



VISTA 2025 Goal 3:

Expand business attraction and retention efforts with a focus on targeted industry clusters

Goal 3 Team Meeting

January 16, 2018

Meeting Notes

Team Members Attending: Chris Alonzo, Mike Bray, Roger Legg, Mark Rupsis

Also Attending: Marybeth DiVincenzo, Hillary Krumrich, David Sciocchetti

Mark Rupsis

Welcomed those in attendance and asked if there were any comments on the meeting notes from the previous meeting. None were presented. Invited D. Sciocchetti to continue review of VISTA 2025 draft progress report.

David Sciocchetti

Noted that our review of the VISTA 2025 Goal 3 strategies at the last meeting concluded with strategy 3.3.3. Noted that this meeting would begin with strategy 3.4.1

3.4.1 Status – Ongoing

3.4.2 Status - On Hold

3.4.3 Status - On Hold

3.4.4 Status – On Hold

Mark Rupsis

Noted that there had been cutbacks in state funding to support industry partnerships.

Hillary Krumrich

Responded to a question and indicated that Ag Connect was a regional program.

Roger Legg

Asked for an explanation of industry partnerships.

David Sciocchetti

Responded that they had been established around the workforce needs of specific industry sectors – information technology, manufacturing, health care, energy and agriculture.

Marybeth DiVincenzo

Added that they focused primarily on workforce training issues and were able to apply for and secure workforce training funding. Stated that state funding required a 50% match.

Noted that sustainability remained a key issue in light of the state cutbacks. Explained that this year's funding only supported 2 of 5 industry partnerships in the county. Last year they supported 4.

Reviewed new state approach focused on self-sustaining industry partnerships that would phase out state support. Explained that each industry partnership board was examining what comes next with a focus on a transition to self-sustainability.

Added that the manufacturing industry partnership had just approved an approach designed to lead to self-sustainability. Noted that they were the only industry partnership to do so to date but that others were in progress.

Indicated that there had been an increase in participation in the ITAG industry partnership which was a good sign.

Commented that the Sector Strategies Advisory Council was no longer meeting.

Roger Legg

Asked if county funding was being provided to support the industry partnerships. Was advised that there was pass through funding from the state that was being made available.

Mark Rupsis

Noted that funding for industry partnerships remained a work in progress.

Roger Legg

Suggested that there needed to be a focus on mechanisms to generate the needed funds. Noted that should be the role of the industry partnerships.

David Sciocchetti

Asked about the regional nature of some of the industry partnerships and whether other agencies could absorb some of the cost burden.

Marybeth DiVincenzo

Responded that Montgomery County had taken the lead in the bio-pharma area. Noted that the new approach to state funding requires that industry partnerships be regional,

but noted that CCEDC gets little to no support from other counties in the region for programmatic activities that support those counties.

Chris Alonzo

Asked about the cost of an industry partnership.

Marybeth DiVincenzo

Responded that as currently constructed the cost was approximately \$300,000 per IP.

Consensus was that the status assigned to each of the industry cluster strategies was currently accurate.

David Sciocchetti

Moving on to the agriculture related strategies noted that the focus of Goal 3 was on the business side of agriculture. He noted that this created some definitional issues related to the “farming/growing” side of agriculture and the food processing side.

3.5.1 Status – Ongoing

3.5.2 Status - On Hold

General discussion of the issue of a dedicated agricultural center raised issues associated with proper location, funding options, participants and tenants that would need to be addressed to move forward.

Concurrence on strategy status

3.5.3 Status - On Hold

Hillary Krumrich

Noted that Lundale Farms was as close as we get to an agricultural incubator in Chester County

Concurrence on strategy status

3.5.4 Status – Ongoing

Chris Alonzo

Noted that Chester County has approximately 1,700 farms. Noted that the Ag Council is focused on keeping them thriving.

Concurrence on strategy status

3.5.5 Status - On Hold

Hillary Krumrich

Stated that this is a land access issue. Added that PA FarmLink was a land matching program that sought to link prospective farmers with available land. Suggested that though the program did provide services there were gaps. Added that the current structure was for a landowner to list a property and just wait for a farmer to be identified for them. Noted that the matching process was one of several issues.

Chris Alonzo

Suggested that this process of linking farmers with land needs help. Noted that the Ag Council had this as part of an ongoing review.

Concurrence on status

3.5.6 Status – Ongoing

Concurrence on status

3.5.7 Status - On Hold

Roger Legg

Suggested that New Bolton already is a center of excellence and that the University of Pennsylvania takes the lead on any technology transfer that is developed out of New Bolton.

Mark Rupsis

Suggested that a likely next step to implement this strategy is to reach out to the University of Pennsylvania

Concurrence on status

David Sciocchetti

Noted the various subsectors of the agriculture industry in Chester County including farming, mushrooms, equine and food processing. Questioned how they can all come together.

Hillary Krumrich

Agreed, noting that a vision for moving forward is needed.

Mike Bray

Asked whether a larger agriculture strategy session was something to consider.

Chris Alonzo

Suggested that it might be a good idea. Added that perhaps there were similar issues in other industry clusters worth exploring.