Real-life Work Opportunities for Youth

- Cheryl Holmes, Human Resources Business Partner at Aetna described Aetna's relationship with Capital Workforce Partners and described the Career Connections model
- Dennis Mink, Youth Employment Programs Coordinator, Capitol Workforce Partners outlined Capital Workforce Partners School-to-Career Strategy and its Career Connections program
- Stacey Jarrett Wagner, Managing Director of the Center for Workforce Success highlighted the emerging needs of the manufacturing industry and outlined the Dream It! Do It! Initiative
- Anita Cardella, Director of the Hartford Job Corps Academy discussed features of the Academy's pipeline model and recommended strategies to engage employers in the pipeline

Presentation / Discussion on Competencies & Credentials: How They Can Be Used to Support and Increase Employer Engagement

- Elyse Rosenblum, Director of Education Programs, Corporate Voices for Working Families outlined the key findings of the survey entitled Are They Really Ready to Work and highlighted the role business should play in workforce readiness
- Jim Boucher, Director of Youth Services, Capital Workforce Partners (CWP) described the career competencies used at Capital Workforce Partners

- Mala Thakur, Executive Director, National Youth Employment Coalition discussed the National Work Readiness Credential and the work the National Youth Employment Coalition is doing in the area of credentials
- Shailah Stewart, Partnership Coordinator, Brockton Public Schools outlined the structure and use of the Massachusetts work-based learning plan

Facilitated Roundtable on Building Employer Engagement: Making it a Reality in Challenged Urban and Rural Communities

- Eugene Sheehan, Board Chair, Hartford Chamber of Commerce facilitated a roundtable discussion with panelists from multiple sectors: Steve Wing, Director of Government Programs, CVS; Greg Thompson, Human Resources Representative, FedEx; David Brown, General Manager, Maxim Health Care; Michael Smeltzer, Manufacturer's Association of South Central Pennsylvania; and Jan DeCoursey, Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago
- Jan DeCoursey, Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago set up the challenge for the roundtable discussion by presenting research findings and implications for stakeholders from the *Making Connections: Engaging Employers in Preparing Chicago's Youth for the Workforce* study
- Michael Smeltzer, Manufacturer's Association of South Central Pennsylvania discussed the work he's done to help build the workforce pipeline and presented the Your Employability Skills (YES) pre-employment credential

Evening Reception at the State Capitol: Legislators, Youth and Providers Work Together to Raise Issues and Resources for Connecticut's Youth

TUESDAY, JUNE 12

- Sally Prouty, President and CEO, The Corps Network, highlighted the strategy Campaign For Youth is taking to move the national agenda forward and asked the group for input on how it can be used at the local level

Building Employer Engagement and Pipelines: Action Agenda for the Network

- Keith Westrich, Connecting Activities Director, Department of Education, Center for Student Support, Career and Education Services suggested that bringing together workforce development and education has been a "slow and sloppy process" but that currently there are several very promising policies and tools being implemented in MA. These include Connecting Activities, the MA Work-based Learning Plan and the state's Pathways to Success by 21 Initiative

"Vision This": An Exercise in Collective Brainstorming to Create a Well-Designed "Network" Pipeline Model

- **Lyle Wray, Executive Director, Capitol Region Council of Governments and co-author of Results that Matter: Improving Communities by Engaging Citizens, Measuring Performance, and Getting Things Done presented a macro level look at the nation's need for creating a workforce pipeline to reconnect youth and highlighted four key points for getting youth ready for the globally disciplined marketplace**

Participants were divided into two groups. One group, led by Lorenzo Harrison, Regional Director, U.S. Department of Labor, discussed the possibility of creating a well designed pipeline model and a proposal to the department of labor to be used with federal contractors. The other group, led by Sally Prouty, President and CEO, The Corps Network, brainstormed what a model would look like if you coupled corps with education support, training, and post-secondary transition support that was specifically customized for an industry.

- **Federal Contractors: This small group designed a step-by step approach for creating and marketing a well designed pipeline model**
- **The Corps: This group felt that educating the Network on what the corps resources and potential opportunities are is necessary before delving into creating such a model**

Next Steps for the Network Organization

- The CCRY Winter Meeting will be held in *Houston, January 14th and 15th* and will focus on mobilization
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Detailed Meeting Summary

Monday June 11th

Mayor Eddie A. Perez, City of Hartford kicked off the two-day meeting by welcoming the CCRY Network participants and giving background on the work that Hartford is engaged in to help connect their city's youth to education and employment. Four years ago Hartford began to assess the reasons why so many youth were not succeeding. The Mayor said that "... at the end of the day in the Hartford core area, we only graduate 29% of our kids normally. And I say normally meaning that if a kid graduates from one of our schools they should have a career path to a job or a path to higher education and we should be able to guarantee that they be successful at either path. And we can't say that. We can only say that for one out of every three kids in our system. Therefore, we spend a lot more money reeducating, retraining, readjusting and reconnecting young people, and in most cases, I would say at least in 50% of the cases, we are not successful." In response to the city's assessment, all the partners in the community, the workforce investment system, the education system and community based organizations, were brought together to collaboratively assess what they were doing right and what needed to be changed. "The first thing was that we could no longer work in silos", the Mayor said. "What we were doing in the school system was just as important as what we were doing in a community based organization and what we were doing in places like Job Corps."

Mayor Perez also discussed the changes in the workforce investment system and the important impact of the Youth Opportunity grant. Since the grant, the Hartford Office of Youth Services within the Office of the Mayor was established to continue its focus. "...the idea there is to align resources and policy, similar to what you're doing at the national level, with practices that incorporate connections to partners, critical partners, so that as kids move from 9 years old to 21 years old you are able to show what interventions and what enhancements you could make in order to make that young person more likely to succeed and what the leverage that goes on in terms of resources is."

Panel on Apprenticeship and Pipeline Models

The first panel of the meeting highlighted three unique pipeline models for youth that create opportunities for real life work experience while receiving the support and skill development they need to be successful in the workforce.

Cheryl Holmes, Human Resources Business Partner at Aetna, described Aetna's relationship with Capital Workforce Partners, Career Connections model, the objective of the model, key roles and responsibilities and the internship program design. Career Connections is a "work and learn" model that allows students to participate in a job readiness program which may include one-on-one mentoring, educational classes and team building exercises. Subsequent to the program, students are placed in paid internships within area businesses such as Aetna. Aetna began its relationship with

Capital Workforce Partners in 2002, has hired 30 high school students since then, and expects to hire 5 more in 2007.

The key roles and responsibilities in this partnership belong to three entities: human resources, the supervisor/mentor and the Career Connections intern. Human resources is responsible for maintaining the relationship, identifies student supervisors/mentors, orchestrates selection and hiring of students and facilitates centralized hiring. The supervisor/mentor has the important role of creating a meaningful and productive work experience by providing coaching and feedback and promoting learning by sharing of experience. The intern is responsible for demonstrating a willingness to learn and be a member of the team, operating independently and demonstrating a degree of professionalism consistent with the role.

Dennis Mink, Youth Employment Programs Coordinator, Capitol Workforce Partners outlined Capital Workforce Partners School-to-Career Strategy and its Career Connections program that began in the fall of 2006. The School-To-Career strategy is a four-tiered model. Tier I is a project-based learning and career exploration experience where youth ages 14 -16 are involved in career exposure activities and are introduced to competency development and team building. In Tier II youth 15-18 years old are in supported work environments and explore careers by participating in simulated work environments and job shadowing. Tier III allows youth ages 16 and up to receive enhanced employability skills training and employment. Finally in Tier IV, youth ages 17 and up participate in the Career Connections program which is a “work and learn” model designed to transition high school juniors and seniors to a successful career path. These youth receive mentoring, job readiness workshops, learn how to conduct a job search and secure unsubsidized, private sector employment.

Stacey Jarrett Wagner, Managing Director of the Center for Workforce Success highlighted the emerging needs of the manufacturing industry and the strategies the industry is taking to meet those needs. Currently, manufacturing has a very poor industry image by young people. Jobs are seen as a dead-end, highly labor-intensive, and low paying, while manufacturing as a whole is seen as a dying industry. This poor image acts as a deterrent for new workers to enter the sector and is being taken very seriously by the National Association of Manufacturers and others.

The industry is working hard at creating its pipeline and developing strategies to replace its current and future workforce. One strategy includes the Dream It! Do It! Campaign; a pro-manufacturing economic development and awareness initiative with a strong employment focus that is in 7 communities throughout the country and is growing. The campaign is a partnership with local, regional, and state collaborations of stakeholders, National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), the nation’s largest industrial trade association, and The Manufacturing Institute, NAM’s 501c(3) educational and research arm. Dream it! Do It! promotes an accurate vision of today’s advanced

manufacturing, aligns goals of economic developers, workforce development and education with industry, develops local education and training strategies for manufacturing that fill skills gaps, and provides career information, guidance, and links to training, internships and jobs.

Anita Cardella, Director of the Hartford Job Corps Academy began by stating that Hartford Job Corps Academy is unique in that it is designed to serve and does serve primarily Hartford youth (92%). The Academy is an employment readiness program and it may be a stepping stone to graduating from high school, but is not a school. Ms. Cardella discussed features of the Academy's pipeline model and recommended strategies to engage employers in the pipeline.

The Hartford Job Corps Academy is a federally funded, 43-year old program that is operated by a private business and serves 16-24 year old out of school and in school youth (concurrent enrollment). It is an employment training readiness program that provides academic, career technical, personal, and employability skills in a safe, supportive learning and living environment. The program serves both resident and non-resident trainees.

Career Technical Training (CTT) is designed to meet local labor market needs for entry into a "career", not just the first job. The curriculum is "employer driven" based on continuous review and enhancement using industry partners through Industry Advisory Councils. The requirements of the curriculum include industry recognized certification attainment.

The model also has career "lattice/ladder" offerings that rely on the engagement with employers, community colleges, other community based organizations and educational partners. 65% of outcome measures are placement and post-placement measures, i.e. initial placement, initial wage, 6/12 month retention and wage improvement, which means that the quality of the training is measured by the success in the employment world.

Questions and Answers

How did the relationship start with Aetna?

It began slowly. It was unknown how to incorporate these students into the company. At first, students weren't assigned to very substantive roles, but soon the roles began to evolve after we witnessed the students' abilities. In order to really make this relationship work between the providers and the employers, it is crucial to get buy-in from top-down.

Dennis Mink mentioned "comfort" when discussing the relationship between the youth and the employers. How do you increase levels of comfort for youth?

You must remove stereotypes about youth by presenting them as assets and by allowing employers to have exposure to youth. Employers must have an opportunity to see these youth in action to understand their potential.

What has worked to get kids interested in manufacturing?

It is necessary to educate them and strip away the layers of what manufacturing means. Youth need to attend tours to see what a “factory” really is. They need to be engaged, participate in internships, apprenticeships, and job-shadowing.

How do you develop partnerships with employers?

One way is to get involved with local chambers of commerce and business associations so they can make the links to the businesses. For example, Dream It! Do It! wants to link with America’s Promise in order to get “to scale.”

Presentation / Discussion on Competencies & Credentials

Leaders in the field have spent significant time identifying the particular competencies and credentials that are needed to demonstrate youth preparedness for the workforce. This session outlined current competencies and credentials and discussed how they can be used as tools to support employer engagement in order to provide increased opportunities for our youth.

Elyse Rosenblum, Director of Education Programs, Corporate Voices for Working Families began discussing the key findings of the survey entitled *Are They Really Ready to Work* and highlighted the role business should play in workforce readiness. Over 400 surveys were completed by high level human resource professionals from across industry sectors. The survey found that employers believed as many as 42% of graduates with high school diploma or those with GED equivalency were deficient in the skills needed for the workforce. These skills included written communication, professionalism and work ethic, critical thinking and problem solving, oral communications and ethics and social responsibility. Conversely, the applied skills that topped the “very important” list by employers were professionalism and teamwork, followed by oral communications, ethics and social responsibility, reading comprehension and English language ability. The survey also asked employers who they believed has primary responsibility for workforce readiness; 75% believed it is the K-12 Education system’s responsibility and 19% believed that it was the hiring employer’s responsibility.

Ms. Rosenblum asserted that it is important for business to play a leadership role in workforce readiness by articulating the skills that are needed, helping with skill development, and communicating with policymakers and others about these issues. Corporations can partner with schools, afterschool and other youth development programs by providing funding, volunteers and in-kind supports. Business can also provide valuable work experience through internships, summer jobs, job shadowing opportunities, work-study experience and ultimately entry level jobs.

Jim Boucher, Director of Youth Services, Capital Workforce Partners (CWP) described the career competencies used at Capital Workforce Partners. CWP's competencies were identified by employers as the skills necessary for success in entry-level employment and were then validated by Strumpf and Associates. The competencies include: basic skills, customer service, computer literacy, problem solving and decision making, interpersonal communications, personal qualities, and job seeking skills. The competencies use is modeled after Massachusetts' Connecting Activities Work-Based Learning Plan and has been further built-out in partnership with Capitol Region Education Council. They are used as a framework for CWP-funded youth and adult programming and are separated into "tiers" (as mentioned in Dennis Mink's presentation on Career Connections) to enable sequential learning built upon a strong foundation. There are companion learning plans for each tier as assessment tools and guides for the learner. 1800 students in the summer program will be using this competency plan.

Mala Thakur, Executive Director, National Youth Employment Coalition ended the panel discussion outlining the National Work Readiness Credential and discussing the work the National Youth Employment Coalition is doing in the area of credentials.

The National Work Readiness Credential was developed through a five-year, national consensus-building process that included businesses, unions, chambers of commerce, education and training professionals, which includes NYEC, and state workforce investment boards in the founding states of Florida, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Washington, the District of Columbia. This process was driven by employers and was essentially designed to be a pre-GED credential. The Work Readiness Credential profile asserts that new workers need to have the following skills: communication, interpersonal, decision making and lifelong learning.

NYEC is partnering with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the State Education Agency of the District of Columbia, Equipped for the Future and two community-based organizations in the District of Columbia to implement the National Work Readiness Credential in a pilot project. NYEC is also engaged in creating competencies for workers in the youth workforce development field and is developing several curriculum modules that focus on building skills in the following areas: knowledge of the field, communication with youth, assessment and individualized planning, relationships, family and community, workforce preparation, career exploration, relationships with employers, and connections to resources. This curriculum may be implemented in a university-based setting for workforce development professionals.

Shailah Stewart, Partnership Coordinator, Brockton Public Schools outlined the structure and use of the Massachusetts work-based learning plan. The MA Work-Based Learning Plan is a tool designed to drive learning and productivity on the job in an internship and other work-based learning experiences. The tool identifies and assesses "Foundation Skills" that are germane to all jobs as well

as options for identifying and assessing specific “Workplace and Career Skills” unique to the individual placement.

The Plan has a three-fold purpose: diagnostic, productivity and assessment. It identifies ability level within skill areas (diagnostic), drives quality of student learning and productivity (goal-setting), and assesses student progress (assessment). There are three sections to the plan. Section 1 focuses on foundation skills: communications skills, work ethic, teamwork, and professionalism. Section 2 focuses on specific workplace and career skills and section 3 deals with evaluation of performance and progress. The new MA Work-based Learning Plan is a more efficient tool that can be personalized to address: academic goals such as math, literacy, MCAS skills and more; career and vocational goals; company-specific or industry-specific skills; and internship-specific goals. The new plan has been piloted with a range of employers and has received positive feedback.

Questions and Answers

What are the opportunities to engage employers with these tools?

The earlier you engage the employer in this assessment process, the more likely you are to build the relationship with that employer.

Have you figured out how to translate the MA Work-Based Learning Plan?

The chamber of commerce is working on a collaborative process in portfolio development to create a package for the Plan and will be a chamber-endorsed tool available on a website.

How do you build relationships with employers in order to make competencies a reality?

You must market the collaboration and competencies in terms of increasing competitiveness. It is important to bring external organizations to the table, which can be extremely difficult work, but in the end, we need partners that will engage in year-round system building.

Facilitated Roundtable on Building Employer Engagement: Making it a Reality in Challenged Urban and Rural Communities

The session began with Thomas Phillips, President and CEO, Capital Workforce Partners introducing the panel of speakers as well as the facilitator for this session, Eugene Sheehan, Chair of Board of Directors, Hartford Chamber of Commerce and presenting the context to the conversation. Mr. Phillips suggested that future workforce development is a key priority for the country. In the past, employer engagement has been marketed as a social agenda. Now, it is clearly an economic development agenda. This roundtable discussion explored the challenges of and promising approaches to engaging employers from the perspectives of panelists from multiple sectors.

Mr. Sheehan introduced the panelists: **Steve Wing, Director of Government Programs, CVS; Greg Thompson, Human Resources Representative, FedEx; David Brown, General Manager, Maxim Health Care; Michael Smeltzer, Manufacturer's Association of South Central Pennsylvania; and Jan DeCoursey, Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago**

Jan DeCoursey, Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago set the stage for the roundtable discussion by presenting research findings and implications for stakeholders from the *Making Connections: Engaging Employers in Preparing Chicago's Youth for the Workforce* study. Ms. DeCoursey noted 6 key disconnects between employers and providers. 1. The meaning of "job ready" varies greatly among providers and employers. 2. Knowledge of and access to support from providers is not clearly understood by employers and therefore, not utilized or valued. 3. Employers are unlikely to hire youth with the greatest needs. 4. Racial and cultural differences between youth and employers are often obvious but not discussed. 5. Current efforts to increase for-profit employer engagement may not align with youth and employer interests. 6. Stakeholders do not share workforce preparation goals. Three implications for stakeholders were suggested. 1. There should be alternative types of engagement for different types of employers. 2. Youth program providers should make employers and youth aware of their supports. 3. Schools' roles in development of the future workforce must be more clearly defined.

Each of the following panelists briefly introduced themselves and the work they have been involved in as it relates to engagement in youth workforce development. Several themes emerged from the roundtable discussion. It was noted that the need for skilled workers is increasing as is the difficulty in filling these jobs, and that it all comes down to implementing strategies that impact business' "bottom line." These employers expressed a willingness to hire and train unskilled workers as long as they held "good values", i.e. motivated to learn, work in a team and be a person of "good moral character". Mr. Sheehan pushed the panelists to think about how employers manage "differences" in new workers, i.e. racial, language, and appearance. Dialogue ensued as to whether it was the full responsibility of the employee to assimilate into the work culture or whether employers have some responsibility to adapt in order to foster integration of new workers into the existent culture.

The panelists were asked to what extent have they as employers been able to access current structures that offer supportive services to assist employees when training and employing our youth. Connecticut works and state employment agencies were noted as having been a good access point. Having a Government Programs department at CVS was given as an example of a structure that helps make the connection to the available services. Maxim Health Care has a professional advisory board that brings together a local board to discuss what's working and what's not working as it relates to increasing their skilled labor force and how linkages to those structures can be made stronger.

Michael Smeltzer, Manufacturer's Association of South Central Pennsylvania discussed the work he's done to help build the workforce pipeline and presented the Your Employability Skills (YES) pre-employment credential; an employer-developed and - recognized credential that determines the academic ability and commitment of an individual to seek a quality job.

Evening Reception at the State Capitol: In the Old Appropriations Room at the state Capitol the CCRY Network meeting participants and others heard Connecticut State Representative Marie Kirkley-Bey and Senator Donald DeFronzo speak about their recent success in maintaining funding increases for youth in their state and stressed the importance of youth involvement in the legislative process. Several youth from Hartford spoke about their advocacy efforts that took place in the last legislative session. Thomas Phillips, President and CEO, and Jim Boucher, Director of Youth Services, at Capital Workforce Partners (CWP) and Bob Rath, President and CEO, Our Piece of the Pie, each thanked Rep. Kirkly-Bey and Sen. DeFronzo for their energy and passion for advocacy on behalf of youth and celebrated the collaborative efforts made by their organizations to help achieve the recent legislative victories.

Tuesday, June 12th

Sally Prouty, President and CEO, The Corps Network highlighted the strategy Campaign For Youth is taking to move the national agenda forward and asked the group for input on how it can be used at the local level. CFY's new document entitled "Advancing a National Investment Strategy for Reconnecting Our Youth" was produced by a coalition of representatives on the CFY policy committee and is meant to stand up and speak on behalf of disconnected youth. CFY is looking at how it can build consensus around this issue and how it can build the political will to put resources into policies and strategies we know work to reconnect youth.

The Memo to the White House that was signed by 250 organizations in 2005 allowed CFY to enter doors as a collective entity where individually it wouldn't have been possible. The "Investment Strategy Document" is the second substantial document meant to influence thinking nationally as well as insert this discussion in policy change dialogues and build the energy during the 2008 presidential campaign. CFY needs a state level advocacy effort, as well as a global advocacy effort, that mobilizes mayors, governors, and legislators across the board. CFY is being strategic about who they are talking to and holds the belief that there's power in numbers and in consistency in message. Ms. Prouty asked the group if the document represented the perspectives and needs of those in the

room, and requested feedback on what more CFY needs to know to help represent the group's perspectives and needs.

Building Employer Engagement and Pipelines: Action Agenda for the Network

Keith Westrich, Connecting Activities Director, Department of Education, Center for Student Support, Career and Education Services began by presenting a historical perspective of the strained relationship between workforce development and education in Massachusetts. With every new administration come new visions, funding streams, and policies forcing administrators to retrofit those into structures and systems that are already in place. Mr. Westrich suggests bringing together workforce development and education has been a "slow and sloppy process" but that currently there are several very promising policies and tools being implemented in MA. These include Connecting Activities, the MA Work-based Learning Plan and the state's Pathways to Success by 21 Initiative, all three of which he outlines in detail.

Connecting Activities was established by a \$7.1 million DOE state line item to provide at-risk youth with structured work-based learning experiences connected to classroom teaching to support employability skill gain. The funds flow through the 16 Local Workforce Investment Boards working in collaboration with Local School to Career Partnerships. Funds are granted through a competitive RFR issued by the Department of Education. Connecting Activities pays for staffing (employer outreach/career specialists), professional development (work-based learning), student support services (special accommodations) and data management (MA STC Database).

In the 25 high schools with the highest levels of participation, over 35% of grade 11-12 students participate in work and learning internships. Half of all high schools - 172 schools out of 348 - participated in work and learning internship programs in FY06. 15% of grade 11-12 students in participating schools were involved in work and learning internships. 5,288 employers provided internship placements for students, generating \$34,762,571 in wages. The legislation requires at least a 200% match in wages for students from private sector participants.

Pathways to Success by 21 is a DWD, DOE, and EOHHS led initiative designed to support and improve service delivery strategies for both in and out-of-school at-risk youth at the state, regional and local levels. This is the state's version of the Department of Labor's Youth Visioning Initiative. There are nine P-21 Strategies: Public Awareness, Early Identification, Early Intervention/Prevention, Outreach and Support, Increase Alternative Education and Training, Work Readiness Assessment for Youth, Unified Staff Development, Address Persistent Barriers, and Share Data.

The MA Work-Based Learning Plan is a tool designed to drive learning and productivity on the job/internship and other work-based learning experiences which was outlined by Shailah Stewart). It

is an interagency collaboration and can be used in any setting in any system that works with those kids.

Group Dialogue

Mr. Westrich's presentation transitioned the group into thinking about what steps the Network can take to move the broader agenda forward. Many questions were asked. Could the Network clarify language that helps explain the challenge of high unemployment, but higher number of unfilled jobs? For example in MA there are 120,000 unemployed and 80,000 jobs that are unfilled. What's the story that needs to be told? What role should the Network play in bridging the gap between workforce development and business? Can we collectively figure out how to blend workforce and education? We have the best of knowledge about creative interventions. Does the Network want to approach common industries to push these ideas?

The group discussed the need for a marketing plan that accurately captures the broader challenges and ultimately changes the way employers and others view disconnected youth. It is no longer a black issue, a poor issue, or an urban issue. It is a youth issue. What does a kid look like who is not at-risk? You can only leverage resources so much, yet it is not just an issue of money either. It is more an issue of values and of the need to change the way we do business. Businesses in Europe see these relationships as investments, but in the United States it is seen as a cost. How do we use the power of the Network to "sell" the youth and infrastructure as assets? We need to reinforce the message that our kids are our workers. Employers do not necessarily understand what a motivating factor they can be when they come to school and show youth why what they're learning can be relevant to their futures. We must also help move the language of employing our youth from violence prevention to economic development and break away from the notion of prevention and recovery as separate strategies.

"Vision This"

Lyle Wray, Executive Director, Capitol Region Council of Governments and co-author of Results that Matter: Improving Communities by Engaging Citizens, Measuring Performance, and Getting Things Done presented a macro level look at the nation's need for creating a workforce pipeline to reconnect youth. Mr. Wray highlighted four key points for getting youth ready for the globally disciplined marketplace: 1. strategy and execution; 2. strategy map – best practices or evidence based practice; 3. engage community partners; and, 4. effective community governance.

A Community Strategy Map is a cause and effect diagram of strategic objectives from engaging citizens to getting desired results. It helps give a picture of the community strategies for achieving major community outcome themes. It also presents a selection of high leverage, high buy-in interventions, with key collaborators on board.

Engaging community partners is important because it increases effectiveness, legitimacy, sustainability, ownership of issues and mobilizes resources and supports. There should also be a focus on residents as partners in connecting youth to the workforce.

Effective Community Governance is achieved by aligning core community skills of citizen engagement, measuring results, and getting things done. Because one-time improvements no longer keep communities vital, you must have effective governance to foster ongoing community renewal and improvement.

Mr. Wray suggests that reconnecting youth is a major issue in US, UK, Australia, and New Zealand and that currently there are massive amounts of literature on strategies that work. Selecting successful strategies and partners, focusing on outcomes, and having relentless follow-through will be the key to moving the agenda forward.

"Vision This" Small group sessions: Participants were divided into two groups. One group, led by Lorenzo Harrison, Regional Director, U.S. Department of Labor, discussed the possibility of creating a well designed pipeline model and its proposal to the department of labor to be used with federal contractors. The other group, led by Sally Prouty, President and CEO, The Corps Network, brainstormed what a model would look like if you coupled corps with education support, training, and post-secondary transition support that was specifically customized for an industry.

Federal Contractors

This small group designed a step-by step approach for creating and marketing a well designed pipeline model. First, the Network must identify companies that are common amongst CCRY communities and those that are local, such as UPS, Federal Express, Good Year, American Express, and Dell. Also identify companies that are already driven to employ young people and want to be connected to the Network? Next, present a strategy for connection. CCRY needs a strong marketing strategy to “sell our product” in a consistent way speaking the employer’s language – i.e. how do we help them with the bottom line. Then, the Network must promote buy-in from a higher level (possibly DOL compliance) and design and present a quality on the job training model common to all CCRY communities that can be utilized within each identified employer. Keeping in mind that all job development is local, CCRY can identify the “what’s in it for me” piece for the employer and really define the product. It will be important to speak a common language with employers and include relevant statistics around the need for an educated workforce. To establish brand development, CCRY can create a national tag line; i.e. “I’m part of a DOL nationwide vision” for example. CCRY can also create a product - program/strategy/on the job training model and define the product and the process.

Employers must help identify skill sets to ensure they are appropriate and must be provided with proficiency documents. The model will incorporate career ladder training and be similar to the Ready

to Work model where the provider pays the 1st two weeks of salary, handles the orientation and serves as an extension of the employer's HR department. The orientation is built as an extension of what the employer is about, includes HR policies, company procedures and work-based learning plans, identifies skills needed from a job description and provides supports.

CCRY must: find a company (may have access through Lorenzo); select an approach and solidify a model; adopt and/or re-craft a work-based learning plan, such as the Massachusetts sample; create the Ready to Work orientation; seek funding options for the model and pilot programs; seek funding for employers and education leaders to have a forum showcasing effective practice and make association connections (ACM).

The Corps

It was decided that a model for coupling corps with education supports, and training would make "a good product better", however, the group felt that educating the Network on what the corps resources and potential opportunities are that exist would be necessary before delving into creating such a model. Several questions were asked, such as, how many hours of service would youth have to participate in and could those requirements fit with the requirements of other programs that already exist in communities. While more information was needed before developing a model, it was agreed that the model should fulfill three areas of need: a community need, a youth need, and an employer need.

The group also thought that it would be important to build partnership with The Corps Network in order to better understand the opportunities that exist. Ms. Prouty has a 30 minute documentary that gives additional background on corps and she will make sure communities have access to the documentary. She also mentioned that recently there has been substantial focus given to energy, environment, and transportation initiatives and that money will be directed into those areas. The Network should be aware and take advantage of that trend as next steps are considered.

Bob Rath mentioned the work that The Finance Project has done that may be helpful to the Network.

A Guide to Successful Public-Private Partnerships for Youth Programs. –

http://www.financeproject.org/publications/PublicPrivate_PM.pdf

Creating Dedicated Local and State Revenue Sources for Youth Programs. –

http://www.financeproject.org/publications/DLR_PM.pdf

Finding Funding: A Guide to Federal Sources for Youth Programs –

http://www.financeproject.org/publications/findingfunding_PM.pdf

Profiles of Promising Practices – **<http://financeproject.org/irc/yp/profiles.asp>**