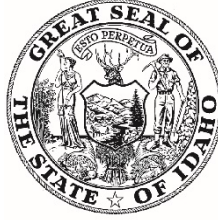


BRAD LITTLE
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Wendi Secrist
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Deni Hoehne
Chair

John Young
Vice Chair

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

514 W Jefferson St, Ste 131, Boise, Idaho 83735-0510

Joint Grant Review & Policy Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday, January 24, 2023

Time: 3:00 PM - 4:30 PM

Grant Review Committee Members: Brian Cox, Jake Reynolds, Jay Larsen, ~~Jeff Greene~~, Jenni Bradford, ~~Joe Maloney~~, Kelly Kolb, Rico Barrera

Policy Committee Members: Christi Gilchrist, ~~Clay Long~~, Daniel Puga, Hope Morrow, Jani Revier, Jason Hudson, John Smith, ~~Lori Barber~~, Sean Coletti, Tom Kealey, Tom Schultz

Staff: Rebecca Watson, Wendi Secrist, Sherawn Reberry, Matthew Thomsen, Cassie Mansour, Jeffrey Bacon, Stacy James, Amanda Ames

Guests: Chris Blanchard

Called to order at 3:02 p.m.

Welcome

Roll Call – Quorum met.

Review Agenda – No changes

Mr. Kolb presented the agenda and the WDTF policy and encouraged the members of both committees to share other thoughts as they came to mind.

Updates to Idaho Launch and the WDTF

- Ms. Secrist presented the current solution to the unprecedented record-breaking usage of Idaho Launch funding:
 - Two weeks ago, the Executive Committee decided to reduce the maximum amount of Launch funding per student to \$5000, to pause all the other grants administered through the WDTF (except those related to the CHIPS Act) for the rest of FY23, and to reclaim funding allocated to participants who did not finish their Launch education.
- Ms. Secrist then presented the Idaho Launch expansion recommendation made by the Governor: \$80 million for graduating high schoolers (\$8500 per student based on need/merit or some combination of the two), and \$10 million for workforce training of adult Launch participants. Finally, any remaining funding could be earmarked for education expansion grants, which would have to be approved by the Legislature.

- Any money left in the WDTF would go toward provider expansion or scale up infrastructure.
- If the legislation passes the Governor would like the WDC to stand up the program this year to be ready to start accepting applications in December of 2023.

Grant Policy – Discussion, Recommendations, and Prioritization of Funds

Mr. Kolb presented the challenges the Grant Review Committee is facing.

In August of 2022 the Grant Review Committee recognized that the same challenges kept recurring as they considered grant requests.

The following are from notes that Mr. Kolb sent to WDC staff, dated August 23, 2022:

Discussion points needing clarity from Policy or concerns from Grant Review Committee:

- Cost of doing business is a contention point for Grant Review Committee (GRC) members.
- Possible examples include forklift training, Microsoft excel, 'soft skills' training.
- Repeat applicants.
- Concern with wages that come in too low – is \$15-\$16/hour too low?
- Travel expenses in grant requests
- Is the rubric too soft or does it give us the correct amount of flexibility?
- Do the end results of the employer grants really increase economic mobility in the state of Idaho or is the benefit more outside of Idaho?
- The whole 'internal training' concept is a tough one for GRC members to accept, define or apply.
- How will we prioritize funding?

Positive feedback for the discussion:

- Quantitative funding model helps provide some weighting to grants.
- Apprenticeship programs are robust and great.
- Bish's RV example is a good one from this standpoint.

Discussion:

- The challenge is that going forward after this pause, the Grant Review Committee will have even harder decisions to make. They may want more guidance from the Policy Committee to help them to make these decisions.
- Types of training that the Council considers "costs of doing business."
- Employer grants are consistently a sticking point.
- The criterion by which we guide our choices to approve these Grants could be made to be more selective without strangling the Grant Review Committee's decision-making ability.
- The governor has prioritized and championed the Employer Grants to serve rural Idaho in the past.
- Is this how these grants are used? Primarily by rural Idaho?
 - No, they seemed to be used in more populated areas.
- What is the cost of doing business and what are new and innovative approaches?

- The Policy Committee considered that we did just provide some exceptions for Micron. Do we want to follow up on those exceptions by making the policy for these grants more restrictive?
- The rubric the Grant Review currently uses only requires one goal to be met for the grant to be approved.
 - The Policy Committee is in favor of requiring multiple goals to be met by each grant.
- We need to remember that when the policy was written the “Cost of doing business” referred to routine training, not a specific one-time goal.
- Is there any practical way to apply means testing to figure out who wouldn’t be able to access this training without the training fund?
 - Maybe we would want to have an employer sign an affidavit stating that they would not be able to afford or access this training without the grant.
 - This was identified as the “but for” model.
- When we are using a “but for” model, who is most impacted? The employer or the employee?
- Are there any other programs that have done this before us? Is there anyone we can emulate?
 - In 2018 when the policy was updated, the Policy Committee researched this and mined from the states who had pioneered these types of training grants.
 - Ms. Secrist pointed out that we are trying to be responsive to Idaho’s employers, which requires us to continue to innovate.
- The problem with the models we are looking at is that they are subjective. Something less subjective – can we weight a higher wage increase at a higher percent?
- With the Launch program, we have worked very hard to identify in-demand careers in Idaho and including this methodology might be a way to weight the rubric to help the GRC prioritize the in-demand careers.
- The GRC can work on developing language in the rubric that will create a threshold of expectations for future grant applicants, weight these rubrics however is appropriate and set a floor scoring for grants that will be considered. This will allow the Committee to have the necessary flexibility.
- The Policy Committee agrees that 1–2-hour trainings are not bulky or significant enough to justify licensure or credentialing that leads to higher wages.
- Defining in-demand credentials may be just as important as identifying in-demand careers.
- During the pandemic, we had critical infrastructure, which had to continue regardless of risk. Do we use this type of language to determine workforce value?
- What are we trying to accomplish with the Workforce Development Training Fund?
 - If we just go based on quantity, are we looking for mass amounts of \$12/hour floor level jobs or are we looking for diversity and inclusion?
- The labor market is shifting... are our priorities based around job creation or are we actively driving to innovate in a growth minded market.

- The GRC suggested strengthening the rubric and bringing it back to Policy Committee?
- Recognizing that our time is short today, can the GRC work on the rubric and make it more stringent and nuanced so we will see the very best projects rise to the top.
 - If an area is too fuzzy, the GRC can send it back to Policy and ask for more clarity.
 - A more robust rubric will allow the GRC to prioritize more effectively.
- Should we consider looking at these grants in batches like we do with the Child Care Expansion Grants?
 - That may encourage choosing the most compelling grants to fund. That may help with prioritization of funding.
- What would we do if a high scoring grant came in with a high ask? Do we need to go back to capping these?
 - The Committee reflects that it may be valuable to work towards quarterly grant awards, thereby allowing the GRC to compare the most valuable grant applications and choose the most appropriate to fund.
- We may need to add prioritizing certifications into policy. Grant Review Committee will work together and bring recommendations to the Policy Committee.

Meeting adjourned at 4:23 PM