



Economic and Workforce Development Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

April 2, 2020

8:30am – 10:00am

Meeting Attendees:	Monica Light, Lisa Venema, Drea McKinney, Sara Magnuson, Johanna Schulte, Emily Madesen, Lorena Aguayo-Marquez, Betty Beth Johns, Chad Patton, Jennifer Summers, Nancy DuBois, Laura St. Louis, Carra Oteto, Dan TenHoopen, Oogie Lamar, Carrie Roper, Elvira Kovachevich, Giuliana Estrada, Jayme Vosovic, Joyanne Huston-Swanson, Lawrence Kloth, Mary Engle, Milinda Ysasi, Jodi Petersen, Juan Rosario, Tammy Britton, Sara Parano, Sharlene Organ, Allison Rudi, Tia Zeien, Tim Novak, Wende Randall, Brianne Robach <i>(List may not be complete- please contact Brianne if you were on the call but are not listed here.)</i>		
Time Convened:	8:30	Time Adjourned:	10:00

Introductions	
New Americans Gateways for Growth Initiative	
Discussion	
<p>Gateways for Growth is an initiative to help communities become more welcoming for immigrants and refugees. Samaritas and other local organizations are working to develop and implement a welcome plan for New Americans based entirely on feedback from New Americans.</p> <p>In order to get input, they developed a survey in coordination with Calvin University Center for Social Research. Survey responses show that the top priorities of New Americans are continuing to work in their profession and maintaining culture as the largest priority and language as the largest barrier. Focus groups identified learning English as the gateway to achieving other priorities and as an added responsibility. When asked about solutions, focus groups identified recognition of foreign work experience and sharing opportunities and resources.</p> <p>The Welcome Plan tries to encompass broad background and needs of all new Americans and instill a sense of belonging in New Americans and addresses has 5 areas. Each area has broad goals that encompass all issues but that are not too prescriptive. One area of the plan is Economic Development. Goals in this section include enhancing business resources, maximizing and leveraging skill set, and best practices for hiring and retaining New Americans.</p> <p>Samaritas has been seeing interested from other municipalities, which is encouraging. The team is working on finalizing the draft of this plan. After the draft is approved by the Steering Committee, it will be available for public comment. They have not scheduled a specific launch date.</p> <p>Providers were provided feedback on what has worked for them in the past as well as what barriers and opportunities they see.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What worked: an employer who allowed family member to go to work with employees for a few weeks. - Opportunities: listen to the needs of the community, short-term careers, or in-house training - Barriers: inability to move out of entry level positions, lack of understanding of cultural agility, accent is not an indicator of level of English-proficiency <p>Reach out to Elvira (Project Coordinator) and Joel with questions or feedback. Elvira Kovachevich: EKova@samaritas.org and Joel Lautenbach: jlaut@samaritas.org. The slides can be viewed by clicking here. The Executive Summary (includes a link to Tableau survey data) can be viewed by clicking here.</p>	



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Current State	
Discussion	
To gauge the current state as well as preparation for the re-opening on businesses, participants filled out a mentimeter survey. Responses can be found here: Mentimeter responses and Mentimeter responses (2)	
Looking Ahead	
Discussion	
Wende asked the group what barriers they are seeing or anticipating for connecting participants to jobs when social distancing measures are lifted.	
Barriers include:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Digital divide and lack of infrastructure and equipment. School-aged children have been the priority in getting technology. Individuals in higher learning may have had to drop classes. - Important to remind participants and staff that they are balancing grieving, need to manage expectation around productivity - Concern that there may be more difficulty with getting those with disabilities back to work. - Reminder of the need to center racial equity in this time. - Increased susceptibility to scams during this time. Report scams to GR non-emergency line - Gender – if most of the work at home is carried by women, and now women are working from home, how does this impact women disproportionately? 	
Opportunities:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This could be a time to look at policies that currently don't serve the workforce, what are employers able to make more flexible for employees out of necessity? - Talent 2025 are seeing that employers are reluctant to lay-off staff and are finding creative ways to retain staff. What permanent changes will this have on flexibility in the workplace? - Learn more about trauma-informed care and self-care 	
Additional Updates	
Discussion	
<p>KDL – Sara is updating employment resources on KDL's community resources page. She will send the link to the group; please send input and ideas.</p> <p>Please ensure that changes in operations are given to 2-1-1 through backdoor contacts: Sherri Vainavicz at svainavicz@hwmuw.org, 616-752-8641 and John Mitchell at jmitchell@hwmuw.org, 616-752-8648.</p> <p>Conversation around ways we can co-locate resources to meet people's needs once we are starting to see ease of social distancing directives.</p> <p>Employer resource for helping find child care for essential workers: http://www.talent2025.org/uploads/files/Essential-Workforce-Child-Care-Resources.pdf</p> <p>MLPP Policy Recommendations: https://mlpp.org/michigan-league-for-public-policy-outlines-recommendations-to-address-immediate-and-ongoing-needs-during-covid-19-crisis/</p>	