

## **DOL YouthBuild Orientation Workshop, January 29<sup>th</sup>**

*Sustainability: Working with City, County, and State Governments*

Presented by Ann Higdon, President, ISG

The discussion began with Ms Higdon explaining how ISUS started and questioning how session members programs started.

This introduction was followed by questions about sustainability and fundraising efforts for YouthBuild. Ms Higdon expressed that asking people and organizations to participate in good works doesn't yield results – and more often than not fails. One needs to focus on “enlightened self-interest” helping all parties to see how their vision for local development is fulfilled by the work of your organization.

Participants then discussed how YouthBuild programs and community efforts relate to what local government is trying to do on the community level. Ms. Higdon encouraged programs to look at YouthBuild programs as more than training, but as part of a greater community revitalization plan which local government create plans for and invest in. For ISUS, this realization became more than fundraising for their nonprofit, it became an investment tool for local government.

The benefits gained by government and YouthBuild programs include:

- Long term investment by local government in the YouthBuild program;
- Long term government investment may lead to a YouthBuild program being written into local government budgets;
- YouthBuild programs become more attractive to other funders;
- Increased ability for YB programs in expanding their programs while building affordable housing; “not just one house per year, but entire blocks, and communities.”
- If a YouthBuild program becomes CHDO, they can become a preferred CHDO for local government.
- Sustainable growth leads to additional participants being served, and greater community service; and
- Promotes goodwill, acceptance, exposure, credibility, and positive PR.

The method Ms Higdon uses for fundraising and working with local government requires the following elements:

- Know what your agency/organization can offer the community;
- Research what city, county, and state plans are, these plans can be found on their websites, or can be requested in person or by telephone;
- Compare what your organization can offer, and what the government plans include;

- If there is a mutual benefit, contact the agency, and set up a meeting to discuss the mutual benefits of collaboration and partnership;
- Using the government plans, find out who the other players in the private sector are, and start meeting with them for potential partnerships and networking opportunities;
- If it is not possible to meet, or speak with a government planner, contact someone within your new network, to set up a meeting;
- Find out about your local Rotary club, or other service club, what are their interests, and how are they involved with local government; and
- Compare what your organization is doing, with what the Rotary is doing, if there is a mutual benefit contact them for fundraising and networking possibilities;

At this time Ms Higdon answered questions and showed a video of her program. Partners wrapped the session with offering assistance in finding local government contacts, plans, and other potential funders in government agencies and the private sector.