

**BRAD LITTLE**  
GOVERNOR

**Wendi Secrist**  
Executive Director



**Trent Clark**  
Chair

**B. J. Swanson**  
Vice Chair

## **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL**

317 West Main Street, Boise, Idaho 83735-0510

### **Workforce Development Policy Committee Meeting Minutes**

**Date:** Tuesday, April 21, 2020

**Time:** 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm (Mountain Time)

**Committee Members:** BJ Swanson, Kelly Kolb, Jason Hudson, Christi Rood, Todd Schwarz, John Smith, Scott Syme, Lori Wolff, Jani Revier, Tom Kealey, Tom Schultz

**Staff:** Wendi Secrist, Paige Nielebeck, Amanda Ames, Matthew Thomsen

**Guests:**

**Call to Order at 2:04 PM**

**Roll Call** – Quorum met

**Review Agenda** – no changes to the agenda

**Approve March 17, 2020 Meeting Minutes**

**Motion by Mr. Schwarz to approve the March 17, 2020 meeting minutes as written. Second by Mr. Kealey. Motion carried.**

#### **ETP Methodology for Appendix A**

The Committee is responsible for updating the methodology for identifying in-demand occupations in Appendix A every July. One of the challenges discovered in implementing the current version of Appendix A is that restricting to the top 150 occupations has inadvertently removed trainings from the ETP list that are in high demand (e.g. welding). The methodology uses occupational data from an interactive tool developed by IDOL. For a training provider to be eligible to be put on the ETP list, the occupation they are providing training for must be in the top 150 occupations for the region the training is being provided in, the occupation cannot require a degree/certificate higher than an associate's, and the median wage has to be over \$10 an hour. The Committee previously asked Ms. Secrist to look into the methodology for Advanced Opportunities and see how their methodology compared to the one used for ETP. The Committee also requested Ms. Secrist look into methodologies other states use for their ETP lists. Ms. Secrist reviewed the different methodology options. Please see attached document.

After all of the research Ms. Secrist felt that none of the other methodology options would be a good fit for Idaho. Ms. Secrist recommended that the Committee keep the current ETP Policy methodology and create a process for training providers to request their trainings be added to the ETP list if they fall short of the current criteria.

The Committee discussed the option of changing the salary requirements from \$10 an hour to \$12 or more an hour. The concern is that individuals who are utilizing services through the ETP tend to be the

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hardest to serve in Idaho. They tend to be individuals who do not have strong workplace skills. For one of these individuals to get a CNA job that may be under \$12 an hour is a big step for them.

Instead of using the current methodology, what if the criteria were made into application questions and the committee analyzed the purported need made by the provider rather than having fixed criteria to get put on the ETP list.

- This process could make it difficult to explain why one provider was added to the ETP list and another provider was not added. The Committee would have to justify any decision it made, preferably against quantitative data points.

The Committee discussed a simple expansion of the number of occupations taken into consideration for Southwest Idaho since the labor market is so much larger than other parts of the state. The number of occupations could be expanded to 300 just for that area. Of the training providers who have reached out after not being reapproved to go on the ETP list, they have all been in Southwest Idaho. The WDC and IDOL have not heard if North and Eastern Idaho are having similar issues with the ETP methodology.

- It is important to ensure that different criteria is not being set for different areas of Idaho. Some areas of Idaho may not see eye to eye on why Southwest Idaho would get top 300 occupations and they only get top 150.

A policy could be put in place to allow an individual to make a request for an occupation to be added to the ETP list and the request would be reviewed by the Committee.

There seems to be confusion on the difference between Hot Jobs and In-Demand Occupations.

- Hot Jobs is the old terminology for the In-Demand Occupation list. IDOL ranks jobs based on a number of factors including long-term projections for growth, number of annual openings and wages. They still publish a PDF version of "Hot Jobs" for jobseekers, but the interactive in-demand occupations tool was created for us and other agencies to use to filter the data as needed.
- What difference are there in the methodology between Advanced Opportunities and ETP?
  - Ms. Secrist recommended that Advanced Opportunities use a different methodology than ETP because the WDC was struggling already with the methodology put in place for ETP. They included "or" statements to provide more flexibility
  - Once the WDC has a more solid methodology in place, there might be an opportunity to realign ETP and Advanced Opportunities.

The Committee suggested keeping the current methodology in place and create a petition process where the Policy Committee will look at appeals to add occupations to the ETP on a case-by-case basis.

- There is concern not having any type of criteria in place before the Committee begins evaluating the appeals.
  - The policy could state that the request will be evaluated with the use of real-time labor market information. The data would come from BurningGlass.
  - The Committee could also put constraints on the grounds for an appeal.

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- The provider making the appeal should provide a rationale of why the training would be a valuable investment for Idaho.

### **Short-Term Training Financial Assistance Under the WDTF**

At the last Committee meeting, the Committee discussed a short-term training assistance program under the Workforce Development Training Fund (WDTF). This program would be designed to support individuals seeking training through programs that are not eligible under federal financial aid or other means of funding. Ms. Secrist reviewed the input she gathered from the Workforce Training Network on the program design. Please see attached document.

### **Individual Eligibility**

- It is hard to imagine how the intent (immediate employment or further education) for the training will be gathered.
  - The individual participating in the program would have to be asked before receiving assistance and be followed-up with after the program is complete to see if they are employed.
  - The Workforce Training Network also struggled with this item. They found it hard to support a program that might take 3,4, or even 8 years to see a return on investment. That is why it was recommended to find out the intent of the training.
  - Individuals could be matched with wage records from IDOL to find out if they are being employed after training.
  - There is a lot of pressure from employers that feel individuals are not being prepared for the hot jobs in Idaho right now.
  - It is hard to imagine turning someone away from the program who may want to pursue an occupation where the training takes a little longer to complete (e.g. paying for a CNA who is planning to enter an LPN or RN program).
- Ms. Secrist was asked to clarify the "con" on whether the individual is employed or unemployed.
  - An example is an apprentice whose employer is already paying for related training. If the employer finds out about the program, then what incentive does the employer have to continue paying for training? The real question is whether we want the possibility of supplanting existing employer reimbursement programs.
  - The employers are the ones who contribute to the WDTF so they should be encouraged to use the WDTF for funding.
- The Committee feels that they would like to stay silent on the purpose of training issue for now.
- Does the Committee want to have something in policy say that the grant would convert to a loan if the individual goes to work in another state? There are other states that have this in place already.
  - It creates an incentive for individuals to stay in Idaho.
  - There should be an appeals process for individuals who may have had to leave the state for personal reasons (e.g. family situations).

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- The Committee would also need to keep in mind companies that are established in Idaho, but also have office in other states. The individual could receive training in Idaho but then be moved to an office in another state. The employer should be required to then maintain the same number of employees in Idaho (e.g. 200 employees in Idaho, 1 moves to Montana, the employer needs to find one to fill the spot in Idaho).

### **Availability of Funds**

- There should be a sliding scale of how much funding would be offered to an individual. The WDC would have to come up with very clear expectations of how the scale would work.
- The Committee would like Ms. Secrist to look at a sliding scale and bring examples to the next meeting.

One of the projects the WDC has been working on with the Idaho LEADER group is to identify high-quality credentials. Ms. Secrist shared an early glance of the data being collected for the project. Please see attached document.

Data is being generated that can help define high-quality credentials for ETP and the new WDTF program. The WDC also has an existing outreach campaign called Launch that is going to be a great vehicle to get information out about the new WDTF program. The idea is that region by region individuals can be connected to the most in-demand industries and growth areas in their region and lead them to very specific training opportunities to meet the demands. At the next meeting Ms. Secrist will provide more information on Launch.

**Motion by Mr. Hudson to adjourn. Motion carried.**

**Meeting adjourned at 3:02 PM**