

Workforce Investment Board of Columbia & Greene Counties
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Workforce Strategic Planning Grant Announced

The Workforce Investment Board of Columbia & Greene Counties learned about a \$100,000 strategic planning grant at its quarterly Board meeting, held June 19. The WIB has received unofficial notification from the NYS Department of Labor that funds will soon be made available.

Karen Diffley, Chairperson of the Board, informed the membership that the grant is the result of a statewide WIB Chairpersons retreat she attended in Syracuse on June 5. Ms Diffley explained, "The purpose of the retreat was to provide each of the 33 workforce areas in the State with an overview of the issues involved in creating a competitive workforce and economic development advantage in New York State."

Ms. Diffley continued, "The facilitator at the conference was Ed Barlow. He is a nationally known consultant, whose company is called - Creating the Future. He was excellent and spoke to all the workplace issues we have been dealing with as a Board."

Mary-Alane Wiltse, Director of the Workforce Investment Office at Columbia-Greene Community College, who also attended the retreat, added, "Although we don't know all the particulars about this grant yet, we do believe that it will require us to hold a community-wide summit to discuss the issues we focused on in Syracuse. We believe we will be able to use some of these funds to bring Mr. Barlow here to Columbia and Greene counties.

The exact requirements for the grant will be issued by the Department of Labor in a couple of weeks. It is anticipated that the summit will require representatives from all members of the community. This should include elected officials, businesses, government representatives, educators, parents and their children, employees, and job seekers.

Ms. Diffley concluded, "The great thing about this grant is that there should be enough money available to follow through on the ideas we hope to generate through this community summit. This is going to be a very exciting project that will give us a chance to plan for our economic future."

The Board also heard a report from Rikke Beal, from HAVE, Inc. who discussed the completion of the New Employee Orientation pilot project. Ms. Beal commented, "The project could not have been more successful. Everyone who attended the program raved about it. The Skills Standards Committee wants this program to continue, however we decided to change its name to be more inclusive. It will now be known as the Employee Enhancement Program." Over 80 participants from 11 companies attended the pilot project during April and May.

In other action, the Board voted to extend their existing youth services projects. Programs at Hudson City School district, Greeneville Central School district, New Lebanon School District, and Questar III will serve in-school youth. The in-school youth projects provide career exploration, work-readiness, employment and tutoring services. Catskill Central School district and the Workforce Investment Office at Columbia-Greene Community College will operate out-of-school projects that provided GED preparation and employment services through internships.

The next meeting of the Workforce Investment Board of Columbia & Greene Counties will be scheduled for October 2003.