

## **Employment Connection Council (ECC) Minutes May 20, 2020**

### **In Attendance**

**Member:** Sofia Morales (Chair), Carla Calhoun, Staci Phipps, Roxanna Cruz, Robert Gonzales, Larriann Torrez, David McMunn, Nick Brown, John Werner, Robert Kleyn, Linda Patino, Tammy Olson.

**WIB Staff:** Adam Peck, Edith Hernandez, Laura Gonzalez (scribe), Mary Rodarte, John Gonzalez, Lisa Martinez, Desiree Landeros.

**Other:** Craig Plath(CSET), David Baquerizo (ProPath), Maria Guerra (Proteus, Inc.), Luis Espinoza (Proteus, Inc.), Leanna Price (CSET), Esbeydy Ruvalcaba (EDD), Dennis Johnston, MG.

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

2) **PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.**

3) **CONSENT ITEMS**

**Approve November 20, 2019, Employment Connection Committee Meeting Minutes**

Motion by Larriann Cruz, second by Carla Calhoun to approve the Consent Items; carried by unanimous vote with the amendment change to Sherri Glenn title from (TCOE) to (HHSA).

4) **ONE-STOP OPERATOR ITEMS –**

- a. **Employment Connection Site Meeting** – David Baquerizo, spoke on the reestablishing of ECC Site meetings. A supplemental survey connected to the State Hallmark of Excellence Program was done and much was learned from ECC staff and partners who responded to the survey. We decided to use site meetings as the forum to provided ECC information and work on areas targeted for improvement. We will have monthly site meetings at both Visalia and Porterville ECC locations. We found through the survey many similarities with activities at each of the centers. Focusing on partner Collaboration is a major part of the Hallmark of Excellence. The site meetings would be the foundation of Program and staff development. Site Meeting Agendas are prepared by Edith Hernandez and strategically include topics that guide the group through specific targeted improvement areas. The goal was to move each ECC forward every month. With the COVID-19 pandemic in full force, the site meetings have become ground zero on pandemic relief and how to adjust operations in a shelter environment. Both locations have been having combined meetings. Business services activities have been a topic target part of the meetings with Jonathon. He recalled a comment from the survey about a previous site not moving forward. With the new structure and leadership under the management of Edith Hernandez, the ECC Site Meetings are moving forward.

5) **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

- a. **WIB Executive Director Report** - Adam Peck, Thanked David Baquerizo for his work with Hallmarks of Excellence and ECC Site Meetings. He went over various current and upcoming funding streams. Spoke of concern on the Pandemic's overall unemployment rate which may harm Tulare County's funding in the next fiscal year budget. Briefly explained how funding is formulated using an above 6.5% unemployment rate to start. Stating that Tulare County is generally in the range of 13%. Another area of concern are those that have been hit hard by the pandemic and fallen through the cracks; hopefully, the data we get from UI and other agencies can help to identify them. In July Unemployment Insurance (UI) should be running out and we are bracing for the high amount of people flooding the job market and Employment Connection office. Adam discussed on the New UI Claims-Tulare data. Mentioned the Board of Supervisors action regarding what stage Tulare County is in and when can businesses start opening. We have no clear answers and we are working to sort through the issues with partners on how to manage best practices and how to serve our community with the COVID-19.

John Werner asked if we know what it takes for helping disaster relief funds to help undocumented immigrants look like in our Region and any data available from the UFW Foundation?

Adam said he does not have any information, but will look into that to see if there is any data available.

John Werner asked if there are ways to include them into our community that are impacted to understand how we are being affected locally and what resources are being given out?

Adam said I think you are right and that he would follow-up on that.

**b. WIOA Dislocated Worker Fund for Underserved COVID-19 – Edith Hernandez**

WIB was awarded \$180,000 to assist 300 Tulare County residents whose employment has been impacted by COVID-19. One-hundred percent of the funds are to assist with supportive services from May 11, 2020 through September 30, 2020. Not providing services through the office but offering services remotely or by phone while in the comfort of their homes. Each eligible individual may qualify for \$400 to \$800 dollars. The participants must meet eligibility and COVID-19 requirements. WIB will issue payments directly to participants. The goal is to minimize disruption to service delivery, and to ensure that WIOA requirements and the needs of the individuals are quickly being met.

**c. Disaster Recovery Employment NDWG - Mary Rodarte**

EDD announced three million dollars to help with employment recovery for individuals impacted by the COVID-19. The WIB was awarded Six hundred thousand dollars for Tulare County individuals who are unemployed, reduced hours at work or eligible for dislocated worker; long-term unemployed due, plant closures due to COVID-19. The WIB is partnering with the Tulare County Public Health and CSET to implement this project. Project will enroll 32 individuals in temporary employment which is different from our regular transitional jobs or on the job training. Temporary employment to fill positions as Contact Tracers with Public Health. Moving very quickly to fill these positions because Contact Tracers play an important role in Public Health. By tracing the confirmed individuals who contracted the COVID-19, referrals for testing and contacting individuals who may have been in contact within close proximity of someone who tested positive. These individuals will be interviewing, making phone calls, experienced with Word, Excel Microsoft and bilingual. Hourly pay rate of \$15.90. The jobs are full time but temporary positions. Great opportunity position as a career path to fill other positions within Tulare County. The WIB will place 32 individuals in positions that will last 14 weeks starting the end of June.

John Werner asked about ways to help the public understand that this is something that can help in a positive way? Making sure they are provided specific training on being sensitive to the situation of the COVID-19 individuals?

Adam is aware of the situations and will analyze the responses as they arise.

**d. Business Services – John Gonzalez**

**i. BST Updates**

Since April 7, 2020 we have reached out to 500 various business which represent 5,951 employees in Tulare County. Out of the 500 business we have completed services for 88 of those businesses. The WIB completed services by making contact at least once with that business, provided rapid response materials, conduct orientation or provided layoff aversion strategies.

The WIB received layoff information referrals from various ways.

- 32 - Warn letters from the State or businesses
- 50 - Weekly Community Collaborative Meeting
- 116 - Data customer engagement report from the Employment Connection Office
- 302 - WIB Business Services Team.

**ii. Rapid Response Updates**

Virtual Rapid Response meetings are conducted every Tuesday at 1:00 pm. A customized rapid response can be conducted for larger business that have 10 or more employees. The rapid response team provided six recurring meetings and four customized orientations for Eagle Mountain, Central Valley Auto Transport and two for Jostens which two hundred individuals attended. If anyone is

interested attending an orientation they can register through a link that is sent out explaining how to attend. The Rapid Response Round Table meeting will resume on June 2, 2020 and will take place every 1st Tuesday of each month Ryan Leasure will send out an email to people who attend. Rapid response material has been translated into Spanish.

## 6) ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Edith Hernandez gave each partner the opportunity to share resources from the three questions below:

- a) How has COVID-19 affected your organization's operations?
- b) Has your referral process changes?
- c) How might we can maximize our partnership?

**Carla Calhoun** - EC office still open, 70% are telecommuting to limit the # of people in the office and in-house monthly virtual meetings. Providing 1200 meals to seniors that are homebound, assisted virtual 3000 income tax returns for low income individuals. Thirty-two individuals have applied for Rental Assistance. Weatherization is on hold but continue to intake, continue to provide utility services for 400 people since April. ECO Program facilitated by Conservation Corp has continued with social distancing. Signed three additional work experience contracts for the ECO Program. Continue to service individuals while social distancing.

**John Werner** -Adult Schools mobilized about mid-March to switch to online provision services and have stabilized into a distance learning format. We continue to struggle with target populations with devices and technical problems. Career technical programs have struggled with interruption of lab and clinical settings Navigators are working from home. Good communication is key. Future budget for the Adult program will be impacted by 12% for the next year.

**Robert Gonzalez** - Transitioned to distance learning for K-12 district, diploma classes are offered on-line learning platform. ESL has had the biggest impact due to daily contact. Due to the COVID-19 they have not been able to serve many families. We rely on telephones, video conferences to provide services for individuals. Working with a reduction of staff with minimal contact in the office.

**Robert Kleyn** – No client contact all through virtual or telephone. All staff are telecommuting working with minimal staff in the office. Referral process has stopped, individuals can call the office and staff will provide orientations by phone or can mail them a packet. Maximizing by sharing resources to be able to refer individuals for services.

**Roxanna Cruz** – Management and above levels are telecommuting from the office. Line staff and supervisors are rotating 50% at office and at home on an on-call basis due to not enough equipment. Staff continue to work on Cal-Fresh, Cal-Works, Medi-cal staff continue to work on programs. Lobbies are closed, contacting clients through phones, BCW Portal and mail. Referral process has not changed much but staff continue to use and refer clients to the BCW Portals. Continue the communication.

**Linda Patino** - Ticket Program is a national virtual system. Utilizing stream line methods and the form process. Communicating with individuals through phones lines, texting and mail orders. Continue to check our main phone lines daily. Providing more face to face support through zoom, hangouts for our participants. Assisting individuals with job opportunities who have lost their jobs due to the COVID-19. Providing constant service. Referring individuals to the Employment Connection for resources and services.

**Nick Brown** – Porterville Sheltered Workshop serves 650 clients for 11 different programs since the shut down on March 23, 2020. Board approve staff to continue to get paid. Brought some clients back to work slowly. Individuals placed in employment still continue to work throughout the community. Fifty staff are back to work to assist with contract obligations. Recycled center has opened, copy centers are open for curb side only and Thrift stores is only accepting donations. Twenty-five staff are back to work. Due to transportation issues many clients are unable to work. Referral process has slowed down tremendous.

**Tammy Olson** – Distance learning for HS diploma and GED students. Only a third of our students are participating in the Pilot Program for ESL. Challenging issues with students no internet access and devices. Good news for the Medical Programs the State Public Dept of Health offer on-line classes. Added lab hours in order for students to complete their programs later and bring back smaller groups to the campus. Extended LVN clinical hours to no more than 50% to return in June 2020 to complete January 2021. Referral process has been non-existent due to office closures. Our office just now opened with part-time staff. HS diplomas and GED testing will open back in June 2020. Prior students have been emailing staff to return back to complete their program for the fall semester. Continue the communication.

**Larriann Torrez** - Transitioned to online learning. Created a resource guide on-line for staff and students. Meeting with staff weekly through zoom. Provide chrome books to students in need. Kuddos to Saul Magana with CSET for reaching out to students and providing work materials to students. Started to offer GED testing. All registration is done online starting July 1, 2020. Orientations started on site for Phlebotomy and CAN Programs. Drive thru graduation for LVN on Friday and next Wednesday for HS diplomas at the Maple Campus. Staff are coming into the office as need and teachers are working from home. Referrals are still being done in the office. Staying connected and open communication with partners and following COVID-19 guidelines.

**Sofia Morales** – Operation has changed since March 2020. EDD staff started working immediately strictly by phones calls and emails only. Staff have been teleworking. Each office in Visalia and Porterville have two staff working. Staff located at the AJJC are providing services by phone. EDD staff continue to serve TAA and Veteran staff, migrant students assisting . Due to the COVID-19 pandemic Unemployment Insurance has grown in Tulare County. EDD has had to redirected 30% to 50% of their staff to handle UI phone calls. Since March 18, 2020 UI has taken 13,911 phone calls. They are averaging 15,000 calls per week. Sharing services with partners to assist with UI. A webinar will be held regarding UI & COVID-19 on May 21, 2020 and two sessions will be held. Edith will email members the information. Thanked the WIB for providing rapid response information and CSET staff for their support.

**Next Meetings** – August 19, 2020  
November 18, 2020

**Adjournment:** – The meeting adjourned at 11:35 a.m.