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WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

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

Grant Review Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: Friday, January 27, 2026
Time: 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Committee Members: Jake Reynolds, Jay Larsen, Joe Maloney, Kelly Kolb, ~~Rico Barrera~~, Adrian San Miguel, ~~Sergio Mendoza~~, ~~Ben Davidson~~, Todd Putren, Catherine McClure, Christi Gilchrist

Staff: Denise Hill, Amanda Ames, Dee Mooney, Chad Lahti, Tina Polishchuk, Jenny hay

Guests:

Call to order at 10:00 AM **Kelly Kolb, Chair**
Welcome

Roll Call, Introductions
Review Agenda
****Review the December 5, 2025 Meeting Minutes***

Motion by Mr. Maloney to approve December 5, 2025 Meeting Minutes. Second by Mr. Reynolds. Motion carried.

WDTF Financial Report — Amanda Ames

- Report as of December 31, 2025
- WDTF 58% spent
- $15.8 spending authority for this year
- Grant requests today total $700K
- Obligated funds $21.3M
- Unobligated funds $4M

****WDTF Grant Requests*** — Kelly Kolb

- ***CWI AMET Expansion – Industry Sector Grant***

The College of Western Idaho (CWI) proposes expanding its Advanced Mechatronics and Engineering Technology (AMET) training capacity by establishing a new instructional site at Micron's Boise Training Center. This expansion addresses the Treasure Valley's widening skills gap in advanced manufacturing, where employer demand for technicians is rising faster than the region's supply of qualified workers.

Over the grant period, the project will train 134 individuals, with 74 expected to complete classroom instruction, and 111 earning recognized credentials. The program supports both new entrants and incumbent workers, contributing to wage gains, job placement, and long-term retention in Idaho's advanced manufacturing workforce. Grant funding will support personnel salary and fringe benefits, laptops for instructors, and indirect costs associated with project management. Micron is providing matching support, including $500,000 in CHIPS funding for instructional staffing and $1 million in equipment. CWI will utilize grants funds to build a sustainable, scalable training model that strengthens Idaho's talent pipeline, supports industry growth, and advances one of the nation's first federally registered apprenticeships in the semiconductor sector.
Requested Amount: $319,611.00
Discussion:

- Industry growth rate, will the jobs be there, projections from Lightcast
- Micron may have better information internally
- Job growth doesn't justify the funds requested, national data provided
- Wouldn't Micron provide this to support the request
- Past CWI grant experience is positive
- Rubric doesn't currently address industry growth rate
- 3.7% industry growth rate in application
- Currently only one instructor
- Anticipate more growth in this industry
- Universal skills
- Footnote to go back to requester about data supporting request
- Data needed to support statement
- Impacts to other supply chains
- Like cash match is from Micron, positive investment in the project
- Plan for sustainability needed
- How much is TPM weighted? It is not part of the current criteria
- Budget, $2,380 per participant
- Industry credential
- Rubric score: 72%

Motion by Mr. Reynolds to approve the CWI AMET Expansion Industry Sector Grant in the amount of $319,611.00.
Amended motion by Mr. Reynold to approve the CWI AMET Expansion Industry Sector Grant in the amount of $319,611.00 with request for additional information on talent demands in this field and the shifts in data over the past four years. Second by Mr. Larsen. Motion carried.

- ***U of I Cyber Training Gaps – Industry Sector Grant***

University of Idaho's Bridging the Cyber-training Gaps initiative addresses a critical statewide shortage of workers who can manage real-world data systems, build and deploy artificial intelligence and machine learning models, and operate secure cloud-based computing environments essential to Idaho's agriculture, manufacturing, mining, and semiconductor sectors. Over the grant period the University will train 45 students through a series of week-long training sessions, combined with immersive laboratory and virtual simulation experiences, to build a sustainable workforce pipeline that expands economic opportunity for Idaho residents and strengthens Idaho's leadership in data-driven manufacturing and semiconductor innovation. Students will work through clean, well-documented datasets that reflect production processes, equipment performance, agricultural field measurements, and quality control

workflows. Grant funding will support personnel salary and fringe, facility and administrative costs, training supplies, tuition and fees for students.
Requested Amount: 294,021.70
Discussion:

- Over the summer, 3 sessions one weeklong each
- Skill gap in mining, agriculture; no partners in these spaces
- Track record for these types of events do not have a good history
- Not seeing how this can be replicated
- Budget, large overhead seems inefficient
- More personnel than those being trained
- Curriculum doesn't seem to move the needle
- What is the pathway after this
- Academic credit
- Tuition is being charged in addition at standard rates
- Cyber Security is foundational, but it is unique to each industry
- Multiple grants outstanding
- Rubric score: 46%

Motion by Mr. Maloney to deny the U of I Cyber Training Gaps Industry Sector Grant in the amount of $294,021.70. Second by Ms. Gilchrist. Motion carried

- ***Idaho Outfitters and Guides Association – Innovation Grant***

The Idaho Outfitters and Guides Association (IOGA) will relaunch the Professional Guide Institute (PGI), a statewide training program designed to strengthen Idaho's outdoor recreation workforce. PGI addresses a critical skills gap by providing guides with science-based education in communication, interpretation, and resource stewardship—skills not covered by current licensing requirements. The program will deliver an online curriculum developed with industry partners and subject-matter experts, to 150 individuals covering Idaho's natural and cultural history, ecology, and professional standards. PGI will improve employability, create career pathways, and enhance visitor experiences, supporting rural economies and Idaho's reputation as a premier recreation destination. Grant funding will support curriculum development, implementation, supplies, and travel.
Requested Amount: $74,965.00
Discussion:

- Wage seems high
- Policy allows for more than $25K if multiple regions are involved
- 3 regions involved, 2,3, & 6
- Knowledge needed is fundamental in industry
- Important part of Idaho's economy
- Great letters from partners
- Training could become a required for hire
- Match is in kind
- Outside of the box idea, good project
- Good organization
- Rubric score: 72%

Motion by Mr. Larsen to approve the Idaho Outfitters and Guides Association Innovation Grant in the amount of $74,965.00. Second by Mr. Reynolds. Motion carried.

- ***LONG Building Technologies – Employer Grant***

LONG Building Technologies is a full-service building systems provider specializing in HVAC equipment, building automation, mechanical services, security solutions, and part distribution launching a new operation in Idaho. Grant funds will be utilized to hire and train 6 new employees, and re-train 25 existing employees, to meet customer demand, provide high-quality solutions, and build a sustainable foundation for long-term success in the Idaho market. The training will enhance promotability, employability, and wage potential for employees while supporting the company's ability to deliver high-quality, integrated building solutions.
Requested Amount: $54,058.00
Discussion:

- Aligns with WDTF goals
- Not associated with an education institution
- Seems like everyone is getting a bump for doing training, lacks definition
- 5% increase across the board
- Would like to see feedback after training to see if it really affects them
- Quantitative model is $54,058.00 initial ask was $157,970.00
- Some travel included on budget
- 1st application from them
- Is this more of the cost of doing business
- Everyone must stay current in keeping their workforce current
- Rubric score: 58%

Motion by Mr. San Miguel to return the LONG Building Technologies Employer Grant in the amount of $54,058.00 for additional information. Second by Mr. Reynolds. Motion carried.

WDTF Grant Process and Goals Discussion All

- Committee Feedback
  - Policy, goals and historical data provided
  - Policy has been adjusted, goals have been unchanged since 2018
  - Historically
    - Mid to high 80s has been the highest percentage given
    - Is 65% the right threshold for funding
  - Are the goals what we need going forward or has our thinking changed
  - Are our expectations matching goals
  - Thoughts
    - Higher education institutions applications, are they applying rather than using other financial means
    - Possible cap on amount or number of grants from higher education institutes
    - Higher education grants include large overhead costs in budgets
    - Same cap on industry possibly
    - How would goals be adjusted for this
  - Dollars available have changed, we were asked to invest in specific buckets
  - Past 3 – 4 years had $13M Micron grant, had $47M to support Micron in total, most went to education institutions
  - Before CHIPS Act, available funds were $3-4M annually

- Funds from unemployment taxes are inconsistent and availability depends on when payment is made
- 6 goals
    - Economic Mobility
        - Yes, refocus on wages
        - Must impact the person to impact the system
        - Maybe retitle, move up Best Practices
        - Evaluation aligned grants to in demand careers
    - Innovation
        - What does it mean
        - Combine it with Service to Employers or Best Practices
        - Remove or restate the word innovative
        - Must be at the employer level
        - Look for companies that are trying to expand out
        - Grants have been difficult, rarely see it
        - Is it sustainable, ok if not depending on request amount
    - Best Practices
        - Almost the same as Service to Employers
    - Service to Employers
        - Tie to In demand careers
        - Add “extraordinary”
    - Economic Growth
    - Return on Investment
        - Possibly combine it with Economic Growth
        - Hits all the buttons
        - Saying the same as Economic Mobility
        - Always go back to match, in kind questionable, where is the industry buying in
            - TPM
- When reading grants look for the “a ha!” moment, how are you helping the individual or making it better for the individual or economy
- Health care example: saying it is innovative, but in reality is everyone is doing it
- Return on investment, Idahoans, business, innovation
- Only have 3 priorities
    - Deliver for Idaho
    - Deliver for Idahoans
    - Deliver for business
- Focus on sharing what we fund
- Want to support the top in demand industries
- Focus on skills rather than industry sectors
- Tech goes across every sector
- Possibly solicit sectors? Use in demand careers
    - Business development in sector
- Always prided on being equal opportunity
- Possibly have designated time for Higher Education grant requests
- Agriculture, possible training for mechanics on farms, not seeing requests from this sector, reach out

- Staff reviews for alignment to the goals and assists with the application
- How do we know how successful these grants are
    - Annual report on actual training
    - 2 – 3 years post grant evaluation, need 30 to 40 participants for key questions
        - Faster wage growth, by industry
        - Retention in Idaho
        - Input /output analysis, generated x in state taxes
- We are more effective because of the tension we have between committees and the questions raised
    - Look at the data and continue to improve it

Unanimous consent motion by Mr. Reynolds to adjourn. No objections.

Meeting adjourned at 2:33 PM