

Benton-Franklin Workforce Development Council

Youth Committee Minutes

February 17, 2021
3:30 p.m. – Zoom

Present

Dennis Williamson
Alicia Perches
Bob Legard

Excused

Absent

Lynn Ramos-Braswell

Staff/Partners

Tiffany Scott, BFWDC
David Chavey-Reynaud, BFWDC
Diana Hamilton, BFWDC
Cynthia Garica, BFWDC
Jamilet Nerell, BFWDC
Jessie Cardwell, BFWDC
Becky Smith, BFWDC
Mark Wheaton, TC Futures
Kayci Loftus, CPS
Heather Woodruff, CPS

Ex-Officio

Cinthia Alvarez
Paul Randall

Call to Order

Dennis Williamson called the meeting to order at 3:31. Members responded as Becky called roll. Cynthia welcomed Cinthia Alvarez and thanked her for her service as an ex-officio member.

Approval of Committee Minutes

Members received copies of the November 18, 2020, Youth Committee Meeting minutes for review.

Bob Legard moved to approve November 18, 2020, Youth Committee Minutes as presented, seconded by Alicia Perches. Motion carried.

WIOA Youth Program Updates – Cynthia

Cynthia thanked everyone for taking the time to join the meeting. Last month the State Monitors did a virtual annual review of the WDC fiscal, administrative, and programs. They conducted a full comprehensive review of 10 files from the Youth Program. There were no findings or questioned costs identified. Next month we should receive the management letter, which will summarize their visit and will be shared with the full board. She acknowledged Career Path Services (CPS) for their availability and help to resolve issues the week of the monitoring.

She shared the PY20 OSY Youth Program Performance Summary. The numbers continue to be below target, especially for employed exits. COVID restrictions have drastically impacted industries that youth are interested in. They find that participants need support for a more extended time before they are ready to engage in job search and training activities. Our youth and young adults are competing with more experienced and skilled job seekers for entry-level positions. The staff continues to focus on providing credentials and assistance for basic needs to remove barriers so that customers can continue with their education and employment-related goals. It is taking longer to make sure that the participants don't have barriers when they start job searching. There are about 22 GEDs in progress. We are now in phase 2, so we hope to see an increase now that so many establishments have a 25% capacity.

Within this report are some of the strategies that are in place to increase enrollments and employed exits.

Pre-Apprenticeships have been delayed and may not happen this program year due to COVID restrictions.

TC Futures Monthly Report – Mark/Cynthia

Mark expressed how proud he is of his staff. They have been very resilient as they have been working remotely. They are able to provide GED testing and technical support. They are still providing many services. They continue to grow and impact customer's lives. Many customers are dealing with homelessness or need rental assistance.

They are graduating more students than they ever have in the past. It helps to lessen test anxiety that students can come to an environment that they are comfortable.

Social media presence continues to be strong.

Being shut down has given them time to look at the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations and increase accessibility throughout the facility. Equipment has been ordered with more to come, making studying at the center a better experience all around. New signs have been installed, which include braille. They want to make sure all customers have equal access and have an enjoyable experience at the center.

Mark reported that they are looking at what the school districts are doing with COVID safety concerns. They are looking at ways for customers to be in the center safely.

Dennis shared that he likes the report and thanked Mark for his work on it.

Brazen/LinkedIn Learning Opportunities - David

David shared that Brazen is the virtual resource/job fair platform. In January, we had a resource fair where there were 19 booths with 41 representatives staffing them, 118 registered, and 51 people in attendance. This resulted in 93 conversations and 52 job referrals. We are looking forward to expanding the use of this platform. We can have up to 2 virtual events a month. At this time, we have approximately 1 per month planned. We think the virtual events will continue post-Covid.

There is a Healthcare Job Fair scheduled for February that already has 30 vendors signed up. The goal is to streamline these events so that employers can be involved with little effort. We have the use of the platform through October. Jasmine Sanchez is the local virtual job fair administrator.

Cynthia asked about the availability of Brazen in Spanish. Having Spanish would help with accessibility. David checked, and the translate button on the site does not exist yet, but Brazen is actively working on it.

David shared that in January, we started a six-month pilot program with LinkedIn Learning. We have 300 licenses. 60-70 of these will be used for professional development at BFWDC, WSCB, and TC Futures staff. The rest will be used to help customers upskill. He shared a tour of the LinkedIn Learning site. [Linkedin.com](https://www.linkedin.com).

This is a pilot program that goes through June. It will allow us to see this program's value-add in both professional development and services for our customers. At that time, we will evaluate the benefits.

Other Business

Dennis welcomed Cynthia Alvarez and asked her to give a brief overview of what she does at Columbia Basin College (CBC).

She shared that she has been at CBC for six years and is currently the High School Equivalency Program (HEP) Academic Advisor and Recruiter. She helps migrant seasonal farmworkers get their GED and employment. Their grant has been extended for the next five years serving 107 students per year. She is also involved in the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee. They are moving forward with creating an equity plan for students, faculty, and staff. They have been working hard to create a more diverse and equitable work and learning environment. She is the new chair by the Tri-Cities Latino Community Network. They work with the Chambers, migrant school programs, and the Mid-Columbia Libraries. They come together and give information about what is happening with the LatinX community. These meetings are currently virtual.

Cynthia asked Mark how TC Futures handled students who want to sign up to get a GED to meet the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) requirement but don't want to sign up for any other services. Mark shared that they haven't seen many. The TC Futures students are referred from the school districts. TC Futures works with the districts to find the supports needed. Mark shared that they are connected to Legal Counsel for Youth and Children and are excited to help youth in our demographic.

The age requirement for HEP is 16 and up. There is an eligibility exam to get into the program. The program is offered in Spanish and English. They are currently the only program giving Spanish instruction.

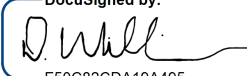
Next Meeting

Youth Committee Meeting – May 19, 2021, 3:30 p.m. at TBD

Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

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5/19/2021
Dennis Williamson, Chair

DocuSigned by:

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5/19/2021
Becky Smith, Office Manager