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**Benton-Franklin Workforce Development Council (BFWDC)**

Adult & Employer Linkage (AEL) Committee

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

Zoom

 **Present Excused Absent Staff/Partners**

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| Melanie Olson, Co-ChairJamie RasmussenJennie WeberTodd Samuel | Adolfo de LeónKarl DyeMichael Lee | Lori MattsonJamilet Nerell | Tiffany Scott, BFWDCDavid Chavey-Reynaud, BFWDCDiana Hamilton, BFWDCJessie Cardwell, BFWDCBecky Smith, BFWDCHeather Woodruff, CPSRebecca Williamson, ESDRosa Reyna, GWIsrael Delamora, OICRosenda Henley, PFPCrystal Bright, WSO |

**Call to Order**

Melanie was in route to her office, and Jennie started the meeting by welcoming everyone and calling the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. Becky read through the roll call while everyone responded.

**Approval of Committee Minutes**

The Minutes of June 17, 2021, Adult & Employer Linkage Committee Meeting were provided for members to review.

**Todd Samuel moved to approve June 17, 2021, Adult & Employer Linkage Committee Meeting Minutes as presented, seconded by Jamie Rasmussen. Motion carried.**

**Program Highlights** – Diana

Diana shared the Program Performance Summaries that were provided in the packet. She noted that this is the last summary for Program Year (PY)20 as the year came to an end on June 30, 2021. She reminded everyone that these summaries show the actual program outcomes compared to the goals. She reported that the Adult program did a great job serving customers during COVID restrictions by serving 183 customers. This was primarily due to their outreach efforts to encourage customers to engage in WorkSource services by partnering with the Employment Security Department (ESD) to email Unemployment Insurance (UI) recipients using GovDelivery, direct email marketing, phone calls, social media, flyers in the library book bags, and food boxes. All of these efforts resulted in their ability to reach customers that needed services. While employed exits were behind target, 70 participants were still able to obtain employment during COVID. We usually have very few training dollars by the year-end. During PY20, customers were unable to take advantage of training opportunities due to COVID impacts. While we are hopeful to see an increase of customers accessing services as the recovery process continues, we may not see customers take full advantage of WorkSource services until the additional $300 in Pandemic UI ends, as well as children returning to school in September.

The Dislocated Worker numbers are very similar to the Adult numbers. She reviewed the summary. Once again, there were challenges with customers taking advantage of the training services because of classroom size limitations, training provider closures, access to technology, and childcare issues. The BFWDC took the funds that were not expended in PY20 and will use them to increase the first quarter cap for PY21 so customers will have access to training and support services.

The Rapid Response Increase Employment (RRIE) performance summary shows that they were slightly behind on all program deliverables. This program has been extended until December 31, 2021. The subrecipient will continue to provide the program services needed to serve customers while fully expending this contract to reach performance deliverables.

The Disaster Recovery program doesn’t end until March 2022. All of the performance targets are being exceeded, but the expenditures are behind. Listed in summary are all of the temporary Disaster Recovery employment opportunities that the subrecipient is working to fill to meet the needs of our community partners in providing humanitarian assistance. ESD staff utilize GovDelivery to recruit qualified individuals who would be a good fit for these programs. They are also completing an extensive pre-screening process. So far, two Disaster Relief food support positions have been backfilled at Second Harvest. They are working to assist Community Services who need 5-8 food support workers to replace the eight National Guard members that will depart at the end of July. Once all of these Disaster Relief positions have been onboarded, the expenditures will increase to get back on track as planned.

The Employment Recovery program also ends in March of 2022. The program is currently behind in all targets. The subrecipient has implemented strategies to increase performance outcomes and increase expenditures by shifting funds to increase training opportunities and prioritizing enrollments into the Employment Recovery program for permanently laid-off customers.

Diana shared a letter received from ESD. It recognizes the positive performance outcomes for Adult, Youth, and the Disaster Recovery programs through March 31st and the positive employment outcomes for the Dislocated Worker and RRIE programs through September 30, 2020. She highlighted the dedication and hard work Career Path Services and the Benton Franklin Workforce Consortium put into serving customers during the pandemic.

Melanie asked if WorkSource Columbia Basin (WSCB) has had trouble finding people to enroll in entry-level training programs. Diana answered that there are lots of entry-level training opportunities throughout the community. Employers are having a hard time filling these positions. There are many variables from people still receiving the additional $300 Pandemic UI and childcare issues. Melanie shared that Lourdes Counseling is struggling with many open positions that she cannot fill. Diana shared that the State Grant Managers are saying that until kids are back in school and the additional $300 Pandemic UI ends, we will face these challenges. Many businesses are offering sign-on bonuses or incentives.

**Economic Security for All (EcSA) Update** – Jamilet via Video

Jamilet shared that Employed Exits continue to be behind the target. Staff continues to work with the WorkSource Columbia Basin (WSCB) Business Services Team (BST) to ensure those job seekers are matched with employers with open positions. They continue to refer participants who recently completed training or certification to local employers to match their newest skills to on-demand job openings. They continue to place participants in subsidized training in commercial driver licensing, nursing assistants, and welding. The EcSA staff continue to work on strategies to do outreach to new customers, such as working with Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) for referrals and continue to post on social media.

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

This is the last report for FFW as they have completed their grant cycle as of June 30, 2021. She is happy to report the successful outcomes. They were able to serve 73 non-custodial parents, which exceeded their goal by 130.4%. Of those enrolled, 84% found employment with the help of the career counselor conducted by Goodwill of the Columbia, and 27%expanded their financial literacy knowledge. The Washington state FFW project ranked at the top of the five programs across the nation. 69 out of 73 participants were placed in employment. This study provided 73 non-custodial parents with the necessary tools to find the pathway to self-sufficiency, get back on track with their child support obligations, and reunify with their families and children. Congratulations to Goodwill for meeting and exceeding expectations and working with the community to serve marginalized populations.

We look forward to finding different avenues and funding sources to continue serving non-custodial parents in the future.

**Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Update** – Jamilet via Video

The CDBG is a new program for which we have secured funding. She thanked the AEL Committee and Board Members for their E-Votes to have Career Path Services (CPS) be the subrecipient for this grant. They continue to work through finalizing the contract. This will now be included as a standing agenda item on the AEL agenda.

**Liaison Report** – David

David shared that the number of job seekers and total services to job seekers continue to improve as people start to come back into the center and book appointments. We are only below 22% of staff-assisted job seekers compared to 2019. This is a significant improvement from where we have been. We will stop reporting on FFW and will be adding the CDBG information to this report.

Unemployment figures have dropped significantly. This number mirrors where we were in 2019.

He shared that we are wrapping up the pilot for LinkedIn Learning. We used about 100 licenses. The state has moved forward with a one-year license to be shared amongst the 12 Workforce Development Areas (WDAs). The BFWDC has requested 700 licenses for our area over the next year. We are excited to continue to take advantage of this tool to bring value to our customers.

He is pleased to report that we are at 102% COVID-19 job recovery. Many industries are pulling forward. Those that were hit hardest are bouncing back. There is some concern over national jobs. By fall, we should see this rebound. Retail trade is growing strong. We still have a shortage in hospitality, construction, healthcare, and government services. We hope that the job search waiver and the $300 Pandemic UI going away and school starting in the fall will find more workers coming back.

**WorkSource Update** – Crystal

Crystal called out highlights of work happening at WSCB. The BST held a virtual job fair in June. They reached out to employers that are struggling to find workers during this recovery time. They were able to attract 27 local businesses and 59 job seekers. They were also able to provide customers with job referrals and make introductions to get them connected. The Summer Virtual Job Fair will be on July 29 from 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. via Brazen. There will be a Public Service Announcement (PSA) coming out shortly.

She shared that the center reopened on July 1 and that she is currently stationed outside at a front triage table. It is going well. They are bringing the team back in phases. The Alpha Team started back the third week of June, and they are currently doing a re-orientation with the Beta Team. A huge shout out to the front-line workers for their work to onboard and orient team members back to the office. Some of the newest team members have never worked at the center before.

Crystal shared that they are filling the front-end services appointments (basic career services). They are seeing an increase in the number of self-serve customers.

She shared that WSCB will embark on a Spanish radio campaign. Thank you to the partners from ESD and Opportunity Industrialization Center (OIC) of Washington for funding this opportunity. It starts today at 2:00 p.m. on La Zeta 96.7. The kick-off is an overview of who WSCB is and the services provided. Every other Thursday from 2:00 – 3:00 p.m., they will continue with this hour-long radio show through December. This program will also allow the callers to engage directly with representatives.

Todd asked what the public interest in services has been. Crystal answered that for now, we do not see demand that exceeds capacity. They continue to get the word out to the community. The table out front has been a way to connect folks with resources, information and help with appointments. There has been a steady uptick in customers. Todd asked about the intent for fully reopening. Crystal answered that they continue to get the team ready. They are in a holding pattern waiting on revised direction from the state.

**Other Business:**

Tiffany shared a Happy New Year as we have entered into a new Program Year. She thanked all partners at WorkSource and in the community for their stellar work during a challenging year. She also thanked board members for engaging consistently and being committed to the necessary work. When there were so many opportunities for things to fall apart or go awry, the right people were in the right place at the right time. We have gotten to this point through the collaborative efforts of our system partners. She also thanked the BFWDC team.

Melanie shared that there have been many challenges, but we learned much about ourselves, each other, and the strengths we can rely on. The BFWDC is an amazing team, and WorkSource is doing a great job.

Melanie thanked everyone for attending and being patient with the technical difficulties.

Rosa thanked everyone on behalf of Goodwill for the opportunity to partner and provide services to the non-custodial parents in our community. They look forward to future opportunities to work together.

**Next Meeting:** The next Adult & Employer Linkage Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 19, 2021, at 8:30 a.m. on Zoom.

**Adjournment**

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:15 a.m.

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Meeting Co-Chair Date Becky Smith, Office Manager Date