



Benton-Franklin Workforce Development Council

Quarterly Board of Directors Meeting

January 28, 2025, 4:00 p.m. – TCRC | Virtual Hybrid.

I. Call to Order and Welcome

Todd Samuel, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. Todd Samuel initiates the roll call, confirming the presence of board members and staff. Todd Samuel welcomed all in attendance and thanked them for taking the time to support the mission and vision of the BFWDC.

Cyndelle reported excused absences; a quorum was present as defined in the bylaws. In-person guests were asked to introduce themselves, and virtual guests were asked to use the chat feature to reflect those in attendance in the meeting minutes.

II. Consent Agenda

Chair Todd Samuel asked members if they wanted any consent agenda items removed for individual consideration or additional discussion. The response was no.

- a) Approval of Board Minutes
 - a. To approve October 29, 2024, Quarterly Board Meeting Minutes as presented
- b) Program
 - a. Program Year 2024 Subrecipient Monitoring Schedule
- c) Operations
 - a. Bylaws Updates | Member and Officer Positions
 - b. Executive Committee At-Large Members | Benton and Franklin County

Todd Samuel asked for board members' comments or opposition; there was none.

Todd Samuel called for a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented. Motion moved by Andrew Cook, the second by John Dickson, and unanimously carried to approval.

III. TCRC- TRIDEC Report Out: Lori Mattson | Karl Dye

Lori Mattson, the CEO of the Tri-City Regional Chamber of Commerce and Karl Dye, CEO of Tri-City Development Council provided an update on some of their workforce development initiatives. One initiative is their annual "Signing Day" event in June, where they celebrate students going directly into the workforce after high school, rather than attending college. They partner with Tri-Tech and local school districts for this event. The Chamber also partners with the Washington State Chamber to help populate a statewide workforce portal where businesses can post internship opportunities and students can post their resumes. The Chamber has a monthly "Ask the Experts" program that focuses on developing business culture and workplace activities this year. They also host small business resource fairs to connect local businesses with various resource providers, including the Workforce Development Council. The Chamber is hosting a workforce roundtable on February 13th to discuss building a talent pipeline and making young people and families aware of future job opportunities.

IV. Employee Handbook E-Vote Results

Cyndelle introduced updates to the employee handbook and presented the results of the E vote. The board discussed the importance of having an updated employee handbook and the feedback received from board members.

V. Fiscal Director Report – DeAnn Bock

DeAnn Bock provided an overview of the fiscal reports, highlighting the budget to actual expenditures for BFWDC and asked if there were any comments or questions. Todd Samuel asked if DeAnn had any concerns or spending that she was keeping an eye on; she responded no, spending was at 50% overall to budget at midyear.

Todd Samuel spoke about the significance of obtaining unrestricted funds and the impact they have on the organization's ability to support clients. Todd Samuel also emphasized the significance of donations and encouraged the board to look at the donation page on the website.

DeAnn introduced the new Staff Accountant, Raul Ochoa, to the board.

VI. WorkSource Columbia Basin (WSCB) Annual Certification Progress Update- Grace Collective Presentation

Amanda Lorraine presented an overview of Grace Collective, its mission, and the services provided to women survivors of poverty and exploitation. The board will be receiving a video showcasing the impact of Grace Collective on the lives of its participants. Amanda discussed the expansion of Grace Collective's programs, including a new barista training program. Andrew Cook and Board Chair Todd Samuel discussed potential donation opportunities and the importance of supporting local nonprofits.

VII. Certification Monitoring Schedule

Gabby Torres presented the certification monitoring schedule for various WorkSource sites, provided an overview of the status of each site's certification, including pending ADA compliance items.

Cynthia Garcia highlighted the importance of certification and the need for board members to participate in the process. At the meeting the progress made on certification was discussed and the next steps for each site. To follow State policies and ADA Compliance, an assessment should take place at least on an annual basis and progress of each certified site will be presented at a Board meeting and recorded in the meeting minutes. This schedule will allow us to keep track of the status for each site.

For record keeping purposes:

- WorkSource Columbia Basin is our certified Comprehensive Site and is certified for 3 years.
- TC Futures, our Specialized Site, is currently pending ADA compliance items to be corrected for certification. The certification date is pending.
- Grace Collective is certified as our 1st Connection Site and was presented to the Board on 6/25/24; it's certified for 3 years (5/29/24 – 5/29/27); a progress report is due 1/2026; and a presentation was presented today (1/28/25) by Grace Collective.
- Benton City Mid-Columbia Library– is our 2nd Connection Site certified and presented to the Board of 8/27/24; it's certified for 3 years (8/13/24 – 8/13/27); progress report due on 7/27/25; and a presentation is pending.

- Prosser Mid-Columbia Library – is a working progress; the Certification Team met with staff and ADA Compliance monitoring was conducted. However, there is an ADA item to be corrected in order to meet the requirements of a connection site. More information to come.

VIII. **BFWDC Mid-Year Reflection-** Cynthia Garcia N. Garcia

Cynthia Garcia provided a slide deck and summarized the workforce activities that have occurred during the last 6 months of the program year. Information about this presentation is found in PowerPoint added to the meeting packet.

Highlights of that presentation included:

- **Workforce Programs and Performance Reports:** updates on workforce programs, including performance reports for Q1 and Q2 and the impact of state and federal incentives on caseloads and service delivery. Jessie Cardwell provided updates on rapid response work, including outreach to Lamb Weston workers and the use of peer outreach workers.
- **Introduction of New Executive Board Members:** Cynthia Garcia introduces Andrew Cook and Megan McCary as new at-large board members for Franklin and Benton Counties. The board discussed the importance of having engaged board members and the process for their approval. Todd Samuel and other board members express enthusiasm for the new members' involvement and contributions. The board reviewed the roles and responsibilities of board members, incorporating feedback from previous meetings. With no additional comments or feedback
- **One-Stop Operator (OSO) Request for Proposal (RFP) and Committee Review Formation:** The current One Stop Operator contract expires on June 30, 2025. The RFP is on track to be released as planned. In the coming week, we'll be reaching out to you (board members) forming an OSO RFP Committee, where we will review all relevant details and the next steps. Having board engagement and input will be crucial as BFWDC staff move forward with this process. As a reminder, the OSO under WIOA (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act) is designed to help coordinate services provided at our one-stop career center- WSCB. OSO's role is to ensure that various partner organizations work together effectively and efficiently. This coordination helps improve the overall experience for individuals seeking employment services and job training, ensuring they get the support they need seamlessly. It is important to mention that the last time we completed this process was back in March 2021.
- **Execution of the WSCB and TC Futures MOU:** Revision 1 of WSCB MOU/IFA has been signed by partners final version has been submitted to the counties. WSCB MOU/IFA is not in effect until June 2026. TC Futures MOU and financial agreement is in effect until June 30, 2025.
- **Strategic Plan and Partnerships:** Cynthia Garcia emphasized the importance of strategic partnerships and the strategic plan in achieving significant outcomes. Acknowledgment of Career Path Services, for their dedication and hard work in delivering exceptional reemployment services. Todd Samuel and Cynthia Garcia discussed the importance of recognizing the role of strong partnerships within the workforce system. Amanda Jones

inquired about the performance metrics, confirming that performance exceeded all targets.

- **Community Engagement and Economic Development:** Cynthia Garcia highlighted the Community Reinvestment Program (CRP) and its role in enhancing workforce strength and economic development in Washington. Mention of a local employer and legislator tour benefiting from training and microgrants, with a picture featuring Senator Boehnke. Todd Samuel shares insights from the senator's meeting, noting that workforce development is not a priority for community leaders in the Tri Cities. Emphasis on the need for workforce development to meet the needs of future employers and the role of the Workforce Development Council in preparing the workforce.
- **Economic Security for All Initiatives:** Cynthia Garcia discussed the success of the Economic Security for All initiative, including grants and services for small local businesses. Metrics include 166 businesses engaged, 97% of the career population served, and 11 microgrants awarded. Highlight of the successful completion of state monitoring with no findings, emphasizing the team's excellent stewardship of funds. Todd Samuel reiterated the importance of having no findings during state audits, indicating strong financial management practices.
- **Certification and Partnerships:** Cynthia Garcia expressed gratitude to board members for their participation in certification processes and mentions upcoming certifications. Approval of the PY24 WIOA Title I Dislocated Workers, Adult, and Youth services contracts to Career Path Services. Establishment of a partnership with Stevens Media Board to increase disability awareness through social media, Google pages, and radio ads. Jessie Cardwell discusses the outreach efforts for Lamb Weston closure impacted workers, emphasizing the importance of trust and familiarity in reaching the target audience.
- **Diversifying Funding Sources:** Cynthia Garcia emphasized the importance of the BFWDC's efforts to secure funding from non-governmental sources, such as grants, to support workforce development initiatives. She mentioned ongoing applications for various grants, including the National Dislocated Worker Grant and the Pathway Home 6 funding.
- **Hospitality Pathways Funding:** Cynthia Garcia announced a \$40,000 grant from the Department of Labor that was awarded to the Washington State Labor Council to develop comprehensive hospitality pathways. Emphasis on collaboration with partners to avoid duplicating efforts and ensure effective strategies. Discussion on the success of the youth program in connecting youth to employment opportunities and post-secondary education.
- **Digital Literacy and Transportation Initiatives:** Cynthia Garcia highlighted the support for digital literacy classes at the Mid-Columbia Library in Benton City, with plans to expand classes in English and Spanish. Todd Samuel mentioned the advertising of digital literacy classes on LinkedIn and Facebook.
- **Benton-Frankling Transit Donation:** Announcement of the receipt of a 12-passenger van from Ben-Franklin Transit, with plans to make it available for customers. Discussion on the need for policies and procedures to ensure the safe and effective use of the van.

- **Funding Opportunities and Community Engagement:** Cynthia Garcia discussed ongoing efforts to secure funding for high-impact workforce development initiatives, including partnerships with the Employment Security Department (ESD). Emphasis on the importance of diversifying funding sources to support workforce development needs. Mention of the upcoming release of a request for proposals for the One-Stop-Operators and virtual reality training. Todd Samuel highlighted the need for the Workforce Development Council to be more present in the community and engage with local government meetings.

IX. Member Updates and Business Engagement- All Board and Ex-Officio Members

Todd Samuel opens the floor for any additional updates or information from board members. Emphasis on the importance of community engagement and partnerships in achieving workforce development goals. Acknowledgment of the efforts and contributions of board members and staff to the success of the initiatives discussed. Closing remarks expressing gratitude for participation and encouraging continued support and involvement in future initiatives were made by the Board Chair.

Next Meeting

Quarterly Board Meeting – Tuesday, April 29, 2025, at 4:00 p.m. at WorkSource Columbia Basin - Room 8 | Hybrid Zoom

Adjournment

With no further good of the order business, Todd Samuel adjourned the meeting at 5:03 p.m.

Board - Present

Commissioner Will McKay
Commissioner Clint Didier
Bob Legard
Amanda Jones
Andrew Cook
Geoff Arends
John Dickson
Jason Jansky
Karl Dye
Lynn Ramos-Braswell
Todd Samuel
Alicia Perches
Kate McAteer
Michael Lee
Jessica Rusch
Sheila Erickson
Lori Mattson

Board - Excused

Adolfo DeLeon

Absent

BFWDC Staff

DeAnn Bock
Cynthia Garcia
Jessie Cardwell
Cyndelle Howell

Guests

Israel Delamora
Rebecca Williamson

Signed by:

Todd Samuel, BFWDC Board Chair

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Todd Samuel, Board Chair

Date

Signed by:

Lynn Ramos-Braswell, BFWDC Secretary

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Lynn Ramos-Braswell, Secretary

Date