



## Minutes

### Workforce Innovation Board

Tuesday, March 19, 2024; 10:30 am – 12:00 pm

Physical Location: Northern Trust - Gold Coast Conference Room 181 W. Madison, Floor MB-07,  
Chicago, Illinois, 60602

**In Attendance:** Amelia Fulgham, Marisa Lewis, Shannon McGhee, Thomas Evenson, Amy Santacaterina, Susan Massel, Jose Mota, Adam Hecktman, Carrie Thomas, Haven Allen, Jacki Robinson-Ivy, Juan Salgado, Liisa L. Stark, Michael Jacobson, Pam McDonough, Smita Shah, Xochitl Flores, George Wright, Nicole Shaw, Kimberly Hinkey, Nancy Cao, Pilar Trejo, Robert Guzman, Becky Raymond, Cherryl Morris, Dan Miller, Larry Fitzpatrickk, Erica Eckhart

#### Quorum: Yes

#### Call to Order

Jacki Robinson-Ivy and Smita Shah, Co-Chair

The meeting was called to order by at 10:31 am by Smita Shah.

#### Attendance; Confirmation of Quorum

Amelia Fulgham, Board Liaison

Amelia took attendance at 10:32 am.

#### Minutes of September & December Meeting\*

Jacki Robinson-Ivy and Smita Shah, Co-Chair

Smita Shah called for a motion to approve the September & December 2023 WIB meeting minutes. The motion was moved by Pam McDonough and seconded by Adam Hecktman. Motion carried.

#### CEO Update

George Wright, CEO

George advises that he typically gives his comments in three categories, people, finances, and processes.

As for the people, George states that 30% of staff over the last 6 months have been promoted or are new. We have been lifting people up in The Partnership, many of the people who have been promoted are original staff from 12 years ago. George advised that we are targeting the right person for the right jobs. We have had an overhaul in our finance department, we are currently 60% staffed in April. George states that we are intentionally investing into our talent and people. We sent 5 leaders to Connecticut to spend time in the largest WIB in the country that is a non-profit. This WIB has 50 MM annually in private investments. We are keen on this and want to continue doing things like this.

Xochitl Flores advises that a 30% growth rate is significant, how are we training up? This is a lot of people in a short period of time. How are we making sure that people have the right tools to be successful in their new role?



George advises that for a staff of 90, 30% is around 30 people. He states that he will dive into this more when reviewing process, how to scale staff up will be reviewed.

As for the finances, historically The Partnership has had speedbumps around the timing of the audit. We have had to delay the audit, it has been late or we have had to ask for extensions. For the first time in 3 years, we have submitted a clean audit on time. Finance is revamping themselves. George advises that this is something to be proud of, kudos to the staff and the new auditor who made this happen.

George advises that we are working on accepting and using public funding. There is 30 MM in excess of WIOA funding that we must spend in short order. We are very proud of the confidence the State, City and County have in us. We are focusing on outcomes and impacts within the communities we serve. This has had a positive impact on our balance sheet, which is growing and expanding. We want to access more private funding, as a 5013C we were created to accept private funding.

As for processes, George states that we have embarked on an initiative for process efficiency to become more than a notion. This kickstarted us in improving our existing processes. We needed to establish policy and procedure from the finance team. Many of our existing processes had never been updated since 2012. They were missing information that was needed to be made current. KEB was hired to complete a scan of processes and procedures within the organization. They went back to the forensic audit and the non-profit board to report out. We have hired them to come back to ensure the updates are compliant.

We are doing this same process with IT, and with HR. George advised that we are looking at 3<sup>rd</sup> party providers for IT and HR to identify how can we update processes, how can we place an emphasis onboarding, promotions, and so we have a scan of the organization as a larger project. George states that we can have good people and finances, however without processes we are losing money. We are intent on not losing money.

The question was asked, how would you categorize the shift on policy, have half of the policies been adopted? I would like to hear more about this. George advised that around 80% of policies within The Partnership have been rewritten or newly created. He states that the transition has largely been formalizing the procedures onto paper, many policies and procedures had been living in someone's mind.

An attendee asked what was the training plan offered by KEB?

George advised that KEB has done the training with staff on how to create and implement processes and procedures. KEB will be coming back to periodically test staff to ensure compliance. We intentionally started with the Finance department as The Partnership operates the largest workforce board in the country.

Xochitl Flores asked if KEB will be performing the process review for IT and HR?

George stated that KEB is used for our MOU process. KEB has expertise in financial piece.

Smita Shah asked if we have retained people to review HR and IT?

George responded that this has been a part of the 30% staff overhaul. We hired a person who is an expert in systems. Depending on the budget, we will hire an outside perspective. The same is true for HR, we will hire an expert for HR policy as needed.

## **Committee Reports**

### **Service Delivery**



Pam McDonough, Co-Chair & Amy Santacaterina, Director of WIOA Programs

- New Arrivals

There is a comprehensive team that is working with the new arrivals. In July president Biden issued an order that allows for new arrivals to apply for work authorization and temporary protective status for Venezuelan immigrants who migrated prior to July 31<sup>st</sup> 2023. This team has been helping triage and inform new arrivals on how to access work. This is a part of a larger collaboration between us, the State, City of Chicago, and Cook County. Migrants will be brought to the Metcalf building from the shelters to be processed for temporary work authorizations with pro-bono attorneys. The last step for the new arrivals is to visit our table where we inform people about workforce services. We have been working closely with WIOA partners, IDS, One Stop Operator, and connecting new arrivals with Title II providers. Amy reviewed the data we have collected from the new arrivals. We have screened over 1700 people; most of them are within the 25-35 age range. When screening for work experience, we found basic labor experience, manufacturing, and hospitality sectors most represented. Most of the people screened have high school or less educational experience.

We have been a part of the team with DCO and the State, creating an employer outreach webinar. We are educating employers with the goal of integrating New Arrivals into workspaces. We hosted a resource fair at Malcom X College with over 200 people attending to connect with resources.

Today's hiring event has been postponed for health and safety due to a Measles outbreak.

Xochitl Flores asked if all 1700 individuals that have come in through the system for the New Arrivals initiative have work permits?

Amy advised that after they apply for permits, we do screening so we can get them in for services as they are waiting for work permits. Some people have gone through and applied, not everyone has been accepted. There is an average of a 45 day turnaround on a good application. It depends on the individual, their situation and data.

- A member of the public asked if there were adjustments that needed to be made in programming or screening to accommodate the language barrier?
- Amy advised that the first few events had a majority of Haitian attendees, we staffed Spanish speakers and had to adjust. We staff primarily Spanish speakers now. We are in the process of increasing Spanish speaking staff at the AJC locations. We are connecting with Title II partners in referring to ESL classes. The State released a notice of funding that we are applying for. We are looking at ways we can partner with ESL providers. We are also looking at combining ESL classes at our AJCs. There are funding and training opportunities with Food Hero, as they have Spanish speaking staff in the kitchen. We are looking at projects where we have Spanish speaking staff and experience with pilot programs. We want to understand what works well with this population. We are innovating and pivoting every week.
- A member of the public asked, as today's event had to be postponed, can we combine this event with the Hospitality Hires event later in April?
- Amy confirmed, yes.

- WIOA Updates

- **Vote to Transfer Funding\***



Amy advises that we have submitted applications to the State for 2M to WIOA 1E funding to DCO. The State reserves money that supports dislocated workers. We submitted 2 1M applications, we were awarded 2M. We applied for this money as on the Adult formula side, we are quickly running through the Adult ITA budget. Many of these people we serve are low income and basic skills deficient. New arrivals are not dislocated workers, they come in as Adults. We are recommending to transfer 2M from Dislocated Worker formula funds to the Adult side to continue to have Adult ITA funds for the remainder of the year. We received another 2M to support the dislocated workers.

Amy advises that we did issue a temporary suspension on adult ITAs. We want to make sure we have enough for the end of the year. We will resume in mid-April. We issued a suspension on the Youth ITAs for the remainder of the year.

We also applied for 1.3M to serve new arrivals, migrants and refugees. This is money that must be spent between April to June of this year.

- A member of the public asked if this 1.3M funding is for ITAs?
- Amy advised no, this 1.3M not just for ITAs, this was for new arrival work. This is not WIOA funding but is State funding.
- A member of the public asked, will it provide funding for what we are already doing?
- Amy advised yes, these funds will cover what we were doing at the Metcalf back to January, formerly paying with WIOA funding.

Amy reviews a chart on Adult ITA usage. She advises that we can see a significant percentage is going to transportation and logistics, primarily the CDL course. We are pausing Adult ITA's as we want to evaluate if we are getting the proper outcomes for the CDL course. We have seen some aggressive recruiting tactics. We want to make sure CDL course takers are getting CDL jobs.

Pam McDonough asked if there is a component that tracks placement?

Amy responded that we see placements at the end. We match up the participants with the placement and industry code.

Pam asked if the CDL program has historically been this proportion?

Amy advised that in the last few years "supply chain" became a buzzword, so programs have been investing money in CDL programs for truck drivers.

Pam called for a motion to transfer the \$2M in Formula D to Formula A funding. The motion was moved by Xochitl Flores and seconded by Juan Salgado. Motion moved.

Juan Salgado asked when the 2M is transferred, is there still going to be a pause on the CDL program? Amy advises that the pause on the ITA programs will resume in April. We are specifically looking at the CDL program and have a call with that program's CEO.

Juan asked can we expect to move these a lot quicker than other industries, can we expect that the 2M will go along this path?

Amy advised that it depends on what we find.

George Weight stated that we want to evaluate the effectiveness and impact that the CDL course has given us. Are we getting the placements we have been promised?

- **WIOA Local Plans\***



Pilar Trejo advised that the local plan is a 4-year plan spanning from 2024-2028. This plan describes the development, alignment, and integration of the workforce area. The plan is chapters 1-6, starts with the states vision. These are part of the guidelines we must use as workforce professionals.

Pilar advises that this is a living document. In 2 years, there will be another modification. We will develop and integrate more with our partners.

Pam called for a motion to approve the WIOA local plan to the State, seconded by Juan Salgado. Motion passes.

- **Eligible Training Providers\***

Pam called for a motion to approve the Eligible Training Providers lists, seconded by Carrie Thomas. Motion moved. Juan Salgado abstained.

Amy advised that the ITA packets are in the materials. There are two sets as we didn't meet quorum in December. We passed a group of training programs from the Service Delivery Committee meetings in both December and March.

- **Policy Letters\***

- WIOA dislocated worker
  - Pam McDonough called for motion to approve, seconded by Juan Salgado. Motion moved.
- Follow Up Policy Adult and Dislocated Worker
  - Pam McDonough called for motion to approve, seconded by Juan Salgado. Motion moved.
- Follow Up Youth Policy
  - Pam McDonough called for motion to approve, seconded by Juan Salgado. Motion moved.
- Selective Services
  - Pam McDonough called for motion to approve, seconded by Juan Salgado. Motion moved.
- Career Planning
  - Pam McDonough called for motion to approve, seconded by Juan Salgado. Motion moved.
- OSO Procurement
  - Pam McDonough called for motion to approve, seconded by Juan Salgado. Motion moved.

- **Revised PY23 MOU\***

We submitted the MOU to the State for DCO, the State asked us to add boilerplate language. This update has been made, however it is now considered a revised MOU. This was on the previous meeting's agenda when there was no quorum.

Smita Shah advises she wants everyone to feel comfortable with the items. Marisa will send both the old and new versions.

Pam McDonough called for a motion to approve the changes made to the PY23 MOU. Motion moved by Carrie Thomas, and seconded by Juan Salgado. Motion moved.



## **Youth**

Adam Heckman, Chair

Adam Heckman begins the Youth update.

For WIOA Youth programs, we served over 2300 Youth with the WIOA programs as of yesterday. We have achieved 77% of our YTD quarterly goal of 3000 Youth. The Youth ITA budget is 3M for this PY year July 1 – June 30<sup>th</sup>. We have obligated 2.8M, we will not be issuing more ITA's this year.

Non WIOA Youth programs includes Opportunity Works focusing on the suburbs. The City has One City Chicago. Opportunity Works helps Youth find employment in the summer in the suburbs. The ARPA funding was staying in Chicago, and is now expanding into the City. We are working with Abram to bolster the IT Sector, and Healthcare.

A member of the public asked what is the impact of pausing the ITA funds for the remainder of the program year? Does this impact youth that have been referred?

Adam advised that we are pausing new ITA's, this does not affect youth who are already in the program.

Amy advised that there are still Youth being served in the program with a career coach, not all youth get an ITA. Some programs offer other job experience and paid work experience.

## **Finance**

Jacki Robinson-Ivy, Treasurer & Jose Mota, Director of Finance

Jose Mota advised that the State reviews the obligation requirements, we are on pace to meet the obligation requirement.

Jose advised we will be looking to the future as this is a busy time for WIOA fiscal. We are anticipating fiscal projection letters for June 30<sup>th</sup>. Preliminary PY24 projections will be available in May.

## **Development Update (Jobs Report)**

Jasmine Williams, Senior Research Analyst

Jasmine Williams will give her report at the next WIB meeting in June.

## **Communications Update**

Susan Massel, Director of Communications

Susan Massel opened reminding everyone of the tools we use to communicate. She stated that we contract a photographer and videographer for important events. Everyone in this room has access to tools and messaging media that we don't, if you see something you would like to add to our newsletter please let us know.

Susan reviewed the recent events we have hosted for the New Arrivals initiative, and lifting up local Black leaders for Black history month. We are doing all we can do to remind the public that we are a non-profit.



This looks like investing in updated signage, constantly hosting hiring fairs, and matching employers with career seekers.

Susan reviewed the growth in our social media following over the last 4 years. She states that our LinkedIn has grown over 200%.

Jacki Robinson-Ivey asked if our engagement on the social media platform X, formerly Twitter, is standard?

Susan advised that we scrubbed bad contacts from X, and shared that X is not on the rise as a platform.

Susan continues to state that The Partnership manages three websites. She advises that we have over 20,000 visits on our main website.

She advises that George Wright led a meeting with Community Based Organizations (CBO's) who asked great questions. Themes of discussion included what are we doing right, what should we stop, and what would you do as a CEO?

Susan stated that we are working to increase the number of employers using the bilingual portal.

Susan shared that the Hospitality Hires event hosted at The Palmer House has been rescheduled for April 16<sup>th</sup> due to the recent Measels outbreak.

Susan advised that our internal newsletter The Pulse, has a 55% readership. Please read The Pulse as we want to keep our newsletter alive.

On the first working day of the week each month we release our other newsletter, In The Works. Susan shared that over 10K people open this newsletter within the 1<sup>st</sup> 10 minutes of being published.

Smita Shah advised for Susan to subscribe everyone on the WIB to our newsletters.

Jackie Robinson – Ivy advised to put trivia in the newsletters to drive engagement.

Susan shared that we recently acquired a 50K grant from North Western medicine. This grant came from the healthcare sector relationship due to staff at The Partnership.

Susan shared that each Saturday morning from 8:00 to 9:00 am George Wright goes on Air at WVON with guest speakers dispelling myths within workforce development.

### **Public Comment and Adjournment**

Smita Shah states that we are continuing to evaluate how The Partnership has been structured over the last decade. We want to ensure our set up is effective for delegate funding and for increasing funding



opportunities. The City and County have engaged CCA and Mayor Brown. They will reach out to our board members and The Partnership staff to give feedback. Please share what you think is working, and what you think could be better so we can best serve our community.

Xochitl stated that the civic consulting alliance assess different areas of operations for improvement and strategic planning processes. The collaborations between the City and the County are helpful to bring in additional support. The County and the City are looking at this structure, how we function, how we can improve as it has been many years since they created this entity together. When engaging in this discussion we should examine what the next 10 years look like and what we should be looking for. The Partnership is continuously evolving and creating, we want to be efficiently delivering to Cook County and the region. There are many opportunities with funding, as we further align and improve the organizations' structure, this will position us to gather additional funding. She states that she is looking forward to the engagement.

Nancy stated that CCA and Mayor Brown will summarize the feedback as the City and County will be reviewing it directly.

Juan advised that he was involved with the city and county years ago, when The Partnership was formed. He stated that he thinks this effort from the City and the County to work together is very important. Xochitl advised that it has been great to have a strong collaboration with the City and County, and she appreciates working to continue to strengthen The Partnership.

Jacki called for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:03 am. The motion was moved by Pam McDonough and seconded by Xochitl Flores. Meeting adjourned.