



UPSTATE WORKFORCE BOARD YOUTH COMMITTEE MEETING

February 11, 2025

The DuPre House- VCOM Campus 3:30 p.m.

Committee Members Present:

Ms. Erin Black
Mr. Doug Bryson
Mr. Josh Cleapor
Mr. Jay Coffey

UWIB Staff Present:

Ms. Ann Angermeier
Mr. Brent Bishop
Ms. Dana Hudgins
Ms. CJ Jackson

Guests Present:

Sgt. Aaron Garrett
Ms. Caitlyn Horn
Ms. Melanie Hughes

Mr. Craig Jacobs
Ms. Elyse Miller
Ms. Sydetra Payton

Welcome:

Ms. Erin Black, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:31 p.m. and welcomed everyone in attendance. Committee members, staff and guests introduced themselves.

Presentation:

Sergeant Aaron Garrett and Intelligence Analyst, Caitlyn Horn, from the Spartanburg Police Department gave a PowerPoint presentation on gang activities in Spartanburg County and the surrounding areas. State law defines a "gang" as any group of two or more individuals that are committing crimes to further their organization. Gangs normally follow rules and structure, as well as the three R's (respect, retaliation and reputation). More common gangs used to be easily identified because they only wore certain colors. Now they wear mixed colors, even those of rival gangs, making it difficult for the officers to identify members. A gang's area of operation could be in any neighborhood, depending on which friend's house they choose to hang out in. The average age of gang members ranges from 13-24. Sergeant Garrett stated that young members are trying to emulate the older more notorious gangs, but lack the conviction and conscience displayed by the original gangs, making them more dangerous. Many gangs are formed as a way of paying homage to an individual who recently died. "It's just a bunch of kids. One of them will kind of be like the ringleader, but they're not really calling the shots until they start getting into their twenties and thirties", said Sergeant Garrett. Many gang members and their activities are identified through their social media postings. Gang involvement is everywhere. More information can be obtained at <https://www.nationalgangcenter.ojp.gov>

Financial

Mr. Brent Bishop, UWB Finance Manager, went over the financial report for December 2024 which represented half of the program year. January numbers are not in yet because invoices for December and January have not been received. Mr. Bishop also provided a snapshot of a professional development grant that has expended 70.55% of its allotted budget through January.

ACHIEVE Program Reports / Dashboard

Ms. Melanie Hughes, ACHIEVE Director, stated that the program's year-to-date spending looks really good despite having two substantial staff vacancies for five months. The recent budget modification has been signed and approved. They purchased the Victory XR software with the virtual reality headsets. They are looking into doing an in-person Cellbotics class with the participants at the end of March. Ms. Hughes reported that there had been one new GED obtained. The ACHIEVE students and staff participated in a job fair and went on a field trip to see a facility that provides service dogs for Veterans in Greenville, SC. ACHIEVE staff now have updated pamphlets and business cards.

Other Business

Ms. Dana Hudgins, UWB Associate Director, reported that the state will be monitoring ACHIEVE and SC Works during the last week of February. She stated that last year's monitoring report was received with no findings, and only a few EO observations.

Adjournment

With no further business or discussion from the floor, the meeting was adjourned at 4:47 p.m.

The next meeting will be held on April 29, 2025.