

Benton-Franklin Workforce Development Council
 Adult & Employer Linkage Committee
 September 17, 2020, at 8:30 a.m.
 Zoom

<u>Present</u>	<u>Excused</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>Staff/Partners</u>
Jamie Rasmussen Jennie Weber Karl Dye Melanie Olson Michael Lee Todd Samuel	Adolfo de Leon	Lori Mattson	Tiffany Scott, BFWDC Becky Smith, BFWDC Cynthia Garcia, BFWDC David Chavey-Reynaud, BFWDC Diana Hamilton, BFWDC Jamilet Nerell, BFWDC Jessie Cardwell, BFWDC Crystal Bright, WSO Israel Delamora, OIC Heather Woodruff, CPS Jasmine Smith, CPS Kayci Loftus, CPS Rosa Reyna, GW

Call to Order

Melanie welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 8:34 a.m. Becky read through the roll call while everyone introduced themselves.

Approval of Committee Minutes

Minutes of the August 20, 2020, Adult & Employer Linkage Committee Meeting were provided for members to review.

Todd Samuel moved to approve the August 20, 2020, Adult & Employer Linkage Committee Meeting Minutes as presented, seconded by Jennie Weber. Motion carried.

Program Highlights – Diana

Diana shared that the Adult, Dislocated Worker, Disaster Recovery, and Employment Recovery contracts have all been fully executed. Thank you to Jessie for the help that she gave on writing these contracts. She has been a great asset to our team. A WARN notice was issued for Sandvik with layoffs happening on October 30, impacting approximately 50 workers. There will be multiple virtual sessions coordinated to accommodate the different work shifts. Some of those employees live in Yakima County, and our rapid response team will coordinate with the South Central WDC for these sessions.

Diana pointed out that the number of customers served is a little behind in each of the programs. Provided in the Program Performance Reports is an explanation of recruitment strategies by the subcontractors that have been implemented to promote services available and increase the number of customers served. There has been a coordinated effort and partnership happening at WorkSource to connect customers who have been receiving unemployment benefits for over 20 weeks utilizing a list provided by ESD. This outreach plan was created to target UI recipients in various industries using several outreach methods.

Diana encouraged everyone to read the Disaster Recovery and Employment Recovery press release that went out this week. The hope is that the press release will generate interest in these programs.

Todd asked about the outreach done to the local churches and food banks. Heather reported that information was given to local foodbank and church staff. These staff members were very surprised that WorkSource was still offering services. This response tells us that we still have work to inform our community partners and the public that our doors

are closed, but we are still providing services virtually. Heather described some of the outreach that has happened to promote programs.

Cynthia shared that David will be taking over the Econovue platform. We are currently printing reports of companies that are hiring in specific sectors. In the future, we will be able to report out how this platform is helping. These reports can give state trends and localized data for Benton and Franklin Counties to tell us which sectors and businesses are growing. This will allow us to get the economic data needed to conduct business outreach.

Todd asked about the Disaster Relief listening tours. Diana shared that we learned a lot from these tours highlighting what the current local needs are. The challenge was that when the proposal was made, we were addressing the needs from five months ago. We found out within those grants; there is no flexibility to add the current needs of the community. We need to stick with what was proposed unless there are additional funds added. We can help with the current needs that were identified through other funding sources.

Todd asked about the possibility of people that we help get a job getting COVID-19. Diana shared that the language in the agreements should protect us. The state is currently reviewing the language to make sure.

Todd shared his appreciation for these reports.

EcSA Update – Jamilet

Jamilet pointed to the Program Performance Report emphasizing how COVID-19 has affected EcSA enrollments. They continue to face challenges with customers not wanting to participate in any federal or state-funded program as they seek legal status in the US. Others don't believe the program is free and legitimate.

In July, the Social Policy Research Agency conducted interviews with EcSA partners and staff. Phase one of the research analysis is complete, and she is happy to report that all of the challenges we have struggled with are included in the report. This report shows each of the four areas implementing this program. Within each area, we can see the executive summary, the early implementation success, and challenges and recommendations. The EcSA funding source and the other areas have agreed that they need to provide more flexibility through the pandemic to help relieve the needs of these communities.

Todd asked about the cost per outcome. Jamilet explained that we are still exploring whether our customers need more technical assistance resources. This topic has been brought up with her peers across the state. What is COVID-19 doing to the program and customers? They are exploring what the needs are and how we can meet them.

Families Forward Washington (FFW) Updates – Jamilet

Jamilet shared that as of this week, they have 62 participants, which exceeds the goal of 56 for the program. If we want to enroll more participants, we will need to look at the cost of training. Goodwill continues to provide virtual services and case management. They continue to adapt to the new world of doing virtual services.

WorkSource Update – Crystal

Crystal shared that there are a lot of exciting things going on. Overall, the number of customers is the same as last month. There has not been an uptick in customer traffic that was expected in August. The Job Search waiver has been extended through October 1. Work is being done to get more actionable feedback on the surveys. In preparing for the uptick anticipated, they have started reaching out to the community, asking if our service delivery is meeting their needs and what do we need to do to meet those needs. Childcare remains to be a primary concern. Jamilet added that the BFWDC had executed a letter for support for the Imagine Institute, seeking to bring funding resources to meet the needs of childcare in our area. WorkSource staff is being proactive in working to create virtual workshops to help job seekers be prepared through the eyes of the employer. On 9/15, another cohort of the Certified Business Professional kicked off. This will give a total of 16 certified individuals. This means a consistent model of delivery of business services and customer service and shared understanding and focusing on business relationships. We are experiencing hiring across the food processing sectors and are fielding concerns about employees refusing to work and employers not getting the workforce needed. Virtual job fairs are essential and have been a useful tool for us.

Kayci shared a need for a virtual platform where we can help businesses conduct hiring events. The team has been diligently researching other tools to address this and proactively working with the WDC to see if we can move forward with getting a platform of our own if something does not come out from WWA and ESD sooner than later. They continue to focus on sector work. There has been a big focus on apprenticeship opportunities and entrepreneurship. We want to make sure we have a good handle on those as we can see through local data that we have more job seekers than our community has in employer openings. We need to be well versed in traditional and non-traditional employment opportunities for job seekers. We want to make sure we have a subject matter expert to help with entrepreneurial opportunities.

Crystal thanked Tiffany for being our voice back to the Washington Workforce Association and advocating for the need of the job fair platform.

In terms of service delivery, it has been a huge team collaboration to succeed in the last six months. They have been working to help people with unemployment insurance benefits and other basic needs related services. About 80% of our ESD partners have been deployed to provide UI support. These team members are now back home at the WorkSource. We are now shifting our focus back to reemployment. There is a need for a transition back into reemployment thinking. Several venues of training will be happening to help. They are also ramping up safety training.

They have the opportunity to work with a facilitator that will be walking through Lean Process Mapping to continue to move forward to being bigger and better for the community.

Melanie asked about the need for parents to stay home to supervise their children doing schoolwork. Has this affected the number of customers coming into WorkSource? Once children can go back to school, will there be an uptick in people able to access services? Crystal shared they will need to look at extending hours at WorkSource to meet people's needs. Do we need to provide after-hour services to help accommodate these parents?

Crystal shared that the new signage should be available by the end of the month. She is also working with Google to have a new banner placed on our business page to say that the building is closed, but WorkSource is open.

Kayci shared that we are in partnership with the Department of Health. They are researching local employers that have employees unable to return to work due to having been exposed to COVID-19 and/or need the time and support to isolate. They are also working with employers to ensure that they are creating and maintaining a safe environment for their employees to return to work. There are some incentive dollars at the state level that we could partner with the Department of Health to incentivize workers who have been impacted by COVID to get back to their worksites or previous jobs. We have been working through the Business Services Team to identify needs. At this time, we haven't uncovered any of those needs.

Todd asked for clarification around the virtual job fair platform. Tiffany reported that the platform is costly. WWA has been working with ESD due to some confusion with the Brazen platform. We were fortunate that Monster paid for the platform for a limited number of months due to their relationship with ESD and ETO. There was confusion on who would pay for it following that time. We need to look at the following; is Brazen the best tool? How much does it cost? Who is going to pay for it? It would be more beneficial to collaborate with state partners than to try to get a platform ourselves. It is being discussed, and she is confident that they will come to a resolution.

Crystal shared that one significant need in our community is the barrier to technology and digital literacy. The WorkSource system is wracking their brains to look for solutions around digital access. They are looking at things like laptop loaner agreements, access to Wifi, or some way to get our customers connected to digital literacy resources. There is a sense of urgency around this need. Solving this need could be very impactful to our community.

PY19 Annual Report – Cynthia

Cynthia encouraged everyone to read the PY19 Annual Report. Thank you to the board members on the P-ROC Team that helped. This report will be sent out to board members, partners, WWA directors, and Flash Alert.

Other Business: None

Next Meeting: The next Adult & Employer Linkage Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 15, 2020, at 8:30 a.m. on Zoom.

Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:38 a.m.

DocuSigned by:
Melanie Olson 10/19/2020
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Meeting Chair _____ Date

DocuSigned by:
Becky Smith 10/19/2020
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Becky Smith, Office Manager _____ Date