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Wendi Secrist
Executive Director



Trent Clark
Chair

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Vice Chair

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

317 West Main Street, Boise, Idaho 83735-0510

Workforce Development Policy Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday, August 18, 2020

Time: 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. (Mountain Time)

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

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

Guests: David Hahn

Call to Order at 2:00 p.m.

Roll Call – Quorum Met

Review Agenda – No changes to the agenda.

Approve June 16, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Motion by Mr. Kolb to approve the June 16, 2020 meeting minutes as written. Second by Mr. Schwarz.

Who are the strategic plan work group representatives for the Policy Committee and has the work group met yet?

- Kelly Kolb and Todd Schwarz are the Policy Committee representatives. The first work group meeting is on August 20. There will be two or three more meetings before the October Council meeting where the group will report back to the full council.

Is there a report on the outreach metrics from the Policy Committee's strategic plan objectives?

- The outreach efforts of the WDC are integrated into the WDC's annual report. Work on the annual report will begin in a couple weeks. This will be an item of discussion in future meetings. Ms. Secrist will send out the annual report to the Committee prior to the September meeting so the Committee can discuss any changes to the metrics.

Motion carried.

Update on Short-Term Financial Assistance Program/Employer Survey

The WDC received funding from the CARES Act to start a short-term financial assistance program. The first step of program implementation was to survey employees on their short-term workforce training needs. The survey will help identify the areas of training in high-demand and offer those trainings through the short-term financial assistance program. Idaho Launch will be utilized to provide the short-term training to Idahoans through the end of the year and then the WDC's short-term financial

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assistance program will take over and continue supporting short-term training for Idahoans. 877 surveys have been completed by employer as of today. There is good representation across all industries. Ms. Secrist shared the preliminary data from the survey. Please see attached document.

The WDC is appreciative of the industry associations and council members getting the survey out to Idaho employers.

In September, the Policy Committee will receive a list of training programs to approve. It is important to have quorum at the September meeting or it will push back the start of the Idaho Launch program. Ms. Secrist will send out the list Friday before the meeting.

Does the survey dig deep and ascertain the kinds of skills employers are looking for in employees?

- Yes. Ms. Secrist will send out the survey questions to the Committee. The survey was very thorough. In the survey, employers prioritized skills that data showed were important in their industry.

In the policy created for the short-term financial assistance program, the Committee included a statement that the WDC may require repayment if the individual take a job outside of Idaho. Does the Committee want the agreement the individual signs to remain silent on the repayment or incorporate the language with the understanding the WDC will not enforce the repayment for the first year of the program?

- The Committee would like the agreement to include the repayment language. It reinforces that the WDC is working to encourage individuals to stay in Idaho.

Apprenticeship Reimbursement Program

Two years ago, the Policy Committee revamped the criteria for the employer, industry sector, and innovation grant programs. As the Committee continues to support and promote work-based learning (WBL), the council suggested exploring creating a program under the WDTF to help employers start registered apprenticeship programs or to support the hiring of a registered apprentice. The program could leverage the application process for employer grants, but be significantly simpler. Right now, on an employer grant application, an employer receives 5 bonus points for registered apprenticeships, which amounts to about \$250 extra per apprentice. The Committee and Council have expressed that this is not a large enough incentive for employers. The apprenticeship reimbursement program would be an opportunity to provide an incentive for employers to create registered apprenticeships/hire apprentices.

Ms. Secrist reviewed similar program models from other states. Please see attached link. South Carolina did express that many employers choose not to participate in tax credit program because of the amount of work it takes to file for the tax credit.

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Under IDOL's apprenticeship grant, there is a small pool of funds that can be offered as incentives to employers and the WDC built \$200,000 into the USDOL Youth Apprenticeship Grant for incentives, but both of those funding streams will eventually run out. This program needs to be long term.

It is hard to know what the right incentive will be for employers. The Committee needs to research what might be a valuable incentive. Anything under \$1,000 may not be helpful when creating a new apprenticeship program. For discussion purposes, if the WDC allocated \$1 million for the program, it could fund:

- 1,000 apprentices at \$1,000 per apprentice
- 400 apprentices at \$2,500 per apprentice

Could the program use a sliding scale model like the quantitative funding model used for employer grants?

- That is a possible option. The length of the apprenticeship, cost of the apprenticeship, county average wage, and ratio of apprentices to journeymen could all be scoring factors on the funding model. The model would need to be fair for all businesses in Idaho.
- The Committee should gather data from programs on the cost to run apprenticeships (e.g. building trades equipment is expensive). Mr. Hudson will help gather this data.

Is the Committee comfortable that the program would only be for registered apprenticeships?

- If the program is registered, then the federal system will have all the data needed to submit for reimbursements. Any non-registered program will have to provide self-submitted data which can be difficult to verify. Part of the incentive is getting employers to register the program and then the WDTF will offset some of the incurred cost.
- There are a few DBS programs that would be able to provide accurate data. There are a lot of individuals in DBS programs.
- The Committee would like to start the program with registered apprenticeships only and then incorporate other programs, if appropriate.

Does the Committee want a certain number of hours or completion of related instruction as a qualification for the funding?

- Employers are looking for funding to help start apprenticeship programs. Will the funding be used to help start the program or help sustain it?
 - For an employer grant, employers provide the training and then submit for reimbursement from the WDTF.
 - 500 hours is one quarter of an apprenticeship. Does waiting to provide funds until after the apprentice has started qualify as providing startup funding?
 - Not having funds up front is a pain point for employers.
 - After the first year of training, employers see a lot of turnover. The WDC could be wasting funds if we provide them upfront to employers.

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- There is an unspoken practice in the trades to stall apprentices far enough along in their training to be valuable, but not be able to move out on their own as a journeyman.
 - Trades could fall lower on the funding scale than other programs.
- What if the WDC only provides funds for apprentices who complete the program? Then funds are not being used on individual who drop out.
 - The WDC could provide minimal support at the beginning of the program and then provide more as the program progresses.
 - The employer needs to be offered something up front as an incentive.

Does the Committee want the applications to go through the Grant Review Committee or since it is for an apprenticeship does the WDC automatically accept the application? If the application went through the Grant Review Committee, how would they handle the review process?

- The Policy Committee should write guidelines for the WDC staff on what kinds of programs the Committee is looking for. The Grant Review Committee has larger tasks to be working on.
- The Committee is comfortable with WDC staff reviewing the applications as long as it is for a registered apprenticeship program since they have already gone through an extensive verification process.

The Committee would like to pursue creating a WDTF program for registered apprenticeships.

Ms. Secrist will take the feedback above and put something together for the September meeting.

Motion by Mr. Schwarz to adjourn. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 2:55 p.m.