



Wyoming Workforce Development Council
Quarterly Meeting - Zoom
Virtual
January 18, 2024

January 18, 2024

Council Members Present

Tina Conley	Tamsin Johnson	Michael Kercher
Tony Cross	Representative Ryan Berger	Eric Trowbridge
Ron Wild	Chairman Fabian Lobera	Mark Madsen
Tiffany Marshall	Brenda Morgan	Larry Fodor
Charles Wilson	Danny Burau	Bria Hammock
Nathan Williams	Senator Fred Baldwin	Katie Hogarty
Phillip Cornella	Mayor Matt Hall	Ron Gullberg for Josh Dorell
Dr. Michelle Aldrich for Superintendent Degenfelder	Sara DiRienzo for Governor Gordon	Brian Hickman for Nicky Harper
Kristi Arneson for Korin Schmidt	Michael Swank for Ben Moritz	

Council Members Absent

Dick Smith	Commissioner Robert Short	Travis Lawrence
------------	---------------------------	-----------------

DWS Staff Present

Kristy Tyrney	Jennifer Wilch	Deanna Crofts
Holly Simoni	Christina West	Elizabeth Gagen
Ivy Castleberry	Robin Martin	Daniel Anderson
Robin Martin	Mary Orr	Brittany Redenbaugh
Jeff Schulz	Tyler Stockton	Shaye Moon
Sharon Geissler	Director Robin Cooley	Jennifer Cassidy
Michael Moore	Christina Arizona	

Others Present

Andrew Parker	Scott Hooversland	Laurel Ballard
John Melville		



January 18, 2024

I. Call to Order & Welcome Presenter: Chairman Fabian Lobera

Chairman Fabian Lobera called the meeting to order at 8:31 am.

A. WWDC Roll Call Presenter: Jennifer Wilch

Jennifer Wilch took roll call and noted we have a quorum.

B. Approval of Agenda Presenter: Fabian Lobera

Jim Engel moved to approve the agenda as written; Ryan Berger seconded. The motion carried.

C. Approval of September Minutes Presenter: Chairman Fabian Lobera

Tina Conley moved to approve September Minutes with corrections to attendance; Tony Cross seconded. The motion carried.

II. Message from the Chairman Presenter: Chairman Fabian Lobera

Fabian Lobera welcomed Dr. Ben Moritz, the new Executive Director of the Wyoming Community College Commission, formerly the designee for many years. Michael Swank, the Chief Financial Officer and designee for Dr. Ben Moritz, provided an update on the current restructuring of the Wyoming Community College Commission. Chairman Lobera announced that Governor Gordon has appointed Director Robin Cooley as a District Court Judge for the First Judicial District of Laramie County and on behalf of the committee, thanked her for all of her years of service. Recognition was provided to Climb Wyoming for their \$100,000 award of excellence from the Daniel's Fund.

III. Department of Workforce Services Update Presenter: Director Robin Sessions Cooley

Director Robin Cooley provided an update regarding her transition in the Spring of 2024. Director Cooley provided legislative updates, including the passage of the budget with amendments that included recommendations from the Governor in the Joint Appropriations Committee. The Governor supported and made a recommendation for an 8-million-dollar budget for training. Currently, a couple of bills are being presented in the legislature. The Joint Appropriations Committee granted approval for the additional positions requested by Workforce Services, in addition to the requested clawback of employment and training dollars to help support available service dollars. Additional funds and matching funds were approved for Vocational Rehabilitation. A separate line item budget request was made for the Wy Relocate program, with the approval from the Joint Appropriations Committee of the Governor's recommendation of 1.7 million dollars. Director Cooley further elaborated on the collaborative efforts of Workforce Services, the Wyoming Business Council, and Harvard Growth Lab. In conclusion, Director Cooley provided an update on the Hire Wyo MIS system, which she was hopeful would have a soft launch on Monday, January 22, 2024; highlighting a new and improved user-friendly website.



IV. Workforce Programs Update Presenter: Holly McKamey Simoni

Holly Simoni provided an update about some of the programs the agency is working on alongside community partners and businesses. The Wyoming Health Train Grant is currently up and running and receiving great feedback so far. As of the present 71 applications and \$662,000 have been approved for the Wyoming Health Train Grant. 40 applications were approved for nursing, nine for social work, six for dental hygiene, and some were also approved for Master's level counselors, physical therapy assistants, medical assistants, as well as pharmacy techs, respiratory therapists, and medical laboratory technicians. The WIP EMS training grant just launched and was a collaboration between WIP and Jen Davis, the Governor's Healthcare Liaison, with 58 applications currently and around \$266,000 obligated to new individuals going into basic or advanced paramedic training. Funds currently being utilized are in the year they are received.

V. Title I Program Team and One-Stop Operations Update Presenter: Christina West

Christina West provided an update about RESEA (Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments). To date 1170 claimants have been served with reemployment services through the RESEA program, approximately 30 appointments per week. An online scheduling program is being developed for RESEA and currently, scheduling takes place manually. Reemployment podcasts have been produced with support from the partnership through Workforce 180 and the Department of Workforce Services Communications team. WIOA has seen an increased number of participants in Title I, the adult program, the dislocated worker program, and the youth program. Halfway through the program year of 2023, over 650 individuals have been served, last year 750 individuals were served. Adult Education has been a strong partner the agency continues to work with. Title youth and additional co-enrollments have risen by 292%. The Pathway Home Three Grant, also referred to as the Career Compass Point (CCP), a competitive grant, was awarded to support 400 justice-involved individuals facilitated by a partnership between the Department of Workforce Services and the Department of Corrections. Modifications from the Department of Labor have been navigated successfully and participants are currently being served. The grant will remain funded through 2025 and participants must enroll by December 2024. As of January 2024, there are currently 180 justice-involved participants in the program. One of the modifications provided for the purchase of two CDL simulators for two correctional facilities to provide additional training opportunities to justice-involved individuals. In January of 2024, the ARPA upskilling grant will be implemented within all 18 workforce centers, this grant opportunity allows the agency to serve individuals who may not be eligible for other programs.

VI. Break

Resume at 10:00 am



VII. Workforce Center Update Presenters: Jeff Schulz, Mary Orr, Gilbert Servantez

Mary Orr is the center manager for Laramie and Rawlins Workforce Centers and provided updates on employer services currently being provided. Mary shared the several duties of workforce specialists and explained that in the smaller Workforce Centers employees are often delegated to several roles from employer services to WIOA. Business representatives work with employers to post jobs and fill openings, and labor market research that helps determine good pay rates, how many workers are available, and what kinds of skills available workers need to have. Workforce Centers help employers screen potential candidates and refer people to employers. Workforce Centers also work to support the guidelines of the Wyoming Preference Act requiring any job being completed with Wyoming dollars to strive to hire Wyoming residents. At the Workforce Centers the Department of Labor “Hire Vets Medallion Program” and “Wyoming We Hire Vets Program” promote hiring veterans. Other promotions for employers that the Workforce Center’s support include workforce development training funds, advocacy for apprenticeships and internships, the work opportunity tax credit, and federal bonding, in addition to other programs. Business representatives at the centers provide outreach to employers, community partners, and organizations who help refer people to the Workforce Centers. Many business representatives also work closely with Next Generation Sector Partnerships and provide support to H-2A job orders for foreign individuals in the agricultural industry in addition to H-2B job orders for foreign individuals in non-agricultural industries. In more rural Workforce Centers located near small communities, it is not uncommon for local outreach to be provided to support both employers and individuals. Jeff Schulz provided information about job fairs that take place in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Every month on “Workforce Wednesday,” the Workforce Center in Cheyenne is averaging between 11 to 20 employers every month, and before Covid-19, an average of 8 employers. There has been an average of 35 to 66 job seekers at these job fairs. Large job fairs taking place at Laramie County Community College during renovations currently average 55 employers, before renovations the average was up to 75 employers in attendance and 250 job seekers on average. Before Covid-19 this average peaked at around 300 job seekers. Wyoming Colorado Job Fair is another major job fair that became a hybrid of both online and virtual in October of 2023 with 1,100 job seekers combined and over 229 employers, with 15% of job seekers being veterans.

VIII. Be Pro Be Proud Presenter: Andrew Parker

Andrew Parker presented information about Be Pro Be Proud founded in 2016. Be Pro Be Proud has worked hard to change the perception of how communities view technical programs and opportunities. Andrew conveyed the substantial need for young people to fill technical careers. National statistics have often been similar to state statistics of the states and populations Be Pro Be Proud has worked with so far. Of all degree holders on a national level, about 40% will engage in a career that requires no degree in the first place. A multi-level approach attracts students and young adults to technical careers



through exciting simulation experiences and connecting them to post-secondary opportunities and engaged employers. These highly engaging, custom-built tractor-trailer mobile workshops allow students to be able to have hands-on experiences with high-demand technical professions.

IX. Lunch Break

Resume at 12:45 pm

X. Wyoming Community Development Authority Presenters: Scott Hoversland

Scott Hoversland provided a presentation on the mission of the Wyoming Community Development Authority. Scott shared the loan options and programs that are offered to Wyoming Citizens. He provided statistics on the affordability of home ownership as well as the affordability of rental prices across the state. Statewide housing strategic planning is being developed and plans to help mitigate the current housing shortage crisis for affordable units, not just the high cost of homes. He conveyed the point that if we do not have the homes to house people once they get here, we then struggle to support workforce development. 2.4 million dollars of funding has been secured to help cities and counties across the state do studies to help determine a plan on how to go forward in their communities. Wyoming has secured 10 million dollars in ARPA funds to help support housing and to date has used 2 million dollars. Scott made mention of the Harvard Growth Lab study in collaboration with the Wyoming Business Council. Wyoming is 1 of 3 states that do not currently have a statewide housing trust fund.

XI. Micro Credential Project Update Presenters: Laurel Ballard

Laurel Ballard presented the latest statistics on teachers and students earning micro-credentials. In February of 2022, 40 teachers participated & 29 teachers earned at least one micro-credential, 80 micro-credentials were earned, and four educators were on track to complete all 17 micro-credentials. In January of 2024, 133 teachers participated & 56 teachers earned at least one micro-credential, 563 micro-credentials were earned, and 24 educators completed all 17 micro-credentials. Laurel shared the satisfaction of the program from teachers and students retrieved from surveys which showed growth in some areas of satisfaction. Lastly, Laurel presented information about the Wyoming Department of Education and Department of Workforce Services WIP Partnership.

XII. Media Training Presenters: Ivy Castleberry

Ivy Castleberry presented skills and parameters on best practices while engaging with the media. Ivy also shared how to convey the mission of the council while putting your best foot forward.

III. Break

Resume at 3:05 pm



XIV. Next Gen - What's Next for Wyoming Presenters: John Melville

John Melville provided updates on the current Next Gen partnerships and the upcoming Next Gen Academy. Wyoming currently has eight partnerships that include, three in manufacturing, three in healthcare, one in hospitality, and one in construction. A 9th partnership will be coming online by the end of February and a 10th and 11th partnership is also currently being developed. Seven regions of Wyoming are being represented through these partnerships. Several new connections have been made thanks in part to support from several council members and others helping to facilitate. Support through career awareness is utilized to empower youth and adults to join industries and careers experiencing growth. Additional support has been provided to connect partnerships to grants and state resources as needed. Wyoming has been essential in developing a rural guidance document that has provided national visibility. John continues to help recruit or replace conveners as needed and provide Next Gen 101's. Work is underway to plan the next academy that will take place on April 25, 2024.

XV. Spending Plan and Expenditures Presenter: Jennifer Cassidy

Jennifer Cassidy provided expenditures for November and December of 2023 and January of 2024. 100% of the funds from the 2021 grant year have been spent with \$2 remaining. As of the end of the month of January 2024, there was a total of \$824,031 remaining. The amount remaining for the 2022 grant year was \$347,615 and the amount remaining for the 2023 grant year was \$476,413. Jennifer presented the current project expenditures that include \$200,00 budgeted for Microcredentialing from the Department of Education with \$75,953.91 remaining. Strategic planning budget of \$24,195 with \$8,525 remaining. Southwest Wyoming Manufacturing Partnership budget of \$15,000 with \$15,00 remaining. MIS funding of \$500,000 with \$250,000 remaining. Workforce center chairs budget of \$14,035 with \$8,093 remaining. Lastly, Lift Wyoming with a budget of \$21,450 with \$21,450 remaining.

Motion to approve the Spending Plan and Expenditures

Danny Burau moved to approve and Ron Wild seconded a motion to approve the spending plan and expenditures. The motion carried.

Local budget expenditures and WIOA funding for grant years 2021 and 2022 have been 100% spent. The 2023 grant year has expended 28.12% of the \$4,965,349 budget with \$3,569,245 remaining.

XVI. Next Gen Sector Partnership Academy Funding Request Presenter: Jennifer Wilch

The Strategic Performance and Finance Committee approved and moved the Next Gen Academy budget of up to \$15,000 to the committee as a whole.

Motion to approve Next Gen Sector Partnership Academy Budget

Eric Trowbridge moved to approve and Fred Baldwin seconded a motion to approve the budget. The motion carried.



XVII. Committee Breakouts

Resume at 3:50 pm

XVIII. Committee Updates

A. Communications & Community Relations

Presenter: Danny Burau

Danny Burau provided an update about the upcoming state plan and the work being done to ensure the goals of the committee align with Workforce Services and the goals in the state plan. Further collaboration is being done alongside workforce centers to obtain items for outreach. The committee is working to brand the Workforce Development Council for additional outreach. On February 2, 2024, the state plan will be posted for public comment and the council will need to also review and provide their comments. There are current goals in place that are broad enough to encompass the entire workforce system and further incorporate programs such as WIOA, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Adult Education, as well as the adult and youth dislocated workers.

B. Next Generation Sector Partnerships & Career Pathways

Presenter: Larry Fodor

Larry Fodor provided an update about the upcoming Next Gen Academy that will take place on April 25, at 8:30 am. On April 24, a tour will be provided at the Manufacturing Facility at Laramie County Community College, in addition to a tour of the capital building and the Herschler building.

C. Strategic Performance & Finance

No Updates to provide at this time.

XIX. Public Comment

No comments were brought forward for public comment.

XX. Adjourn

Chairman Fabian Lobera motioned to adjourn Danny Burau seconded. The meeting adjourned at 4:10 pm.