

City of Somerville, Massachusetts Job Creation and Retention Trust

Trustees

Thomas Bent
Vickie Choitz
Lisa Cook
Silvana Dinka
Thomas Galligani
Anika Van Eaton
Rand Wilson
Josh Grehan
Matthew McLaughlin

Minutes

Somerville Job Creation and Retention Trust
Tuesday, August 13th, 2019, at 5:30PM
3rd Floor Conference Room, Somerville City Hall

In attendance: Vickie Choitz, Anika Van Eaton, Lisa Cook, Thomas Bent, Thomas Galligani, Josh Grehan, Silvana Dinka, Rand Wilson

Staff Present: Ben Sommer, Chadi Salamoun

Meeting began at 5:30pm

1. Approval of July 2nd, 2019 Minutes

- Vickie Choitz, Anika Van Eaton, Lisa Cook, Thomas Bent, Josh Grehan, Thomas Galligani approved the minutes. Rand Wilson and Silvana Dinka abstained.

2. Brainstorming ideas for investments

- Vickie Choitz reviewed agenda and process for investment idea brainstorming. The JCRT will narrow down ideas collected tonight at the next meeting. At the October meeting the JCRT hopes to hold a public forum for stakeholders to provide feedback. If the public meeting happens in October, decisions will be made in November on final investment ideas. Otherwise, the schedule will move up by one month, i.e., November and December.
- Vickie Choitz gave a recap of Strategy 1 ideas from the July 2nd meeting. Josh Grehan asked for a definition of contextualized learning which Vickie provided as English as a Second Language and or basic academic skills being taught in the context of a specific industry or occupation, aligned with a job-training program.

- Rand Wilson brought up the issue of evaluation and how this board will measure success of programs. Suggested that we speak to Boston's Neighborhood Jobs Trust. Ben Sommer mentioned that he would be speaking with staff from Boston's Workforce Development Office and would report back on this and other best practices from the NJT.
- Final additions were made to Strategy 1 as well as to other strategies and a short discussion was held to explain each idea. Investment brainstorm ideas can be seen in appendix A.

3. Regular meeting schedule revisit September and October

- The next meeting will be September 10th at 6pm at City Hall. The following meeting will be on October 1st at 6pm at a location tbd for the public forum. The November meeting will be on November 12th at 6pm at City Hall.

4. Updates and Announcements

- Lisa Cook announced that Governor Baker will be at SCALE for an unveiling of the CISCO training program on October 22nd at 12:30pm.

5. Adjournment

- Rand Wilson made a motion to adjourn, Anika Van Eaton seconded the motion.
- Meeting adjourned at 7:45pm

APPENDIX A JCRT Ideation Summary

Notes from Jobs Trust Board Ideation Sessions, July 2 and August 13, 2019

Guide to reading these lists: all bullets listed below emerged in the brainstorm and discussion. We have categorized the ideas to make them easier to digest. We summarized the common themes into the bullets in blue for the Board to consider as potential items for funding

Ideas for Strategy #1: Coordinated system of education and training services

Access to jobs

- Online jobs board
- More job fairs; increase access to existing job fairs

Career navigation

- Career navigator position at non-profits
- City-wide corps of job and career navigators
- Support the career navigation function in any funding opportunities

Education and Training programs

- Workplace-based ESL (on-site) [focuses on incumbent workers]
- English Language learning
- Contextualized integrated education and training program for English Language Learners
 - [focuses on job seekers, although they may also be working]
 - requires more teacher professional development and encouragement on these models
- SCALE – bring back CTE training using existing providers at SHS
- Work with Somerville HS CTE
- Greentown Labs workforce training partnership
- Articulation agreements with BHCC

Education and Training programs

- RFP for contextualized integrated education and training program for English Language Learners, which could be employer-based or at an education/training provider (training provider could be Somerville HS Career Technical Education and/or Bunker Hill Community College). Specify target industries/occupations or at least require applicant to make strong data case for why focus on selected industry/occupation.
- RFP for occupational training for underserved populations in in-demand industries/occs

Student scholarships

- Money directly to students for training programs (scholarships)

Support capacity in the system

- Planning and research grants (for the Board and for others)
- Professional development for teachers (possible World Education in Boston)
- Require matching funds from grantees or providing matching funds to grantees

Coordination

- Industry partnership(s) of employers and providers (in key sectors, if possible, although might not be in small geographic region)
- Fund some sort of coordinating function; possibly co-locating or at least better connecting education programs
- Better understand job/skill needs of new companies coming to Somerville (coordination and communication b/t economic developers and workforce partners)
- (Note: SCC convenes an Employer Advisory Board ~every 6 months around its programming; also have Main Streets employer groups, and Chamber of Commerce)

Coordination

OSPCD Economic Development Division collect information on employment and skill needs of incoming employers; convene local education and training providers regularly (quarterly?) to share employer needs (as collected from OSPCD on incoming employers and providers in their interactions with existing employers) and to strategize as a group how to prepare Somervillians for jobs. Include employer groups such as Main Streets and Chamber, as well as willing employers, as possible.

Strategy #2: Employee engagement

Worker-owned coops

- Solidarity economy TA (worker-owned coops)
- Cooperatives/worker-owned
 - in key industries, i.e, child care, janitorial
 - Outreach
 - Succession planning→ worker owners

Worker-owned coops

Initiative to support the development of worker-owned coops, particularly for business succession planning. Would include workshops, training, and technical assistance. (Also needs to include access to financing.)

Efforts to improve employee engagement

- [WorkLab Innovation Network](#) - an employer-based employee assistance program (“Sustainable Workforce Model) to assist front-line/entry-level workers with services and strategies for navigating life challenges in order to improve retention, productively, and career growth.
- Small business employment (employee?) engagement TA

Somerville join WorkLab Innovation Network

Fund a full-time staff person (based in City Hall or Main Streets?) to develop a Sustainable Workforce Model with employers in Somerville. Jobs Trust funds provide seed funds in the first few years, with employer fees covering program costs over time (Jobs Trust \$ gradually reducing as employer-revenue gradually increases).

Training for Small Businesses and Entrepreneurs

- HR training/resources for small employers as many small companies have not yet built out HR teams, i.e., have a city employee contact companies to offer training/best practices to employers. Partner with incubators to identify companies.
- Job quality training for entrepreneurs, i.e., Greentown Labs

Job Quality and HR Training for Entrepreneurs and New Small Businesses

Work with MIT Good Jobs, Good Companies to create a training/education/development program for entrepreneurs and new and existing small businesses to help them build HR structures and policies and incorporate Job Quality tenants into business models and HR.

- All ideas include engaging with the Chamber of Commerce and Main Streets
- All ideas include providing wage theft training for employers and employees (as well as proper employee classification rules and other employment law basics)

Strategy #3: Experiential learning

Citywide IT instruction through CISCO Networking Academy at SCALE

- Funding for SCALE to purchase routers and IT equipment and pay for staffing to teach Citywide IT instruction through CISCO Networking Academy (Intro, Intermediate, Advanced) instruction (in person and online). Governor Baker invested in the CISCO Networking Academy, which runs a train the trainer model. The curriculum is free, but the staffing and materials needed to run the program are not. CISCO is responsible for connecting graduates with employment after the program. [State capital equipment grant RFP just out. This can this be a funding source for this.]

Build up internships and apprenticeships with local unions

Career exploration for adults

- Support career counseling and career exploration for adults with high school diplomas. Once people are out of a school environment, it can be much harder to explore different career

options because they usually need to work to support themselves, and if they want to enroll in a training or education program, they may need housing, food, or other support to sustain themselves during that time. This could be through funding a career navigator and case manager, stipending people while they participate in training that is not paid, or funding a pilot program to develop career exploration strategies.

Strategy #4: Resiliency responses to the “future of work”

Career navigation

- City-wide corps of job and career navigators
- Private sector mentors:
 - Partner with SHS as part of Barr Foundation grant to connect students to private sector in Somerville.

Education and Training programs

- Continuous learning center similar to the Boston Center for Adult Education. Could entail increased coordination and capacity building between existing non-profits offering adult ed classes.
- Hold “Workforce Innovation Awards” or pitch event and give small grants to exciting new training models.

Continuous Learning “Center”

Increase funding for digital literacy programs held by Somerville non-profits and institutions serving adults and lower-education residents such as library, Somerville Media Center, Artisans Asylum.

Workforce Innovation Pitch

RFP for under \$25,000 to seed training program that addresses the future of work with new or “outside the box” training model or emerging industry.

Rapid Response and Planning

Capacity to respond to plant or facility closing and rapid response planning

Rapid Response and Planning

City coordinate planning meeting for service providers to understand resources needed to quickly scale capacity to anticipate influx of job-seekers. Follow up with RFP or Purchase Agreement with funding required to execute plan when needed. [Connect to CBA \$?]

Competency Project

- Tie into Corporation for a Skilled Workforce's (CSW) "Competency Project" to develop a shared language of skills and competencies between employers, employees, and training providers.

Skill Up Somerville Competency Project

Build from SkillUp Somerville digital competency project, implement a pilot project with the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce (CSW) to work with employers and education/training providers to create competency profiles for targeted occupations, e.g., start with customer service since it is a foundational occupation for many careers. Use competency profiles to provide a common language for job descriptions and education/training curricula. If the pilot is successful, expand profiling to more employers and providers. Goal = city-wide competency-based labor market.