

**Benton-Franklin Workforce Development Council**

Adult & Employer Linkage Committee

April 15, 2021, at 8:30 a.m.

Zoom

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

**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 responded.

**Approval of Committee Minutes**

The Minutes of March 18, 2021, Adult & Employer Linkage Committee Meeting were provided for members to review.

**Todd Samuel moved to approve March 18, 2021, Adult & Employer Linkage Committee Meeting Minutes as presented, seconded by Jennie Weber. Motion carried.**

**WIOA Title 1 PY21 Adult and Dislocated Worker Service Provider Extension** – Diana

Diana shared that the Benton-Franklin Workforce Development (BFWDC) Staff would like to recommend extending the WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Service Provider contracts to Career Path Services (CPS), beginning July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022. She highlighted that when WorkSource Columbia Basin (WSCB) closed its door in March 2020 due to the pandemic, CPS quickly launched two new virtual platforms to transition program referrals and enrollments to an online environment. They have created virtual job clubs, work readiness, online training webinars to engage potential customers and new program participants. They have continued to develop new strategies throughout the year to provide alternative ways for customers to access services, engage with program participants, and get the word out that WSCB is open virtually. All of their efforts have been highlighted in the program summaries reviewed by the committee each month.

Additionally, the State Monitors completed their review of the BFWDC in January. They reviewed Adult and Dislocated Worker participant files, and there were no questioned costs, disallowed costs, or findings identified. This shows the quality work that CPS is accomplishing to provide case management services and help customers obtain their career goals while meeting compliance requirements. We also received a letter from the Employment Security Department (ESD) recognizing the positive performance outcomes for enrollment in the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs through December 2020. These accomplishments show the outstanding work that CPS has done to assist our community during COVID.

**Melanie Olson moved to extend the WIOA Title 1 Adult Service Provider contract to Career Path Services for another year beginning July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022, seconded by Todd Samuel. Motion carried. Jennie Weber Abstained.**

**Todd Samuel moved to extend the WIOA Title 1 Dislocated Worker Service Provider contract to Career Path Services for another year beginning July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022, seconded by Melanie Olson. Motion carried. Jennie Weber Abstained.**

**Extension of Procurement Schedule** - Diana

Diana shared that the BFWDC Staff would like to recommend extending the procurement schedule from every three years to every five years. There are no federal laws, regulations, state or local policies that stipulate a timeframe for procuring WIOA service providers. Every year the board has the option to extend service provider contracts based on performance, funding availability, and monitoring reviews. If the service provider is not doing a good job, the board can vote not to extend their contract. If the service provider is not meeting their performance and contractual obligations, the BFWDC has a corrective action process in place to help service providers correct compliance issues starting at the lowest level of resolution and then progressing up to a corrective action plan. Every month performance summaries are provided to board members to see how service providers meet their deliverables.

The benefit of extending the procurement cycle is that if the service provider is doing a good job, the board can vote annually to extend the service provider for up to five years before going through the procurement processes. This process requires an intensive amount of staff time to coordinate and facilitate, which is a challenge due to the small number of staff members to complete the work. Because this is an internal standard to procure every three years, we don't require a formal vote; however, we would like the approval of the committee to make this change.

Melanie asked how changes made to federal law or policies throughout the year are addressed in the contract. Diana answered that the contracts are modified, and local policies are updated or created.

Jennie asked if there were any adverse risks of extending the procurement schedule as far as public opportunity and bid review. Diana answered that we usually don't have very many bidders that go through the procurement processes.

**There was a brief discussion among the board members, and it was decided to take this issue to the Executive Committee for further review and consideration.**

**Program Highlights** – Diana

Diana shared that there are 12 participants actively engaged in disaster relief employment. Second Harvest has 2 Disaster Recovery workers helping with food distribution efforts. They have requested additional support, so recruitment is now underway. ESD has one Disaster Recovery worker helping the Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers. They have asked for additional support. Recruitment efforts are underway for a replacement for the Meals on Wheels position. The Department of Health (DOH) has requested up to 14 workers for the vaccination site. There are currently 9 workers there. All of these participants receive free vaccinations, lunches, and hot drinks. One of the DOH workers at the vaccination site received an award from the Kennewick Fire Department for volunteering to help his co-workers by taking a less desired shift to serve the community.

Rapid Response services are being coordinated for Bruker. Forty workers are impacted. Some of those workers will be transferred to other locations, and some of them will be retiring. Since the expected layoff date is not until the end of December, all presentations and workshops will be coordinated throughout the coming months. The TAA petition will be filed 60 days before that expected layoff date. There was also a Rapid Response presentation for Hanford Mission Integration Solutions on April 5. There were 27 impacted workers, with 21 of those attending the virtual presentation.

**EcSA Update** - Jamilet

Jamilet shared that most of the EcSA outcomes are on track. We are a tad behind on employment exits; however, most of the training placements are currently in heavy truck driving CDL, an in-demand occupation. After completion, these participants are likely to find employment right away.

The EcSA Employment Specialists continue to work with the WSCB Business Services Team to seek employment opportunities and connections with local employers. One of those employers is Home Care Solutions, a local employer with current employment opportunities for Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA). We have participants who are either enrolled in or aspiring to enroll in CNA training; therefore, we will see an increase in employment placements within the next month.

The BFWDC has been conducting annual monitoring of the EcSA program, which will be complete by the end of April. There were no questioned costs or findings, and all areas of concern have been resolved.

The BFWDC EcSA team has been in contact with other Workforce Development Areas (WDA) as they continue to explore EcSA funding for the second round. Last month, Jamilet presented at the Washington Workforce Association (WWA) Peer to Peer Meeting to ensure they had access to the BFWDC EcSA model. We will continue to be a part of the statewide EcSA Planning Initiative to help with technical assistance to other WDAs.

Todd asked how COVID-19 has affected performance in this program. Jamilet answered that many factors affected the EcSA outcomes. Working with the Latinx Communities and having SNAP as an eligibility requirement was a big challenge due to SNAP being a public charge implicating the process of seeking permanent naturalization in the United States. Serving a small area that had not been aware of WSCB services and serving a remote area brought other difficulties. Many in that area do not have technical access. We have now expanded the area to all of Franklin County. Removing the SNAP eligibility and utilizing the 200% below Federal Poverty Level Income Guideline has allowed us to work with this group of people. COVID made a considerable impact; however, CPS has done a great job at standing up different efforts to connect participants to remote enrollments. We are above target in enrollments and training placements. Employment placements continue to be an area that we are working to explore and adapt. Most of our training is for occupations in demand, and therefore there is no concern in making employment placements.

Tiffany shared that the success of the program hinges on Jamilet's leadership. Tiffany attended the State Workforce Training and Educational board meeting where Jamilet was a presenter and shared the success of EcSA and talked about it from a critical community impact perspective. Tiffany commended her for her effort in this program. Her peers around the state are looking to her for guidance to implement a program such as this.

**Families Forward Washington (FFW) Updates** – Jamilet

Jamilet shared that enrollments concluded in December 2020. We exceeded expectations by enrolling 73 instead of the goal of 56. This month we are working intensively one-on-one with participants who are still in training or seeking employment. The Goodwill Career Counselors continue the communication and intensive case management to ensure participants are placed in employment by the end of the program in June 2021.

The BFWDC received MDRC's FFW Study report draft. This final report will be issued later in April. We had the opportunity to provide feedback to ensure that the data in the report is accurate. Once it is issued, it will be provided to the committee. Families Forward Demonstration examined the new strategies to increase earnings of parents who owe child support but cannot fully meet their obligations due to low earnings. The four Families Forward Demonstrations are part of this report: there are four demonstrations in the nation, with one being in our area.

Todd asked how many more we anticipate will be placed in employment. Jamilet answered that some of those in training are in survival employment now. There are 58 individuals placed in employment within the training track they chose (this number is what we are tracking in the report), and the remaining are either in survival jobs or focusing on training only. We don't see a concern with participants being placed in employment at the end of June as their training is also in-demand occupations

Todd asked if we had an anticipated amount of money that would be spent per participant. Jamilet answered that the average had been \$5,000 for training per participant for occupations in demand.

**Liaison Report** – David

David continues to make improvements to this report. He reviewed the information on the report. Our WIOA programs and TC Futures continue to close the gap between services provided this year compared to last year.

**WorkSource Update** – Crystal

Crystal thanked the partners within WSCB for their collaboration in Rapid Response events. They are doing a great job of working together to collaborate on ways to help our job seekers and employers.

She urged everyone to read through the report. There is great work being done through the partnership as a whole. The Business services team is doing great. They had a virtual spring career fair in March with the surge in registrants attending.

As we walk the steps of integration that streamline the customer experience and ensure excellent service, we were monitored for the work we are doing to Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFW). During the monitoring, there was an opportunity to meet the state monitor advocate. After walking the process with us and seeing how we do business to ensure that anyone can help any MSFW who is seeking services and the concern and complaint process is streamlined are things that we got high praise for. We are excelling in and continue to work to make sure we are serving customers in a more complete manner in a streamlined way.

Todd asked if criteria had been established for re-opening. Crystal answered that there is a lot of work happening behind the scenes. They are working with the WWA, ESD, and Labor & Industries to establish safety criteria. She created a Return to Office Plan, which is meant to supplement the state safety guidelines. PPE has been purchased and installed. They continue to work with BFWDC, the Consortium, and WSCB Leadership to determine when the best and safest time would be.

Tiffany shared that currently, some counties are going back to phase 2 because of the data in the state. This is a very intentional effort and is not being done in a silo. Ultimately it will be the BFWDC decision to open and allow service to be provided beyond virtually in WSCB and TC Futures. We have spent countless hours on this, and we have a strong documented process. We are playing it as closely and intentionally as possible to ensure that our employees, their families, and the community are safe. We don't want to be premature in opening and then have increased rates. Vaccines are becoming more readily available.

**Other Business:** None

**Next Meeting:** The next Adult & Employer Linkage Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 20, 2021, at 8:30 a.m. on Zoom.

**Adjournment**

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:27 a.m.

DocuSigned by:  
*Adolfo de Leon* 5/20/2021  
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Meeting Co-Chair Date

DocuSigned by:  
*Becky Smith* 5/21/2021  
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Becky Smith, Office Manager Date