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WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

317 W Main Street, Boise, Idaho 83735-0510

Grant Review Committee Meeting Minutes – April 19, 2021

Committee Members: Kelly Kolb, Jay Larsen, Michelle Stennett, Brian Cox, Jeff Greene, Joe Maloney, Jake Reynolds, Rico Barrera, Jenni Bradford, Sarah Griffin

Staff: Wendi Secrist, Paige Nielebeck, Caty Solace, Amanda Ames

Guests:

Called to order at 2:03 p.m.

Welcome

Roll Call – Quorum Met

Review Agenda – No changes to the agenda

Review February 23, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Motion by Mr. Cox to approve the February 23, 2021 Meeting Minutes as written. Second by Ms. Griffin. Motion carried.

BSU – Industry Sector Grant

The Boise State University project will provide training in essential, foundational skills for the provision of virtual patient healthcare, a personal and accessible modality of healthcare demanded by many patients, preferred by many employers, and supported and reimbursed by many payers. The modules, curriculum, and other materials developed for this program will help prepare 480 new nursing graduates and at least 525 nurses just pivoting to use this technology as a key element of patient care.

WDTF Request: \$292,346.03

Discussion

There is an obvious need considering the state of the world. The strong track record of BSU with WDTF grants makes it seem like a good investment.

Is there any news on the development of curriculum and how the course will be taught?

- Boise State will be using existing faculty or subject matter experts to teach the courses. There are different courses that telehealth training will be integrated into.

Who are the three industry partners?

- Keystone Health, St. Mary's Health System, and St. Luke's.
- It is nice to see that Boise State is reaching statewide.

All the partners must pay their employees a minimum of \$12 an hour and provide them health benefits. Boise State also has letters of support from Idaho Department of Health and Welfare and the Idaho Health Continuum of Care Alliance.

Everyone that goes through the training will obtain a credential.

Motion by Mr. Reynolds to recommend approval of the BSU Industry Sector Grant in the full amount of \$292,346.03. Second by Mr. Larsen. Motion carried.

Idaho Power – Employer Grant

Idaho Power will train new and existing workforce during the grant period. Some of their existing operators have worked at Idaho Power for 10 years and now need additional training to catch up on new equipment, tools, and processes. The project will train 25 employees at two of their geothermal plants and 2 new employees.

WDTF Request: \$49,157.74

Discussion

Will existing employees get an opportunity to work in the facility?

- There is a simulator involved in the training that some will be able to utilize during the training. Depending on what plant the trainee is at, the training will be customized for the specific plant. This will be beneficial if there is a large power failure.
- The simulator will be used in future trainings as well.
- The request is to upskill 25 current employees and then the infrastructure can train new employees going forward.

Is there a demand for these types of jobs?

- This is going to ensure a sustainable training program that reflects new technology in the industry.
- There are not a lot of businesses with power plant positions in Idaho, but it is an important part of the Idaho economy.
- Idaho Power has a career ladder available to help individuals move up in position.
- A lot of the power plants are in rural communities which provides great opportunities for individuals to stay in their communities.

Motion by Mr. Larsen to recommend approval of the Idaho power Employer Grant in the full amount of \$49,157.74. Second by Mr. Reynolds.

Ms. Griffin recuses herself from the vote.

Motion carried.

Western States Equipment – Employer Grant

Western States Equipment is planning to expand their workforce over the next few years, affecting most of their locations in Idaho. As part of the expansion, Western States plans on retraining 431 existing employees and hiring 110 new employees. The primary focus is expanding the number of technicians in their workforce. Currently, there is a shortage of technicians in Idaho making it imperative that Western States train and grow their workforce.

WDTF Request: \$946,293.16

Discussion

It is a little concerning that Western States had a previous WDTF grant that slipped through the cracks.

- There was turnover in the position overseeing the WDTF grant.
- The Western States Grant transitioned to the WDC when the WDC took over the grants from IDOL. Processes were being put in place and relationships were being established. Grantees now receive quarterly reminders when reimbursements are due and additional contact if there are concerns.

Most of the training is going to be used to upskill current employees. The training is very valuable and easily allows an individual to grow within the company or move to other entities.

What processes are in place to ensure a grantee follows the conditions of the WDTF contract?

- Every quarter the grantee provides a brief narrative report to Ms. Ames and she ensures they are on track to meet their targets. If the grantee is not meeting their target, they may be asked to repay a portion of the grant.
- If Ms. Ames anticipates a program is not going to meet their contractual goals, she does her best to get a contract modification in place. The WDC staff also recognizes that in a 2-year period things and circumstances can change.
- The funding is provided on a reimbursement basis, so nothing is reimbursed until the grantee has proven the funds have been spent in accordance with the contract.

Motion by Mr. Cox to recommend approval of the Western States Equipment Employer Grant in the full amount of \$949,293.16. Second by Mr. Reynolds. Motion carried.

U of I – Innovation Grant

The University of Idaho Coeur d'Alene (UI CDA) Dig'nIT High School Internship Program is a summer STEM enrichment program designed to grow a creative, well-educated, and career-minded community by engaging local businesses to provide a meaningful work experience for high school students. Dig'nIT promotes the university's STEM-focused initiatives by building a diverse workforce pipeline through internship opportunities to expose high school students to hands-on, experiential learning experiences. The grant will provide funding to support 7 students.

The WDC has turned down projects like this in the past because it is an expansion of an existing program with no sustainability at the end. Because of the cuts to the higher education budgets, U of I is not going to pay for the program internally.

This proposal initially went before the Outreach Committee, but they felt it did not fit the criteria of an outreach project.

WDTF Request: \$24,266.67

Discussion

How is U of I measuring the success of the program?

- This project does not immediately result in employment. Success can be measured by student participation. At the end of the program, students share their experience during an Internship Showcase event. This is where the university can evaluate whether the students experience was a success.
- U of I listed a few outcomes/metrics in their application.
 - Number of students who apply for internship
 - Number of students selected for internship
 - Student testimonials
 - Number of industry partners
 - Corporate host site testimonials
 - Annual report including all the above

What is U of I's sustainability plan for this program?

- U of I does not have a sustainability plan in place. They could come back to the Committee next year requesting more funding.
- U of I is encouraging employers to pay half of the intern's stipend.
 - Students are paid \$1,400 for the internship.

If U of I does not receive funding from the Community Foundation and/or the WDC then they will not move forward with the project.

Ms. Secrist reviewed the goals of the WDTF and the purpose of innovation grants. Please go to <https://wdc.idaho.gov/workforce-development-training-fund/> for more information.

Because scaling work-based learning (WBL) is going to require more funding than the \$25,000 innovating grant cap, the Policy Committee is going to look at adding a caveat to the WDTF policy for WBL proposals.

The WDC should ask U of I to create a "how-to guide" for the program that can be shared across the state.

How many industry partners have agreed to take interns?

- 5 entities have signed up.

If one intern gets hired, that breaks even on the amount of grant funds being provided.

Motion by Mr. Larsen to approve in the full amount of \$24,266.67 with the stipulation that U of I create a how-to guide to be shared with other entities throughout the state. Second by Ms. Griffin. Motion carried.

WBL Funding

When Ms. Secrist goes back to the Policy Committee, is it fair to say the Grant Review Committee is supportive of applications that would scale WBL in its various forms?

- The Committee is in agreeance with this.

Is there something the Grant Review Committee would like to see in policy to provide support/guidance for grant scaling WBL?

- A new WDTF grant category could be created specifically for WBL.
 - From a management standpoint, this would be a lot for the WDC staff to take on.
- Innovation grants are designed to be flexible. If the entity is able to show the benefit from the program, then it is a good investment (e.g. wage increases).
- Maybe the funding period can be extended for WBL with the expectation that the entity comes up with a sustainability plan.
- The \$25,000 cap should be removed for WBL projects.

If anyone has any other ideas, please send them to Ms. Secrist.

Motion by Mr. Larsen to adjourn. Second by Mr. Cox. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 3:19 p.m.