



Economic and Workforce Development Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

May 7, 2020

8:30am – 10:00am

Meeting Attendees:	<p>Oogie Lamar, Patty Higgins, BettyBeth Johns, Sara Parano, Pat Walstra, Lorena Aguayo-Marquez, Tawana Brown, Sara Magnuson, John VanElst, Jayme Vosovic, Jennifer Summers, Laura St. Louis, Juan Rosario, Daniel VanderMolen, Carra Oteto, Chad Patton, Colene Johnson, Adrienne Goodstal, Valerie Butler, Tammy Britton, Tia Zeien, Angie Bernal, Jodi Petersen, Adriene Pendery, Sharlene Organ, Johanna Schulte, Monica Light, Nancy DuBois, Giuliana Estrada, Dan TenHoopen, Shannon Harris, Mary Engle, Lawrence Kloth, Alexa Kramer, Martel Posey, Wende Randall, Brianne Robach</p> <p><i>(List may not be complete- please contact Brianne if you were on the call but are not listed here.)</i></p>		
Time Convened:	8:30	Time Adjourned:	10:00

Introductions	
Adult Education and Literacy Panel	
Discussion	
<p>Panelists: Pat Walstra, Patty Higgins, Oogie Lamar, and Chad Patton</p> <p><u>Funding:</u> Federal funds are through Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title 2. The state is currently reviewing applications for the upcoming 4 year grant cycle. Federal funds viewed as a supplemental funding source and service those ages 16 and up if they are not enrolled in any K12 system.</p> <p>State funds are categorical funds through section 107. Funding has been regionalized by prosperity funding. Funding is pre-determined, about \$4.2 million come into our region (region 4) to fund 17 programs, about 60 sites throughout the region. Recently, they have seen a shift in funded programs being seen as the end step and instead as way to get ready for the next step.</p> <p>Other agencies, such as the Literacy Center, are non-profits that use WIOA funding as supplements with other funding sources (grants, fundraisers, etc.).</p> <p><u>Challenges:</u> With the current situation, agencies are working on ways to take the programs to participants, some are using distance learning.</p> <p>In terms of grants, many are fund specific programs and have restrictions on administration, organizations may find it difficult to find funding for the systems that sustain these programs. Organizations also may have to find other funds to help reduce barriers such as transportation and childcare before they can request WIOA funds. In addition, WIOA is a reimbursable grant so agencies must use unrestricted funds to pay for services before receiving reimbursement which may be difficult for smaller organizations.</p> <p>When partnering with businesses, also agencies need to navigate when to charge the business and when to provide services through grants and section 107 and/or WIOA funds.</p>	



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Focusing on equity, some agencies may teach language that is specific to upskilling. ESL programs address language barriers restricting individuals that have advanced degrees from another country. Programs working towards getting these folks credentials recognized and connected to similar career pathways quickly. Gateway for Growth: New Americans in Kent County report shows that large amount of money from immigrants being paid in taxes at federal, state and local levels. One barrier for minority owned businesses in the community is licensing for residential construction as MI is one of the only states that has an English-only licensing exam.

Distance Learning:

Some waivers were offered for WIOA funding. Many agencies had to figure out the nuances of providing distance learning. Technology barrier is a huge equity issue. And, continued distance learning may impact performance.

At the state level, they are trying to support and respond to local programs working to provide distance learning. Many districts have their own adult education centers but plans and funding are not yet in place. Kent ISD is working to meet students where they are and mitigate barriers. They are also gathering input from students as distance learning may be a reality moving forward.

Call to Action

As a WFD system how can we support efforts and build awareness? Adult education provides foundational skills that impact children, the workforce, community as a whole. Suggested calls to action from panelists:

- Work and advocate with legislators
- Look forward knowing that the employment world may look different
- Look for opportunities for partnership.
- Have an open mind
- Invest in adult education and literacy programs.

Child Care Support and Futures for Frontliners Updates

Discussion

Future for Frontliners – this program was inspired by the G.I. bill. Details have not yet been released but anticipate it will run similar to the MI Reconnect program. Expanding age group is top of mind to ensure program is as successful as it can be. Career coaches and mentors as well as data and accountability will be important moving forward.

Childcare Supports – The Childcare Relief Fund is fairly new. This program is 2-pronged, one to support providers to ensure that they stay viable, the other helps make childcare more affordable during uncertain times. Grants are based on type, provider size, age of children served, quality rating. Providers must apply each month, but reports are that the application process is extremely easy. The requirement to not hold slots is helpful to remove financial burden for essential workers. The state has been seeking input from providers. Hopeful that conversations around the importance of childcare will continue. Childcare provider application at Michigan.gov/childcare, a thorough FAQ document available as well.

Additional Updates

Discussion



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ENTF is undergoing a strategic design and implementation process through a contract with Liz G Consulting. The leadership team has been reviewing mission, vision, and values. Over the next few months, Liz will be seeking input from subcommittee members.

Danielle and Shavon at IPS will be presenting their Smart Practices Report towards the end of the month.

Thanks to everyone for the ongoing efforts to build relationships with neighbors and work to build a more equitable system for all.