

## **STRATEGIC INITIATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

### **Initiative 1: Adult Basic Workforce Skills System**

Expand the REB's leadership role to include the development of a more integrated and responsive system that builds and develops the adult basic educational and workforce readiness skills within our region's labor supply. Elements include:

- Establishment of an on-going and dynamic compact of community-based organizations, employers and educators with an interest in this issue to meet the changing needs of the workforce.
- Development of an action plan, which includes strategies, plans for implementation (including piloted demonstration projects) and desired outcomes that will improve the adult education delivery system. This plan will include Identification of key skill levels (i.e., reading, language, math, computer literacy, problem-solving, communication, etc.) and baseline measures and requirements for an effective system; gathering of baseline data regarding current awareness of the REB as a leader in workforce issues related to education and specific efforts to move the REB into a leadership position within the community.

#### **ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

- Hiring of consultant(s) to lead the charge and who especially in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year put "meat on the bones" of the action plan, focusing on outcomes and results; bringing together key stakeholders to move forward as a united group (helping to have us be viewed in the leadership capacity we were aiming towards)
- Participated in review and approval of new 5 year cycle of ABE service providers
- Brought the DOE ABE "coordination" funds into the WIB
- 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary luncheon focused on Champions of Literacy; attended by over 400 & developed DVD presentation on the topic
- Developed a PowerPoint that is used as a marketing initiative to inform key stakeholders, including potential funding sources, of the role of Literacy Works of Hampden County and its providers and partners in the workforce and economic development initiatives in Hampden County; presented show to five organizations during the last quarter of FY'05.
- Served as a resource to 15 ABE/workforce development providers to add value to their programs, identify new resources and strategies for their literacy efforts, and build capacity to assist them in the daily delivery of literacy services to adults and families in Hampden County
- As strategic partners with The Davis Foundation, continued to collaborate with the Cherish Every Child Initiative in the City of Springfield., to introduce new ways for the community to increase literacy services for youths and their families.
- Conducted monthly meetings of the Literacy Works Committee and facilitated and managed the on-going work of three Sub-Committees (Legislative Initiatives, Data Collection & Membership), to implement initiatives that support the work of the literacy providers, and add value to the work of the Committee going forward.
- Met monthly with the Springfield ABE Strategic Planning Team to review their Strategic Action Plan going forward, and to serve as a resource to add value to the implementation of the Plan.
- Prepared the Literacy Works Work Plan for FY'06; which was approved by the Committee to begin July 1, 2005.
- Conducted extensive legislative initiatives relative to the state budget process for FY'06. These advocacy initiatives developed a positive working relationship between Literacy Works and several local legislators, positioning Literacy Works to begin developing a legislative agenda for FY'07 that will address public policy and funding issues that are of significant interest to Hampden County going forward.
- Prepared a Summary Report on the results of a Technology/Distance Learning Survey that was conducted in the winter, 2005, providing a clear picture of the present capacity and inventory of instructional hardware and software in the ABE system, and serving as a baseline for development and refinement of our systemic technology capacity.
- Facilitated meetings and initiatives relative to the establishment of the Peter Picknelly Literacy Center at the YMCA Youth Center. Facilitated the donation of software program from Lexia Learning Systems to be used by the students involved in the program.
- Continued involvement in the development of The Holyoke Adult & Family Learning Center in Holyoke, to be located at the new Multi-Modal Transportation Center in Holyoke, MA.

## **Initiative 2: Technical Training**

To take a leadership role in sectoral training initiatives that enhance the technical skills of new and incumbent workers in critical industries, especially health and manufacturing. Elements include:

- Expansion of activities that promote technical training of new and incumbent workers in critical industrial sectors, including health care and manufacturing; Promotion of the growth and retention of good paying manufacturing jobs.

### **ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

- Successful completion of the IT<sup>2</sup> project that helped 1400 workers in IT jobs but across many industry sectors including health care
- 470 Nursing Home employees upgraded skills, salary, and positions through the three current ECCLI projects
- Highlighted in CommCorp ECCLI documentary
- Development of Mentor Support Program for nursing students and new nursing grads for two LTC systems; mentor training curriculum shared on DVD with partners
- Development of Nurse Preceptor Training curriculum, to enhance nursing orientation, shared with Noble Hospital.
- Involvement of Nurse Career Coach in a variety of activities to promote nursing profession, promote professional development of nurses and to support success of nursing students
- Grant management of the 5 regional NUCLI projects (595 enrollees) related to retention and success of nursing students and new grads (224 grads/161 newly licensed), nursing faculty development(8 MSN/DNS students serving 212 undergrad students), expansion of nursing programs (115 additional, alternatively scheduled seats) and promotion of career ladder mobility (24 CNAs to LPNs, 6 RN refresher course, 1 returning disabled nurse )
- Help to develop DOL Community-based training grant with STCC-HCC-GCC in health care
- Helped 11 companies in manufacturing & health care to receive Workforce Training Fund grants
- Participation in RTC-EDC sessions focused on developing ways to support & build our manufacturing base
- Worked with NTMA to strategize on potential partnership with the REB
- Grant management of Bay State Works project to provide career ladder opportunities through occupational and basic skills training to 180 program participants at three health care and three manufacturing employers

## **Initiative 3: Youth Services**

Improve and expand workforce development services to youth, especially those youth that are low income and low-performing. Elements include:

- Expansion and improvement of youth work readiness services and internships;
- Customization of One-Stop Career Center services to meet the unique employability needs of youth.

### **ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

- Developed a successful model for work readiness curriculum, modified to be accessible to youth with disabilities, that is being held up as a model by the state
- Expanded the REB's youth "Resource Mapping" database on the web site to include transition services for youth with disabilities
- Modified REB webpage to be "AAA Bobby" compliant, done especially for youth with disabilities
- Trained more than 850 youth in the Work Readiness curriculum
- Work Readiness curriculum is now used by more than 30 schools and organizations
- Placed more than 800 youth into summer internships and jobs in 2005
- FW and CP have dedicated youth only areas in their centers, FW has youth website <http://www.youthworks.cc/>
- Developed a Strategic Plan to improve educational and employment outcomes for targeted at-risk youth in partnership with more than 20 local organizations (P-21)
- In FY'05, provided work-based learning experiences for more than 1,200 high school students through the Connecting Activities/School-to-Career grant
- In FY'05, outreached more than 1,000 post-12<sup>th</sup> grade youth that had not passed MCAS and connected 2/3 of these youth with academic support, employment preparation services and jobs (Pathways to MCAS Success)
- Drafted Strategic Plans for the Westfield and Springfield school systems to improve transition outcomes for youth with disabilities

#### **Initiative 4: Information Access**

Become a major source of regional workforce development information through, among other things, periodic publications on the “state of the workforce” and related policy papers. Elements include:

- Development of a web-based clearinghouse of relevant and reliable workforce development information;
- Access to existing on-line data from other web sites; and
- Development of reports that offer value-added interpretations of existing data in such areas as labor supply issues, employer labor shortages, skill needs by an industry cluster, and/or which provide policy statements on issues related to workforce development.

#### **ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

- Developed, maintained and kept updated REB website for which stats of usage are good (average monthly hits: 26, 825) and for which we have received verbal good feedback on
- Regional Economy section is up to date, has links to major LMI sources, and various reports on the local economy
- Developed and sent out 8 e-newsletters to 678 subscribers (included topics to inform key stakeholders on workforce development issues)
- In FY'05, provided labor market research and information for 25 schools, businesses and economic development organizations.

#### **Initiative 5: Community Awareness and Support**

Increase awareness among key stakeholders of the REB’s role in expanding public and private investment in workforce development. Elements include:

- Development of an outreach and action plan for key stakeholder groups, including State/Federal legislators, State/Federal agency administrators, Local elected officials, Major employers, Chambers of Commerce and other major business, economic development and labor associations, Community-based organizations and Education leaders.

#### **ACCOMPLISHMENTS (in addition to those under Information Access; which also increased community awareness):**

- Worked with legislators, others to secure and maintain key funding line items in state budget each year
- Worked with Workforce Solutions Group to develop proposals for additional resources, providing testimony at various hearings in support of the final legislation
- REB staff are actively participating in several community-based strategic alliances that share objectives related to the mission of the workforce development system. Examples include:
  - Mason Square Weed & Seed Grant (Springfield)
  - Community Re-Entry Project for Offenders (Holyoke and Springfield)
  - Holyoke's Communities that Care Grant
  - Springfield's City of Hope, Step up Springfield and Cherish Every Child initiatives
  - Holyoke's Juntos Adult Basic Education Advisory Council
  - Springfield Early Childhood Educational Partnership
  - Holyoke Family Literacy Coalition

Additionally, the REB is an ongoing partner in two quasi governmental economic development initiatives, the Governor's Regional Competitiveness Council and the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission's Plan for Progress.

- Held 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary luncheon which focused on Champions of Literacy; attended by over 400 & developed DVD presentation on the topic that was mailed to selected stakeholders requesting their support for the literacy efforts in Hampden County. The DVD is a significant component of our marketing and fund development strategy for FY 2006.
- Developed a PowerPoint that is used as a marketing initiative to inform key stakeholders, including potential funding sources, of the role of Literacy Works of Hampden County and its providers and partners in the workforce and economic development initiatives in Hampden County; presented show to five organizations during the last quarter of FY05.

- Facilitated continuing relationship between Barnes & Noble Bookstore in Holyoke, and the Holyoke Juntos Adult Basic Education Collaborative in developing a proposal to Barnes and Noble to engage their support in presenting a One-Book, One-City Project in the fall, 2005. Project proposal, including funding request, submitted to Barnes& Noble in May 2005.
- Initiated a relationship with Citizens Bank to develop a collaborative relationship between Citizens Bank and the Ludlow Adult Learning Center.
- Collaborated with the Springfield Public Schools in the development of a Parent Quick Facts Finder link to their Web site. The site will be used by the ABE programs in Springfield as a source of contextualized curriculum for their learners. The ABE providers will also utilize the link to begin to engage learners/ parents who have children attending the Springfield Public Schools
- Served as a member of the Holyoke Juntos Adult Basic Education Advisory Council. As a member of the Council, Literacy Works is a resource to add value to the work of the Juntos partners. Initially, Literacy Works will be assisting the Council in an assessment of the strategic goals that were set and agreed to by the partners and to what extent these goals are being met.
- Served as a member of the Step-Up- Springfield City Wide Planning Team.
- Served as a member of the Third Sector New England (TSNE) initiative which is a planning initiative involving Career Point and the Holyoke ABE Juntos Collaborative to develop learning plans that will inform the work of both organizations as they move forward to collaborating on measures to improve the operational delivery of services to adults and families.
- Discussed with the United Way of Pioneer Valley, Literacy Works serving as a resource to provide technical assistance to the United Way in a specific issue that is a part of their strategic planning initiatives for 2005.