

Urban Weatherization Initiative

Board Meeting

Meeting Minutes

September 25, 2015

Meeting was called to order at 10:02 a.m. by UWI Board Chair, Percy Harris

Attendees:

Voting Board Members: Percy Harris (via phone); Deborah Harrington; Robert Wordlaw (via phone); Jorge Perez (absent)

Department of Commerce Staff: Gwendolyn Davis; Sarah Atkins; Donnie Love; Lynell Mims; Anne Conwill

Ex-Officio Members: None present

Guests: Vickie Forby, Emerson Park; McFarland Bragg, Peoria Citizens Committee for Economic Opportunity; Yesse Yehudah, FORUM; Rena Livingston, Coalition for United Community Action; Mike Neill and Associates on behalf of Proviso Leyden Council for Community Action; Donald McIntosh and Emma McIntosh, Diversified Alliances; Eric Halvorson and Kim Boche, Chicago Jobs Council; Gladys Arana-Arriola, Latin United Community Housing Association; Donna Barnette, Comprehensive Community Solutions; Luther Mason, W&M Solutions; Angie Pape and Ronnie Dunning, Energy Savers Remodelers; Danata Andrews, Quad County Urban League

I. Introductions

II. Executive Session: Motion to move action items for Modification Waiver Requests to the front of the agenda. Executive Session called to order at 10:18 a.m. and adjourned at 10:36 a.m.

a. Home Energy Auditor Training Grantees

- i. Diversified Alliances (Grant #15-141016) Budget Modification approved unanimously.
- ii. Resource Center for the Westside Communities (Grant #15-141009) Budget and Scope of Work Modifications approved unanimously.

b. Weatherization Specialist Training Grantees

- i. Coalition for United Community Action (Grant #15-142003) Scope of Work modification approved unanimously.

c. Residential Weatherization Program Grantees

- i. Comprehensive Community Solutions, Inc. (Grant #15-143001)
Budget Modification approved unanimously.
- ii. Latin United Community Housing Association (Grant #15-143002)
Budget Modification approved unanimously.

III. Approval of Minutes: Minutes from October 17, 2014 UWI Board Meeting were approved.

IV. Election of Chairperson: Motion by Deborah Harrington to approve Percy Harris to serve another twelve months as chairperson approved by unanimous vote of (3) voting members.

V. Status of Suspension Letters:

- a. Suspension clarification letters: Grantees with grant funds on hand were sent letters to clarify permission to expend these funds until the Agreement expires.
- b. Training Program Scope of Work: There is at least one grantee that does not have enough money to complete another cohort. It is unclear at this time whether or not remaining grant funds will be released when a State budget is in place.
- c. Reporting Requirements: All grantees must submit reports in accordance with grant reporting schedules whether or not they are financially able to continue program operations through the expiration of the Agreement.

VI. Program Direction:

- a. State Budget concerns: Chairman Harris expressed concerns about budgetary issues impacting the program. Ms. Harrington would like to continue this conversation at a later date.
- b. Program Changes: Ms. Davis discussed the implementation of policy changes which will be sent to all grantees.
- c. Program Staff: Ms. Harrington indicated it is an encouraging sign that the program is fully staffed both in the Chicago office and outside of Chicago. Ms. Davis stated program managers have come together as a cohesive team with a strong understanding of program requirements.
- d. Training Program: Ms. Davis advised that training program grantees know we are in the last working quarter for these programs.
- e. RWP Program: Ms. Davis cautioned grantees to be careful with spending because it is unclear at this time whether or not remaining grant funds will be released.

- f. **New Guidelines for Reporting:** Ms. Davis discussed the likelihood of program continuance based on receiving further changes and corrections to the program. Programs need to focus on performance metrics and accountability.

VII. General Discussion:

- a. **Performance Outcomes:** Chairman Harris emphasized that consistent program outcomes will be the key to success for this program moving forward.
- b. **Prevailing Wage:** Chairman Harris discussed the unforeseen challenges that Prevailing Wage brought upon the program and the modifications made in order to adjust to these challenges. Mr. Harris discussed the potential to resolve these issues via amendments to the statute. Mr. Harris has urged the Governor's Office and the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus to support this program and statutory amendments to the program.
- c. **RWP Barriers:** Ms. Harrington question barriers to completing weatherization of homes other than Prevailing Wage. Ms. Davis indicated the grantees need to focus on program outcomes, recruitment , homeowner compliance, and finding new contractors .
- d. **Employment Program Support Concerns and Recommendations:** Chairman Harris expressed concerns about performance numbers. The Board continues to stand in support of this program and urges grantees to be proactive, promote the program and pertinent legislation. Ms. Harrington commended program staff for what has been accomplished and stated there is a definite need for these resources for training, transferrable job skills, and good life outcomes in eligible communities.

VIII. Public Comment:

Chairman Harris stated the rules for public speaking consist of a two minute time limit per person per agency with a total of 30 minutes allocated for public speaking. FORUMS representative Mr. Yehudah discussed the difficulty in finding employers who will hire UWI training program graduates. Mr. Yehudah also recommended program changes include On-the-Job training. Diversified Alliances representative Mr. McIntosh stated that contractors are looking for employees with construction experience. Mr. McIntosh also recommended that program changes include adding OSHA 10, RWP, and Whole House Installer credentials in order to increase UWI program hiring rates. Comprehensive Community Solutions representative Ms. Barnette stated that contractors will not hire unskilled auditors or BPI graduates with no experience. Ms. Barnette recommended connecting UWI graduates with experienced auditors to increase successful outcomes. W&M Solutions representative Mr. Mason stated that BPI certification is meaningless unless an employee has done the work. Quad County Urban Leagues representative Ms.

Andrews asked if there was an opportunity for program extension. Ms. Davis answered that there is not an opportunity for extension at this time. CJC representative Mr. Halvorson asked if program modifications would be related to statutory amendments referenced in HB3194 or if they are administrative changes. Mr. Halvorson also indicated that HB3194, which is directly related to prevailing wage concerns, did not pass in the last legislative session. Ms. Davis stated that the UWI program will continue under the guidance of administrative changes. The RWP program will continue through 2016 as scheduled. Support documentation from grantees will be used to verify hiring of UWI trainees. There is no indication that the training program will continue once the current Grant Agreement ends in November. REM representative Ms. Wilkins asked if there is a time frame for an RFP on the RWP program. Chairman Harris stated there is not an RFP scheduled to come out and that the Board will wait and see what happens with any statutory amendments and what happens when the State moves forward on a budget. Energy Savers Remodeling representative Mr. Dunning expressed concern that some employees' licenses have expired, some students were laid off half way through the training, and some students are still waiting to get certified. Ms. Davis emphasized the importance of communication with grant managers because they are able to connect folks with grantees who maintain program information such as lists of candidates. LUCHA's representative Ms. Arana-Arriola commented that there are many two to six units rather than single family units and the multiple unit application process has proven to be a challenge. Mr. Harris stated that more education for residents may be required to help them understand that it will not be a hardship on them.

IX. Next Meeting: January 15, 2016 at 10:00 a.m.

X. Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Meeting Minutes Prepared by: Anne Conwill