

**BRAD LITTLE**  
GOVERNOR

**Wendi Secrist**  
*Executive Director*



**Deni Hoehne**  
*Chair*

**B. J. Swanson**  
*Vice Chair*

## **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL**

317 West Main Street, Boise, Idaho 83735-0510

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

**Date:** Tuesday, July 20, 2021

**Time:** 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM

**Committee Members:** BJ Swanson, Jason Hudson, Christi Gilchrist, Todd Schwarz, John Smith, Scott Syme, Jani Revier, Tom Kealey, Tom Schultz, Clay Long, Lori Barber, Sean Coletti, Hope Morrow

**Staff:** Paige Nielebeck, Wendi Secrist, Caty Solace, Amanda Ames, Stacy James, Matthew Thomsen, Jeffrey Bacon, Jean Millheim

**Guests:** Kylie Turner

**Call to Order at 2:02 p.m.**

**Roll Call** – Quorum Met

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

**Review June 15, 2021 Meeting Minutes**

**Motion by Ms. Barber to approve the June 15, 2021 meeting minutes as written. Second by Mr. Schultz. Motion carried.**

**Launch Course Approvals**

Ms. Solace reviewed the Launch courses for approval. Please see attached document.

Discussion

Is the apprenticeship program standardized and recognized throughout the state?

- It is a USDOL apprenticeship program that was developed by NIC and other providers. It takes a CNA and culminates in a Medical Assistant e-certification.

A third-party vendor is listed for CEI's program. Is the vendor an Idaho company?

- All the Workforce Training Centers use third-party vendors to augment their curriculum and they are not always Idaho companies. An evaluation is done on the curriculum to ensure it is rigorous and beneficial to the state. It allows the training centers to offer the training on-demand rather than have to wait for a class to fill up.
- This has helped rural populations. Any time the training centers can use a local provider they use them.

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Are the welding courses online?

- They are in-person at NIC.

**Motion by Ms. Revier to approve the addition of the courses to Idaho Launch as presented. Second by Mr. Schwarz.**

Ms. Gilchrist and Ms. Barber abstain.

**Motion carried.**

### ***UI Work Search Waiver for Launch Participants***

According to code the Unemployment Insurance (UI) work search can be waived for WIOA participants and individuals per IDOL director's discretion. IDOL asks the committee for feedback on the concept of waiving the work search requirement for individuals participating in Launch. Based on the number of participants receiving UI, the cost of waiving the work search would cost the trust fund anywhere from \$300,000 to \$1 million a year. While this is negligible impact to the fund overall, the employer the individual was laid off from, if they pay UI based on cost reimbursement, would pay UI over a longer period. If the Committee would like IDOL to go this route, there would need to be additional monitoring done on the Launch program. Right now, IDOL signs the individuals up for Launch and then does not check up on them once enrolled in a program. The individuals will need to be monitored weekly if work search requirements were waived (e.g., attendance, etc.).

Discussion:

Is this something the group wants IDOL to consider?

- How many hours of work search is required for UI?
  - The requirement is 2 work search activities a week (e.g., applying for a job, interview, etc.). The work search can be 15 minutes per application or a few hours.
  - IDOL does spot checks with individuals who are unemployed to ensure there is no fraudulent activity.
- How would this change impact employers?
  - It will depend on the employer's experience rating, how many employees the employer laid off, etc. Some employers pay the actual cost of the unemployment insurance rather than being experience rated.
  - The reason there is a range of impact from \$300,000 to \$1 million is because the longest someone is eligible for UI is 22 weeks. Often individuals do not sign up for training the day they are unemployed. Not every individual is eligible for a full 22 weeks of benefits.
  - Many Launch participants are fully employed, and their employers are encouraging them to seek additional training.
- Can the colleges help with tracking the individual (e.g., if the individual is attending class, etc.)?
  - With WIOA, IDOL works with the individual and follows-up with the individuals on a regular basis.

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- For the college to be able to release attendance information, the individual would have to fill out a FERPA release form. These can be daunting to fill out.
- If there would need to be transmission of student data between agencies, compliance officers would need to be consulted to ensure that is acceptable.
- The impact to the UI trust fund is not a big deal. For the individual employers, having their UI rates increase or having to pay UI longer can be a big deal. When the work search is only 2 activities per week is there a real benefit to waiving the requirement?
  - The goal is to get the individual employed.
- IDOL does not waive work search for trade adjustment assistance.
- Is there any way to calculate how much of the WDC's investment might be lost if the work search is not waived? If the work search is not waived, the individual would be required to accept offers of work within certain parameters. This could cause individuals to drop out of the Launch training if required to accept work.
  - This is speculative and there is no data to support this. The WDC only has 6 months of data on Launch so far. The WDC is tracking if someone drop out of the Launch course, but there is not enough history to know what investment might be lost.
  - It is important to avoid forcing an individual to take employment that is lower than where they would be after training.

The Committee would like to table this discussion and reevaluate this topic in a year when more data is available.

### ***Debrief Joint Policy/Grant Committee Meeting – Define Priorities***

Ms. Secrist reviewed the summary of the Policy and Grant meeting. Please see attached document.

The goal today is to prioritize and figure out what next steps the Committee would like to take.

#### **Discussion:**

It is important that the WDC is getting the WDTF funds out there and a return on investment. The money needs to work for Idahoans.

Perhaps we should not fund internal training. It makes more sense to leverage the funds through universities and colleges to do the training. It would be nice to see internal training decrease in applications. There are other external training providers outside of the colleges and universities that the Committee needs to keep in mind. It can be hard to track the funds if they are going to a company for internal training.

While the WDC does need to get the WDTF funds out, the WDC is going to start seeing a shrinking balance in the fund over the next year. If Launch continue to be successful, then more money will go into the program and less money will be available for WDTF grant projects. More funding needs to go toward industry sector grants.

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In the meeting, there was discussion of including OSHA training or other more routine trainings in Launch. Has anything come from that discussion?

- Ms. Gilchrist found a provider (180 Skills) that could do the routine training (safety training, OSHA, etc.). If this is something the Committee wants to focus on, it can be investigated further.

Other states have shifted their grant requirements toward training that leads to a credential (certificate of completion, etc.).

- Prior to the overhaul of the WDTF there was discussion of this idea.
- How does the WDC determine if a particular training is successful?
  - The employer must provide documentation that the training was conducted, paid for, and followed the approved training plan. After that, Ms. Ames checks the wages before the training was conducted and then a year after the grant closes IDOL looks to see if the employees are being retained within the industry and in Idaho.
- The Committee should try to produce policy around this before Legislative budget time.
- It is important that the WDC does not eliminate any changes of internal training.

Staff will come up with some ideas, collect data (internal vs. external), and look at policy changes that would allow the WDC to balance what was discussed.

Until last quarter, there was concern about the WDTF balance. Things are moving in the right direction. The Grant Review Committee will take up quite a few grants this month and a couple next month. If all are awarded, the unobligated balance of the fund will be brought down to about \$5 million. Ms. Secrist has a goal of getting the fund balance down to around \$3 million. The fund sees about \$3.7 million in revenue every year.

### ***ETP Policy Update***

The Committee will take up the ETP Policy next month. IDOL is working on updating all the data sources and hopefully it will be ready next month for the Committee to review.

**Motion by Mr. Kealey to adjourn. Second by Representative Syme. Motion carried.**  
**Adjourned at 3:06 p.m.**