

**Welfare to Work Commission
Of the Suffolk County Legislature**

Minutes of the October 11th, 2007 Meeting

Present: Gwenn Branch; Michael Stoltz; Cheryl Keshner; Gregory Blass for Ed Hernandez; James Andrews; Peggy Boyd; Ken Zone; Rob Greenberger; Pam Killoran; Barbara LoMoriello, Richard Koubek

Guest: Tom Grecco, SCDSS

1. **Minutes:** The minutes of the September Commission meeting were approved, as corrected, on a motion by Peggy Boyd, seconded by Barbara loMoriello, Yes: 9; No: 1; Abstention: 1.
2. **Education and Training Pilot:** Richard Koubek reported that he spoke with, and wrote a letter to Presiding Officer William Lindsay requesting that the Pilot be re-funded for 2008 with Omnibus funds. The Presiding Officer expressed interest but pointed out that the 2008 budget is very tight. The Commission took up a draft report on the results of the Education and Training Pilot scheduled to be presented at the November 15th meeting of Health and Human Services Committee of the Legislature.
 - a. Nina Leonhardt pointed out that the Pilot has a surplus of about \$15,000 in unspent funds but that the Legislature would have to adopt a resolution allowing SCCC to carry these funds into their 2007-2008 budget year which begins in September, 2007.
 - b. Tom Grecco presented a chart his department constructed which compared the 2006 education and training outcomes of the SCDSS clients in courses comparable with the Pilot (BOCES and SCCC) with the courses in the Pilot. After much discussion, it was agreed that Mr. Grecco's data and the Pilot data both show a significant increase in course completions (over 90% compared with 75%) as a result of the case management and mentoring interventions provided by the Pilot.
 - c. It was agreed that the Education and Training Committee would re-convene on October 23rd to consider the following additional tasks for the case managers/mentors, should the Pilot be funded again for 2008:
 - i. Helping sanctioned clients to remove their sanctions so that they can enter the program.
 - ii. Working with clients who have completed the course of study to help them obtain and retain employment.
 - d. By consensus, the Commission agreed to the edited language of the report.
3. **Extended Hours:** The Commission took up a draft letter to the Legislature on extended hours which will be presented to the Health and Human Services Committee of the Legislature on November 15th. SCDSS Chief Deputy Commissioner Gregory Blass confirmed the Commissioner's support for the concept of evening hours but noted that 45 open benefits examiner positions makes problematical the implementation of evening hours when the Department lacks the staff to function at current hours. Mr. Blass and the Commission agreed that this information regarding

the shortage of staff should be added to the letter. By consensus, the Commission agreed to the edited language of the letter to the Legislature.

- 4. Employment Assessment Committee:** Chair Rob Greenberger reported that the Committee met on October 11th and agreed to research data on sanctions that might be correlated with the current assessment process and assessment tool required by OTDA. The goal of this research would be to build a case for pilot testing the draft OTDA assessment tool which, while requiring additional time and staff, could save the Department money in the long run by reducing sanctions and fair hearings, improving employment and education placements that lead to jobs which pay sustainable wages, thereby reducing recidivism on the part of clients whose cases are closed.
- 5. Child Care Reimbursements:** Gregory Blass reported that the reimbursement time remains at 45 days and that 88% of providers are now on the computerized Kindertrack system.
- 6. Next Meeting: Wednesday, November 21st, 9:30 Am at SCDOL One Stop center.**