

Employment Connection Council (ECC) Minutes August 19, 2020

In Attendance

Member: Sofia Morales (Chair), Carla Calhoun, Roxanna Cruz, Robert Gonzales, Larriann Torrez, Michelle Engal-Silva, John Werner, Linda Patino, Tammy Olson. **WIB Staff:** Adam Peck, Edith Hernandez, Elizabeth Dodd (scribe), John Gonzalez, Laurel Hernandez, Craig Wierenga, Mary Rodarte, **Other:** Luis Espinoza, Martha Guerra, Maria Guerrero, Jonathan Thompson, Lola Balandran, Perla Soria, Rudy Roman

1) Call to order: 10:02 a.m.

2) PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

3) CONSENT ITEMS

Approve May 20, 2020, Employment Connection Committee Meeting Minutes

Motion by Larriann Torrez, second by Carla Calhoun to approve the Consent Items; carried by unanimous vote.

4) ONE-STOP OPERATOR ITEMS – Edith Hernandez

- a. **Employment Connection Partner Updates** – Adam Peck – David Baquerizo of Pro-Path has filled our One-Stop Operator role for the last two years. A waiver was granted for the WIB to assume this role. The task of the One-stop Operator is now assigned to Edith Hernandez. Ms. Hernandez then spoke on a few details on how she plans to handle the added task of One-stop Operator.

5) DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a. **WIB Executive Director Report** - Adam Peck,
The County of Tulare Contracted the WIB to handle a 7.5 Million dollar grant to serve 1500 Businesses affected by COVID-19's shut-down. This Grant has been a focus of the WIB this past month.
The WIB is gearing up for the uncertainty of the Fall. Depending on how funding comes for those affected by lay-offs from COVID-19 may now need further assistance and fill our One-stops past capacity.
- b. **Business Services** – John Gonzalez
 - i. **BST Updates**-BST meets monthly on the fourth Thursday of each month. There was training that we finished up on the 23rd & 30th of July. August 27, 2020, at 9:00 am is the next scheduled meeting.
 - ii. **Rapid Response**- Quarter 1 reports have been submitted. The WIB assisted over 100 businesses where over 6,000 employees were affected. John announced the weekly schedule of English and Spanish Rapid Response Webinars. Customized orientations are still offered to businesses.
- c. **WIOA Dislocated Worker Funds for Underserved COVID-19** – Edith Hernandez
Pages 6 & 7 of the day's Power-Point held status and information (in detail) to which Ms. Hernandez spoke on. She touched on the many ways that a customer could qualify to receive these funds and requested committee members to look for those that they may be assisting and encourage them to apply. A reminder to all that this opportunity ends September 30, 2020, an extension may be possible, but would rather see them in use helping our community.
- d. **National Dislocated Worker Grant** – Laurel Hernandez
Tulare County received \$600,000.00 for the focus of temporary jobs from May 29, 2020, thru March 31, 2022. The goal of this program is to assist 32 eligible individuals to become Contact Tracer Trainees. These trainees will help the public health response to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 infection. The positions are full-time, for fourteen weeks, and paid at \$15.90 per hour. Our partners with this grant are HHSA, CSET, and the WIB. 24 of the 32 positions filled and currently screening for the other 8. Tulare County HHSA is in the process of having Extra-help positions open for Contact Tracers providing an opportunity for these individuals.

6) ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

a) How has COVID-19 impacted your organization.

Carla Calhoun – CSET never closed. Approximately 50% of our staff telecommute. We are now virtual. Group activities and events have ceased for all programs. We are delivering meals to about 1400 Senior shut-ins. Currently, we have funding for rental and mortgage assistance and have served 140 families. The energy program is starting to open back up. Seventy (70) people interviewed for Solar and Electric positions during our first Drive-thru event. CSET has a COVID-19 website portal that lists new programs as funding resources become available.

John Werner – Our Sites provide the detail and effect of what we do. Virtual Learning is progressing and still has challenges as we move forward. However, a concern is for those students that we are not seeing. COVID-19 has prevented us from areas that we used to provide awareness, campaign, market, and recruit. We are looking at ways to combat the issue, as many do not have virtual access. We are required to meet prior COVID-19 reporting standards and all measures. We still can have Physical classes for those that need Labs or other instruction as Adult schools are considered part of a higher education learning system. Currently, I am working with Jesus Martinez up in Civic on an entrepreneur type training project. We are seeking persons in our community with residency issues. My email is in chat should anybody have ideas or know of people that could benefit from this type of program.

Robert Gonzalez – COJUSD has transitioned to online enrollment, assessment, and distance learning. Distance learning proved difficult for our community and students to access the technology and led to a decline in enrollment. We now use packets. We are working with staff for long-distance learning and also working on a hybrid type of instruction for our students. We had virtual graduation in the spring. The Adult Ed Consortium has had a tremendous impact on professional development in aligning all schools with the same techniques with regards to this new way of teaching.

Roxanna Cruz – Many of HHSA lobby doors are closed with the exception of extreme emergency. Staff are serving families remotely through online portals, phones, and soon video conferencing. We are working towards increasing in-office staff and other ways to meet the incredulous workload that COVID-19 has brought on.

Linda Patino – Tulare County Office of Education/ SEE had all staff working from home from mid-March through the first week of August. Our processes were converted to a virtual base. For Two-weeks we have been allowed to be in house at a 50% scale. We now can have individuals in person at our physical site utilizing COVID-19 protocol. We work with the Social Security Agency, who have been doing outreach via text to their disabled persons. We have been asked to participate in a tele-acquisition portal that connects to over a million jobs nationwide for persons with disabilities, providing major opportunities to those we serve.

Michelle Engel-Silva – Proteus Inc. has closed its lobby but remained open to customers through appointments. We now have an online electronic signature for customers. Vocational classes are on-site. We opened up another Truck Driving Class to spread students out. ESL, Citizenship, and HEP Classes are set-up for distance learning. We have assisted Food-Link in keeping our Energy Employees on staff. We are working on Contact Tracer Application Proteus will have about 15 slots available. Working with the state on some Farmworker housing to assist those affected by COVID-19 quarantined. We will receive 3.2 Million dollars in September. These are CARES Act Funds to help COVID-19 affected Farmworkers with rent, energy, and other payments. We have private donor funds to assist undocumented persons that do not qualify for other programs.

Tammy Olson – COVID-19 has impacted our Medical Programs the hardest. The good news is beginning August 27, 2020, Vocational Nursing Classes will have access to the hospital for hands-on training to finish their program. Another area greatly affected is our ELL population. Many students have not returned since the spring. The main reason stated is having to navigate and instruct their children. We had great success in graduating our High School Diploma Students in June, reporting that distance learning was already in play due to our Edgenuity Program. GED Students were unable to finish due to the testing centers' COVID-19 closures. GED testing centers have recently opened up. We are working on getting our students through their testing process and successful completion of their program. All lectures and courses are done virtually labs & lab works in preparation for skills are held on campus in small groups under the COVID-19 Guidance; for both staff and students.

Larriann Torrez - This year's Adult Ed Consortium's shared theme is, "Get in Tune; Embracing Collaboration." Tulare Adult School never closed doors to students. From March to June our teachers worked remotely with office staff and herself remaining on-site ensuring, students receive all necessities for class. In June, Summer School was available in a COVID-19 manner, allowing CTE Students to complete their programs, attain their certificates, and be Job-ready. Before July, TAS implemented on-line registration and payments. Currently, we are Distance Learning. Teachers are on-site using Google Classroom and ZOOM with their students. One issue is not having hotspots for students that have no Internet or Wi-Fi. We are providing lots of technology training for our teachers.

Sofia Morales – E.D.D. is seeing customers by appointment only. Half of the staff is currently working with U.I. Services. As of August 8, 2020, the state of California has paid out 63.9 billion dollars in unemployment insurance compared to last year's 5 billion. The number of Claims filed as of August 8, 2020, was 10.2 million for 2019 was 2.1 million. The Governor has assembled a strike team for E.D.D., assigned a workgroup, and reorganized our executive Team. As E.D.D. moves forward with these changes' services will be streamlined. Locally, our Outreach Workers will start meeting in person with Farm Workers delivering information on U.I. and E.C services.

Next Meetings – November 18, 2020

Adjournment: – The meeting adjourned at 11:22 a.m.