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Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) Youth Employment Committee Meeting Minutes March 11, 2021 – 11:30 AM

1. Welcome and Introductions

The LWDB Youth Employment Committee assembled via ZOOM. Co-Chair Jennifer Hughes welcomed Committee members and called the meeting to order.

2. Review and Approval of the Minutes from the February 11, 2021 Meeting

Michele Gifford (Amy Williams) moved to approve the meeting minutes from the February 11, 2021 meeting. Motion adopted.

3. Budget Analysis and Performance for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth Program

A breakdown of WIOA Youth program funds for the current program year and the current performance status of the program was presented and reviewed with the Committee in order to assist the Committee in understanding WIOA Youth funding. The WIOA Youth program is designed to assist young people with barriers to completing education goals or obtaining employment with requirements on the percentages allowed to be spent on In School Youth and Out of School Youth and also for work experience opportunities. The Local Workforce Development Boards are also assigned annual goals to monitor performance of the WIOA Youth programs. Currently, work experience funds expended are low at 19% short of the WIOA requirement of 20%, which is of concern to staff and will be monitored closely to insure compliance for audit and performance purposes by the end of the budget year.

One of the reasons the Committee was formed was to be champions for WA youth programs and determine ways to increase employer engagement and open up the programs to more employers. **Hughes proposed that one of the goals of the Committee could be to provide two referrals of employers that can employ youth; Committee members would then reach out to these referrals, discuss the benefits of youth programs and then provide a warm lead for staff to follow up. The employed youth would be participants of the WIOA youth, or the Youth Employment Project (YEP).**

One of the major barriers that staff face is obtaining job sites for youth in that some corporate employers that express an interest in hiring a youth run into legal or policy issues and are unable to follow through. Another area of concern is the expectation of some employers that there is already a youth available to fill a job immediately upon agreeing to be a host site. Staff need a pool of companies that can be ready to offer a job when a youth becomes available that is a fit for that position, so that staff can place a youth in a meaningful job experience that meets their interest. **Amy Williams suggested that a list of employers that currently hire youth through the program be created that could then be provided to potential employers to demonstrate how those companies were able to overcome certain barriers that resulted in the successful employment of youth participants.** This information could be incorporated into a simple one-page information sheet to distribute to these potential employers and community partners. Staff will research the flexibility of funding under WIOA in order to provide for possible creative options for payment of direct wages such as training funds and whether funds can possibly be expended for legal advice to address employer barriers. This subject will be revisited at the next meeting as it is at the heart of why this committee was formed.

This item will continue to be discussed at future meetings.

4. YMCA Job Prep Program

Tyrone Baker with the YMCA provided an overview of the YMCA's Job Prep program. The program was established 13 years ago to teach 15 to 17 year olds the skills necessary to obtain a job and then place them at job sites. The program is 12 weeks long and students learn job search skills (dress, work mock interviews, etc.) and about how to sell themselves to a potential employer. Job sites are secured and job descriptions made available for graduates to review and call for interviews. Graduates are guaranteed a job, but what kind of job they obtain is up to them based on their skills and preparation. The youth work

at their jobs for ten weeks, 25 hours a week and the YMCA pays the wages. The YMCA does site visits to ensure that the youth and employer are working well together. The YMCA is a part of Helping Youth Prepare for Employment (HYPE) collaborative along with the WA and the City of Wichita. Some of the benefits of this collaborative are being able to combine outreach and marketing activities that help with recruiting, take advantage of strengths to have wider audience and provide different job offerings. Employers in the region are beginning to notice the difference between the programs and services offered between the partners and how well they work together.

This item will continue to be discussed at future meetings.

5. HYPE Work Plan for 2021

Staff presented a draft work plan for the 2021 Helping Youth Prepare for Employment (HYPE) collaborative for the Committee to review, so that members can assist in establishing goals and identifying strategies to implement this year's program. This year's Camp HYPE will offer camps managed by the employers that sponsor them. There will be a technology camp, trade skills camp, Via Christi is sponsoring a healthcare camp, Spirit AeroSystems and possibly Textron Aviation will have aviation manufacturing camps. Freddy's will provide lunch at one of the camps and staff are checking with other businesses about donating lunches for other camps. WA staff will focus on covering soft skills and the employer is responsible for the specific content of their camp. The plan is to provide stipends to students that attend the camps. Some workshops will be also be offered at City of Wichita's Parks and Recreation locations. Many companies are recovering from the pandemic crisis and there may not be as many internship opportunities as in past years; therefore, the plan is to place as many youth as possible in a work experience and then can create a meaningful activity for those that cannot be placed. Staff are still trying to work through the plan for this year and are hopeful that by March and April of next year, it may be possible to develop a better plan and provide more opportunities. Rod Blackburn challenged staff and the Committee to get the El Dorado school district involved in HYPE as the school superintendent has asked what can be done to get those students involved in career readiness training. The application to participate in HYPE is being finalized and will be on the website and in the monthly newsletter; staff will provide more information to Committee members when available.

Report was received and filed.

6. WIOA/HYPE Communication and Marketing Plan

The Committee was asked to share ideas on how to engage more employers in hiring youth and determine the best use of their membership as ambassadors for youth employment in the community. One of the purposes of the Committee is to help the WA be more effective with communication; the message does not have to come directly from WA, YEP, HYPE. Currently, WA staff distribute a monthly newsletter, work with school districts and is active on social media. The WA is involved with the Kansas Department of Education's (KSDE) Work Based Learning (WBL), which is a proponent of HYPE/YEP and is working with school districts to provide more information about YEP to parents.

Committee members discussed some ideas:

- Create a packet of information to hand to superintendents to demonstrate that if they participate, here are things that we suggest you use to communicate and that if they are willing to be a partner in this work, this is how we are going to make it easy for you.
- Need to generate more funding and show the return on investment of providing this funding. Other cities provide funding for youth employment programs with big outcomes. The WA needs sustainable funding in order to achieve better outcomes and serve more youth in the community.
- Enlist the services of school district's communications directors for a uniform message. Determine what information is required from staff I order for them to market youth opportunities.
- Committee members posting to personal and professional social media pages to promote youth programs by having staff prepare content and message and then forward to Committee members to share on their pages.

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- There is a need to get more superintendents in the region involved, so that they can push information about WA services and programs out directly to students and parents. There are standing groups of superintendents that meet regularly and it might be possible for staff or Committee members to get on agenda at those meetings and promote youth programs. Kofoed will follow up with Bielefeld.
This item will continue to be discussed at future meetings.

7. Next Steps

- The Committee discussed a recurring meeting schedule for the remainder of the year and it was decided to meet every other month on the third Tuesday at 11:30 AM beginning on May 18, 2021.
- Create tangible goals for the Committee.
- Continue discussions on the budget and performance for the WIOA Youth program as well as the WIOA/HYPE Marketing Plan at the next meeting.
 - Create a list of employers that currently hire youth through the programs that can be provided to potential employers that provides examples of how those companies were able to overcome certain barriers to be able to successfully employ youth.
 - Develop a simple one-page information sheet to distribute to potential employers and community partners to help them understand the requirements and services available under the program as well as document specific reasons why employers say they cannot hire a youth ie., insurance, legal, too complicated, etc. and then document some ways to address those concerns.
 - Staff will research the flexibility of funding under WIOA in order to provide for possible creative options for payment of direct wages such as training funds and can funds possibly be expended for legal advice to address employer barriers.
- Committee members were asked to reach out to two employers that can employ youth and then provide a referral to WA staff for follow up.
- Develop a plan to engage El Dorado students in HYPE.
- Think about ways to use personal and professional social media pages to share information on the WA youth programs.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:02 PM.

Attendees:

LWDB Youth Employment Committee Members

Kelly Bielefeld
Rod Blackburn
Anne Marie Coughlin
Michele Gifford
Laura Hands
Jennifer Hughes
Debbie Kennedy
Angela Perez
Leah Roeder
Sally Stang
Amy Williams

Staff/Guests

Stacy Cotten
Denise Houston
Aliex Kofoed
Keith Lawing
Shirley Lindhorst
Chad Pettera
Tyrone Baker, YMCA
Deb Weve, Job Corps
Greg Butler, Cowley College
Jennie Heersche, Cowley College