

EASTERN WASHINGTON PARTNERSHIP

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

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WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL AND REGIONAL BOARD MEETING

SPOKANE, WA

September 28, 2017

Attendance:

WDC: Scott Habenicht, Jim Drake, Larry Frick, Jeff Koffel, Teresa Kutsch, Kenneth Maestas, Jennie Weber, Kim Witt, Jami Gecas *By Phone:* Tessa Wicks

Regional Board: Scott Hutsell, Nathan Davis, Jim Jeffords, Steve Kiss, Wes McCart, Art Swannack,

Contractors and Guests: Linda Ames, Kelly Charlton, Jaclyn Jacot, Doug Loney, Sarah Stiffler, Darlene Snider, Doug Tweedy

Staff: Rod Van Alyne, Dayna Brown

Scott Habenicht brought the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. and introductions followed.

Scott Habenicht called for a motion to approve the agenda.

Scott Hutsell made a motion to approve the agenda. Art Swannack seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Scott Habenicht called for a motion to approve the May 25, 2017 meeting minutes.

Jim Jeffords made a motion to approve the May 25, 2017 meeting minutes. Jeff Koffel seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Regional Board Chairman's Report

Scott Hutsell reported that Jami Gecas from the Whitman Hospital and Medical Center in Colfax has been nominated as a potential member to the council. Jami is the Director of Human Resources. Jami's prior work experience includes over 14 years in the Human Resources Department of Washington State University and over five years for the University of Idaho. She is a graduate of Washington State University. Scott added that the Healthcare sector is an important one in the region so we are pleased that Jami is interested.

Art Swannack made a motion for the Regional Board to appoint Jami Gecas to the WDC. Wes McCart seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Chairman's Report

Scott Habenicht welcomed Jami to the board.

Scott reported the Executive Committee met on June 28th to discuss the Upskill/Backfill grant opportunity, approve the MOU and review and approve the One-Stop Operator proposals. Scott said that the Workforce Training Board released a second round of Upskill/Backfill funding. During this round applicants had to be from multiple areas. Big Bend Community College was preparing an application and asked the EWP to participate, adding that a portion of the Big Bend area includes Lincoln County. Scott said that training is targeted to manufacturing and food processing sectors and our portion of the application would be to refer job seekers and employers to the project. The committee agreed that it would be a good opportunity and directed Rod to proceed.

Scott stated the MOU public comment period had ended and the WDC received a few comments. One comment was to include additional language for adult education and literacy. A comment was received from the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) regarding the Termination or Suspension for Cause. DSHS was concerned that there was no clear performance expectations. Rod explained that the Appendix section is a place for each partner to spell out what they are willing to provide to the partnership and DSHS is working on theirs and that addressed their concern. Scott added that as the next piece of the MOU, the Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) is developed the role of DSHS in the system will be better defined. The Executive Committee agreed to the MOU.

Ken Maestas made a motion to approve the action of the Executive Committee of approving the MOU. Jeff Koffel seconded the motion. Jennie Weber abstained. The motion passed.

Scott said during the May WDC meeting the Executive Committee was given authority to review and approve the One-Stop Operator award. During the process the WDC received one proposal from the Employment Security Department (ESD). The proposal met the general guidelines and it was forwarded to the committee for review and scoring. After some discussion on the detail of the budget, the proposal was scored based on experience, project approach and budget. The committee agreed that the proposal met the guidelines and was approved.

Ken Maestas made a motion to approve the action of the Executive Committee of approving the One-Stop Operator award. Nathan Davis seconded the motion. Jennie Weber abstained. The motion passed.

Quality Assurance Committee Report

Teresa Kutsch reported that the Quality Assurance Committee met on September 14 to review the PY 16 performance for all WIOA Dislocated Worker, Adult and Youth providers through July 31, 2017 and discuss the Barrier and Access Committee (BASC) role in the Quality Assurance Committee.

Teresa reported the enrollments in the Dislocated Worker and Rural Resources Adult programs are a little behind and Blue Mountain Action Council Adult program has over enrolled. Teresa added that since the end of the Program Year enrollments have picked up and are back on track. One of the challenges with the low unemployment rate is finding Adult participants that want to receive training and go on to employment. In WIOA, the rules for Priority of Service in the Adult program changed and changed the way the Service Providers were able to provide direct service to participants that were offered employment but had barriers to getting to work.

Walla Walla ESD is a little behind in entered employment, but within reach of the target and everyone else is just over the target. Teresa mentioned that entered employment is no longer tracked in WIOA, but the council continues to use it to see if they are on track for employed in the 2nd quarter. At this time there is no reliable earnings data in ETO, but steps are being taken to get more accurate earnings data from ETO.

Rod stated that during the Quality Assurance meeting a question was brought up about the concern of the BASC members, which are non-board members, attending the Quality Assurance meetings because there is business discussed at the meetings that doesn't involve the BASC committee. Rod asked the Board for their view on how to accommodate the individuals. Rod has looked at the by-laws and informed the Board that the chair can approve a sub, or ad hoc, committee. Scott Hutsell asked how many people are anticipated to be on the BASC committee and if it would include all of the Quality Assurance members; Rod said that just a few people have approached him at this point and it would be all the Quality Assurance members and additional members as needed. Rod also mentioned that non-WDC individuals can be added to committees. Art Swannack asked if Rod is looking at agencies for the developmentally disabled; Rod stated that he can draft up roles and responsibilities before the December board meeting. Ken Maestas stated the committee should define the type of members, and the ones that will give the most information for the Board.

Director's Report

Rod reported on the Upskill/Backfill grant opportunity, stating that Big Bend Community College approached EWP and Benton Franklin WDC asking for a referral to employers to give classes for already employed individuals to upskill employees and pre-employment classes for backfill employees. Rod connected them with Margie Hall to find an employer that would be willing to participate, and received letters of support from both community colleges. The grant is now at the Governor and State Board level and the WDC is waiting to hear if we will be funded.

Rod stated that in June the WDC was monitored by the State, there was no findings or questioned costs. At that time they did an administrative and fiscal audit that went very well. Rod mentioned there were recommendations at the program level, adding that there were no findings questioned costs at that level either. Rod explained that an example of an issue identified is that in WIOA documenting the eligibility for Priority of Service is a little different than documenting eligibility in WIA and that information was not consistent in participant files. Since monitoring, the Service Providers have been trained in the changes. Another recommendation was to add specific wording in participant files for training dollars being the last resort, that has always been done but the monitors want the specific wording in the files. The biggest issue was with the ETO system and putting the file information into ETO. The WDC conducted training with the service providers and talked about the issues. When the WDC monitors the service providers in January, the files and ETO will be looked at in the same way the monitors look at it.

In September, Department of Labor was going to WDC's monitoring the State. DOL was looking to see how the WDC's were implementing WIOA. They interviewed some Board members, participants, and providers. Rod reported that in the exit call DOL stated they were pleased with the area and all six participants gave glowing reports. The monitor also spoke to the struggles our rural area has with the transportation and broadband issues.

Rod stated that the Infrastructure Funding Agreement needs to be approved by December, so the WDC will have it ready in early November so there will be a 30 day comment period and will be able to be approved at the December 14th meeting.

The WDC is working on a collaborative approach to the business services team and how to measure success in different programs.

Rod stated that an RFP for Career Connected Learning is coming available soon. One challenge is that to be an applicant for Career Connected Learning the applicant needs to be part of a STEM network, Our area does not have a STEM network. Qualifying to be a STEM network is hard for rural schools to do all the checks and balances needed. Kettle Falls has an excellent robotics program and Colville and Kettle Falls have the fish hatchery which has been a very popular program. Rod mentioned that the WDC is looking into the apprenticeship piece of the application.

Rod reported that he was part of a healthcare forum recently, partnering with Clearwater Economic Development (CEDA) in Lewiston and Southeast Washington Economic Development Association (SWEDA), working with employers in Garfield, Whitman, Asotin, and Columbia. Rod mentioned that there are soft skills gaps in the healthcare industry also which was a surprise for him. Rod hopes that the EWP area can duplicate the forum in Walla Walla or Colville. Jami Gecas attended the forum in Clarkston also and stated it was a great opportunity for employers to see the labor market and what is working and what isn't working for different employers.

Regional Economist Report

Doug Tweedy reported that the unemployment insurance rates for the Eastern Washington Partnership WDC are historically low, lower than they were 25 years ago and indicators for the future are good. Sixty-two percent (62%) of the growth is in construction, manufacturing, retail, and hospitality. The growth is bringing higher wages and skills. Industry projections for transportation, warehousing and education are all looking up. Doug added that the increase of jobs in education isn't only teachers, it includes support staff. The highest percentage of growth projected is in the computer and electronics; with generally smaller employers (this includes IT, computers, computer engineers and developers), with the majority of projections in Walla Walla and Whitman counties.

Doug stated retirements are continuing to drive vacancies. Jami Gecas added that at Whitman hospital, the two doctors they have are over 65 and the average age of a registered nurse is over 45.

Doug said that there is an updated county profile for each county on the website, www.esd.wa.gov/labormarketinfo , along with forecast information through 2025, supply and demand reports, what businesses are hiring and what skills are needed.

Doug's full PowerPoint presentation can be accessed at: <http://ewpartnership.org/reports>

WorkSource Report

Doug Loney reported that Walla Walla General Hospital submitted a WARN notice announcing the closure of their facilities in the Walla Walla area in August, impacting 371 employees and approximately 100 contract employees could potentially be impacted. WorkSource had worker orientations to assess needs and identify concerns. WorkSource is presently engaged with over 60 former employees and has confirmation of approximately 135 former employees securing employment with local and regional health care organizations.

Many former employees had worked at Walla Walla General Hospital for over eight years and several over 25 years and are aware that many will need to upgrade their skills. Doug Tweedy asked if there was still a Veteran's hospital in Walla Walla and if there are any openings there; Doug Loney said that there is a Veteran's hospital there and many employees have been absorbed there and with area organizations.

Art Swannack asked what the reason for the closure was; Jennie Weber said that it was financial.

Kelly Charlton reported that Rural Resources Community Action partnered with the U.S. Forest Service Three Rivers District to provide summer employment through natural resource conservation activities for four Kettle Falls High School students. Forest Service funds covered expenses for Rural Resources staff time and travel to recruit, interview and manage the youth's participation in the summer employment program as well as three of the youth's wages. The fourth position was filled by a WIOA In-School Youth, with the majority of his enrollment and participation were paid by WIOA In-School Youth funding and also served as the 25% match required by the contract with the Forest Service.

Kelly stated the four youth were introduced to various land and resource management functions of the U.S. Forest Service while focusing on the improvement of recreational opportunities, water quality, access, reduction of fuels and increased forest health. Each youth worked 30 days (240 hours) in the summer and at the conclusion of the youth's employment Rural Resources provided a workshop which included instruction on completing employment applications, resumes, cover letters, soft skills, and communication.

Jennie Weber reported that over 49% of seekers are self-serve only, which is a difference from what has been seen before. Staff assisted is still over 35% of participants that require one on one attention. 68% of WorkSource customers are returning customers.

The top five demand occupations are management occupations, health diagnosing and treating, business operations, drivers, and nursing. The top five industry sectors posting jobs are educational services, health care and social assistance, public administration, manufacturing and wholesale trade.

Jennie gave an overview of unemployment insurance taxes that employers pay and said if the board would like; she can bring in a specialist. There are two main components to Washington State unemployment tax. The first is an experienced tax rate, which is based on an average of an employer's claim history over the past four years. The second is a social cost tax, which is paid by nearly all employers to cover the shared costs of the insurance system.

Jennie next went over the Wagner-Peyser Act, title three. Wagner-Peyser serves anyone that comes through the doors at WorkSource; it is called the "front of the system". Job seekers have access to skill assessments, job search assistance, job referral and placement, training referrals, and re-employment services for UI claimants. Jennie added that a lot of centers would not be able to operate without Wagner-Peyser funds.

Darlene Snider – Walla Walla Community College

Darlene Snider stated that she appreciates the WDC and added that a lot of what is discussed at the meetings is very relevant to the Community College. Darlene has been at WWCC for 17 years and has written grants for WIA and now WIOA. There is a strong alliance with TAP and the State of Washington.

Darlene reported that the goals of WIOA Title II programs are to assist adults to gain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment, to assist parents or family members in the education of their children, to assist adults in completing high school, to promote transitions to postsecondary education and training through career pathways, to improve basic and employability skills and the comprehension of the English language, and to gain understanding of American government.

Darlene shared success stories of two participants that have benefitted from WIOA title II services and a grant from Gates which purchased laptops for students. Walla Walla Foundry is an example of an I-BEST success, 50% of the employees are second language learners and the company needed to find a way to maintain quality control. They came to WWCC needing to train their 22 employees in effective communication and leadership

and then met a workplace goal of improving communication and understanding between production supervisors and employees.

Darlene explained that there are different ways to receive a diploma, and the GED isn't for everyone. Through the open doors program, students that are in the system have a seamless transition to finish school gaining critical skills along with basic skills. High School 21+ uses skills they already have through prior work and life experiences, some only need a couple classes and they will earn high school diploma.

Linda Ames – Spokane Community College

Linda Ames explained that Spokane Community College serves five rural areas. Colville is one of the larger centers and it offers Adult Basic Ed, GED, High School Completion, High School 21+, I-BEST, and PACE. Pace is a program that teaches job, life and computer skills to individuals with cognitive impairments. The employment piece of training is webbed in each of the areas and soft skills are a large part of the training and embedded into the curriculum. The Newport, Pullman and Republic centers offer Adult Basic Ed, GED, High School Completion, High School 21+, and I-BEST. Linda added that the Curlew Job Corps has about 100 of their students. Curlew has a lot of programs that prepare participants for good jobs while requiring them to receive their GED or High School diploma first.

Linda stated that every student becomes part of the WIOA system and WIOA standards are embedded into all the classes.

Teresa Kutsch – Department of Vocational Rehabilitation

Teresa reported that DVR sits at the federal level within the Department of Education. It is the largest investment in servicing people with disabilities. It focuses on competitive employment helping people get jobs with livable wages. DVR set aside 15% of the budget focusing on youth with disabilities. They have signed a contract with Big Bend Community College, other Community Colleges, Rural Resources, and Blue Mountain Action Council through the Pre-Employment Transition contract.

Teresa stated that by Federal law if DVR doesn't have enough resources (funding and staff) to serve all eligible customers they have to go into order of selection, which they will begin this fall. When customers are determined eligible, they are assigned a priority category based on the significance of their disability; this is based on the impact of the disability, not the type of disability. Jim Jeffords asked if it is based on where they are employed or where they live; Teresa said that they are statewide and partner with Idaho.

Old Business:

Rod stated that at the May meeting Art Swannack asked if the board needs to approve the Executive Committee minutes. Rod has looked back through past minutes and committee minutes aren't approved separately. The WDC By-laws state that all actions by the Executive Committee shall be approved. Rod asked the board if they would like to approve the actions taken by the committee or the minutes; Art Swannack said that if the action separately that should be sufficient. Scott Habenicht added that the Executive Committee members should review the committee minutes to make sure they are correct.

New Business:

None

Scott announced the next meeting will be held on December 14, 2017

The meeting adjourned at 2:40 p.m.