

Sonoma County Workforce Investment Board

Minutes of November 18, 2020

- Members Present:** Ananda Sweet, Patrick Harper for Ed Barr, Robin Bartholow, Ethan Brown, Erin Carlson*, Judy Coffey, Sara Cummings, Keith Dias, Nancy Emanuele, Brandy Evans, Steve Herrington, Steve Herron, Kristina Holloway*, Roy Hurd, Stephen Jackson, Judy James, Scott Kincaid, Chris Knerr, John McEntagart, Michael Pickens*, David Tam, Eliot Enriquez for Pedro Toledo, David Wayte, and Audra Verrier
- Absent:** Ed Barr, Susan Cooper, Brad Davis, Paul Duranczyk, Anita Maldonado, George Steffensen, and Pedro Toledo
- Additional Attendees:** Becky Sandoval
- Staff:** Katie Greaves, Shaydra Ennis, Sharona Elfus-Schatzkin, Amanda Gayda Jessica Taylor, Manuel Benitez, Lupe Castaneda, Lonje Deschamps, Pedro Guevara, Tiffany Hill, Sarah Lewis-Crow, Michelle Revecho, Katie Stohlmann, Antonio Vigil, and Judy Oates

***Attendees with asterisks arrived late or departed early.**

I. Introductions and Public Comment

Tobias Weare, Clients Rights Advocate at California State Council on Development Disabilities shared October was National Disability Month. Now is a tough time for their clients as many of them cannot even use the zoom platform. He shared a link to a flier with recommendations to fight isolation among people with disabilities.

<https://scdd.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/33/2020/06/Poster.jpg>

Katie shared her response to the request for public comment from the Board of Supervisors that links the WIB to the board's strategic planning process.

While I very much support the pillars already highlighted, I was surprised none of the pillars included addressing the overall livability of Sonoma County. Homelessness is addressed in 'Healthy and Safe Communities' but nothing that I saw looks at our local

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dependency on low-wage jobs plus our high cost-of-living and the housing crisis. I believe these are just some of the factors we've seen in our data around workforce and economic vulnerabilities. I recommended this as an additional pillar to add and also suggested they reach out to the WIB and EDB for their input on the matter. When I looked at Napa County they had something similar to what I am thinking of which they called 'Livable Economy for All' which I think we can expand on.

II. Approve Minutes of September 10, 2020

The committee reviewed the minutes of September 10, 2020.

Motion to approve the September 10, 2020 minutes: Steve Herron /s/ Keith Dias. All approved (Ananda Sweet, Robert Austin for Ed Barr, Robin Bartholow, Ethan Brown, Kristyn Byrne, Erin Carlson, Judy Coffey, Susan Cooper, Sara Cummings, Brad Davis, Keith Dias, Paul Duranczyk, Nancy Emanuele, John McEntagart, Brandy Evans, Steve Herrington, Steve Herron, Kristina Holloway, Roy Hurd Stephen Jackson, Judy James, Scott Kincaid, Anita Maldonado, George Steffensen, David Tam, Eliot Enriquez for Pedro Toledo, David Wayte, and Audra Verrier). There were no “nay” votes. George Steffensen, John McEntagart, and Michael Pickens abstained. The motion carried.

III. Announcements

The 2021 WIB meeting calendar is included as part of the packet. The meetings will continue to be the second Wednesday of every other month.

IV. Success Story

Jessica share the story of a client who was working on getting a Class A driver license after 10 years of experience with a Class B license. Three days after he started working with Job Link David's Demolition contacted us looking for someone with Class A and B licenses. We provided the client with an updated resume and referred him for an interview. He was offered a full-time job starting at \$26 per hour, moving to \$30 per hour after he completes his training. This is even the ideal schedule he was looking for –

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Monday through Friday with some Saturdays. *This client landed his perfect job 11 days from the first day he first met with us!*

V. Networking / Member Update

WIB Members broke into smaller groups to discuss challenges and trends they are seeing as we move into recovery. The groups reported out highlights of their conversations.

Business

- The long term nature of the pandemic has will have effects on the workforce going into 2021. These issues can be seen in the community, child care, and working mothers and fathers home schooling children. Businesses are facing budgetary issues as they do not know when it will end.
- Employers are still hiring but are having trouble finding employees as people are not looking for employment as much as usual.
- Department of Rehabilitation is trying to hire new staff locally and finding applicants want to work remotely from other areas. Some staff have requested permission to leave area and retain their positions.

Labor

- Labor is going into its typical season slow down right now.
- Apprenticeships are lagging as not everything can be taught remotely to people at home.
- The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) recognizes we are heading into a time of giving and those essential and working should be thankful and give back when they can. The union and crew are providing meals to needy families for Thanksgiving and Christmas to do something great in a not so great time.
- Some construction businesses are still hiring but mostly at journeyman levels.
- North Bay Job Corps is continuing to work on training high school youth online.

Healthcare

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- Hospitals have moved to tele-health with video appointments which has become popular and seems to be working well.

Hospitality

Hospitality has been hit the most by COVID and there is worry it get worse as it gets colder and there is no inside dining.

Non-Profit

- Job Corps offers training and support in training for jobs in culinary, construction and business service fields in a virtual environment.
- Homeless continues to be a challenge for those without opportunities for work.

Education

- Enrollment is down 18% at the junior college.
- Closed schools cause education issues for students and teachers. Parents are also affected as they take time from their jobs to work with their kids to do distance learning.
- Empire College has transitioned well to distance learning and has a high demand for their law graduates.
- Empire College recently had a virtual graduation for students graduating from their medical field classes.
- Adult education teachers are teaching virtually and their students are rising to the occasion. We know it is going well as adults do not show up if they are not getting what they need from classes - and they are showing up.

VII. Job Link Operations

- Sharona reported traffic in the office is light but recently received a report from Cal Jobs that 400 people have used our website to access their services.
- In October we had 22 people attend Job Link's online resume, cover letter, and interview workshops.
- Sharona is working with partners on how to cover the digital divide for people who

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do not have access to computers or hot spots. She wants to find a way to get employers or business to provide hot spot services for our clients who do not have internet at their homes. She asked WIB members to reach out to her if they have any ideas on this to share with her.

- Jessica noted the dashboard shows higher than normal numbers of enrolled WIOA clients. This is due to the additional people that were served by our recent COVID grant.
- Two of our long-term Job Link Career Counselors have retired.
- As of the beginning of November Job Link had 87 active enrolled cases where clients work one-on-one with a counselor. Seven of these clients came from the Prison to Employment program.
- Job Link has 187 follow-up cases that have finished their primary services and staff now check in with those clients periodically to see if they need any additional support.

Business Services:

- Antonio Virgil is returning to Employment & Training to lead the Business Services Team after working at Health Services as a contact tracer for five months.
- There will be an Employer Spotlight on Sutter Hospital on January 19. Fliers with more information will be coming out soon.
- Today is Jessica Taylor's last WIB meeting. She shared her appreciation of her time working with this group and was told she would be missed.

Regional Updates

- Katie share that the Sonoma County WIB works with two regional partners - Solano Workforce Board and Workforce Alliance North Bay (made up of Lake, Mendocino, Marin and Napa counties) to manage regional grants and meet at least monthly. Sonoma is the fiscal agent for these grants. Examples of these grants are.
 - Funds for investment in bolstering our digital services such as website enhancements in each region for virtual services.

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- Funds for dislocated workers in response to COVID and other disasters.
- The SB1 is a grant related to transportation infrastructure. The Trade Introduction Program (TIP) is waiting for the final information from the state to enact this grant. When it starts we will partner with TIP on this program.

Other projects the WIBs are working on together include the following.

- Requirement to update our local and regional workforce plans by April of next year. Staff will bring previous plans and the requirements for the new plans to the January meeting so we can begin stakeholder analysis and decide how to guide our work.
- Working to find a way to align the local workforce system with surge occupations such as contact tracers that occur suddenly.

Ananda thanked Katie and her team for their work dealing with changing restrictions due to COVID, while getting pulled in different directions due to local crises as county workers. What you accomplish is very impressive and thank you for your hard work.

VIII. Data Presentation on Workforce and Economy

Katie led the group through a labor data review that included information through the end of June 2020. Highlights included the following.

- Sonoma County's unemployment is lower than Napa and Solano.
- Average wages in Sonoma are lower than Napa and Solano.
- The cost of living index shows we have a wage structure that does not support the cost of living in Sonoma. This is a structural issue for our economy.
- Employment has grown for over 5 years in Sonoma County until COVID happened.
- 36,000 people are employed in Healthcare and Social Assistance in Sonoma County and there is still a high demand for these positions.
- Top six needed job in Healthcare and Social Assistance are:
 - Personal Care Aides
 - Registered Nurses

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- Home Health Aides
- Nursing Assistants
- Medical Assistants
- Medical Secretary/Administrative Assistants
- The Jobs EQ reporting program she used to prepare this report can be used to do reports providing deeper dives into information for grant proposals, and even down to the worker level to assist someone entering the field.

IX. COVID & Impacts on Workforce

Ananda introduced the panel for the Healthcare and Social Assistance panel discussion.

- Connie Smith, Executive Director, EmpRes Post Acute Health and Rehabilitation
- Dr. Jason Cunningham, CEO, West County Health Centers
- Victoria Keliioomaluu, Human Resources Manager, St. Joseph Health
- D'Arcy Richardson, RN, PHN, CNS, MSN, Director of Nursing, COVID Section, Sonoma County Dept of Health Services

Q. Panel members were asked to talk about their organizations and how they have been impacted by COVID.

Dr. Jason Cunningham, West County Health Centers

Dr. Cunningham has been a family physician for Community Health for 16 years. The mission of West County Health Centers is to serve patients regardless of their ability to pay and who they are which provides unique opportunities and unique struggles. They have 200 employees and the majority of their income come from the 80% paid by insurance for patients come into the offices for service. COVID changed their structure and now telehealth is allowable for patients and for billing their insurance. Their site made the transition to staff working from home and seeing clients online in about a week and a half.

Connie Smith, EmpRes Post Acute Health and Rehabilitation

Connie has been with EmpRes Post Acute Health and Rehabilitation for five years and worked as healthcare administrator for over 30 years. This is a 96 bed 24-hour skilled

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nursing facility. Sixteen of the nineteen healthcare facilities in Sonoma County had outbreaks of COVID During July/August. Her facility had one of the larger outbreaks with 80% of patients and 20% of staff testing positive. The emergency plan at the time was to have registry staff coverage if there was ever need, but found out that registries were not sending staff to facilities with COVID. Her corporation had to fly in nine caregivers from the state of Washington at a cost of \$250,000 for those weeks extra help was needed. Most of the patients and staff were asymptomatic but staff had to be off work for the 14-day quarantine which was very challenging.

D’Arcy Richardson, County Dept of Health Services

I came to the county at the beginning of COVID. The experience for Public Health has been challenging. At the start of the emergency we only had six communicable disease nurses in to manage the entire outbreak for the county. We had to repurpose nurses from other departments and repurpose staff who were not health professions do health work in order to organize the response, determine how to collect data, and how to process that data. We used staff from temporary agencies, reassigned local staff, state reassigned staff, and new hires to do work on a disease we are just learning about. This work is emotional draining as they deal with the tragedies people and their families are facing. We now have 100 positions we did not have when this started.

Victoria Keliioomaluu, St. Joseph Health

St. Joseph has five hospitals in Norther California and COVID impacted them on day one when their Napa site received one of the first patients off the cruise ship. From that day forward the world changed. Key work for this time is adaptability, agility, and ability to continue reaching out to the community, service the underserved, be available and present to clients, and do it all in a different way. We had to work close with the CDC and county officials while ensuring we had the most up to date information regarding protective measures. We taught caregivers how to deliver informed care in COVID situations. All of the people in the healthcare industry are key to getting to the other side of this. The paradigm shift for healthcare is that people are afraid to seek healthcare and as a result are

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more ill when they do come in as they have delayed their healthcare visits. We want them to come in when they need to.

Q. Are there other things we should understand about how you have to operate and what you need?

Connie Smith, EmpRes Post Acute Health and Rehabilitation

COVID has changed healthcare in skilled nursing facilities. It is a challenge for staff to feel satisfaction in their work as they no longer get to provide social and fun activities to the seniors. Now it is all about saving rather than enhancing lives. This is not as fulfilling or motivating for staff. Six percent of their staff are on leave of absences due to their child care issues and distance learning needs for their children so they can be home to help with online learning.

Victoria Keliioomaluu, St. Joseph Health

Hospitals are having the same issues. It is about what support services you have for your caregivers to be able to retain them. We are enhancing their well-being services for caregivers and providing leaves of absences for taking care of their children or someone unable to take care of themselves. We expect there will be some turnover due to the everchanging needs. One thing we have noted is that many healthcare workers worked in two locations before COVID and are now dropping their per diem second job and only doing the one position. Right now we are looking for creative ways at sourcing candidates.

Dr. Jason Cunningham, West County Health Centers

There is worry about stress and burn out while balancing work and seeing the effects of COVID. We are experiencing an increase in mental health requests in the call centers. He agrees that adaptability is key and staff need to learn change management as well as become constant learners. Eighty percent of our staff are now working from home. COVID has changed us organizationally.

D'Arcy Richardson, County Dept of Health Services

Training needs are very different with COVID. It is not just medical it is the psycho-social

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issues that go with it. We have increased the amount of social service workers we have to serve clients to keep them healthy in isolation or quarantine. We are also training people who are not health professionals - and were not looking to be health professions - to do what needs to be done. We are problem solving while dealing with a sheer volume we have not seen before.

Q. What are changes to the health care that will not be for just during COVID? What long term changes that are happening?

Dr. Jason Cunningham, West County Health Centers

COVID has forced a rapid transition from a volume-based transaction to value-based transaction. We are starting to work on keeping people out of the hospital and less sick. We are looking to use nurse educators for how to eat and exercise which was not offered before. Living in an aging population we need to teach people to manage their disease instead of having the system benefit from disease. Things that were not valued before are becoming valued with these changes.

Connie Smith, EmpRes Post Acute Health and Rehabilitation

One of the new requirements is that we have RN infection specialist for skilled nursing facilities which will provide new job opportunities. They are doing a lot of new things doing for infection control so people can visit patients, such as outdoor visits, using plexiglass, masks, and infection control systems.

Victoria Kelihoomalua, St. Joseph Health

We are learning from pandemic and it is bringing us to the next era of healthcare. There is a fear factor of healthcare jobs. We need to continue to do virtual learning platforms to communicate that following proper procedures and using proper equipment means healthcare has not changed and that there are still career opportunities. We are willing to explore a new world of technology and learning.

D'Arcy Richardson, County Dept of Health Services

There are 5 areas that are opportunities as well as challenges.

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Health Equity - Issues of equity as a barrier and threat to good health.

Systems and Technology - Systems need to be more robust to help us respond to crises in the future.

Communications – We have heard the information about staying home and wearing mask, we need a way to do more robust behavior change.

Partnerships - Strengthen those partner relationships for dealing with pandemic, fire or struggles.

Preparedness – This will not be the last pandemic we will face. Think about logistics and positions as we prepare and go forward.

Q. Tell us the main thing you need right now and what we should keep an eye on regarding your workforce needs.

D’Arcy Richardson, County Dept of Health Services

- What we need now is bilingual and bicultural staff. People who live and know our communities, relate, and know how to help people problem solve in a culturally appropriate way. We are looking for the people who will be the case investigators, resource people, and contact tracers who will help our clients through an epidemic on an individual level and community level.
- More nurses.
- People who will go out to the community and do the testing.

Connie Smith, EmpRes Post Acute Health and Rehabilitation

- We used to depend on Red Cross for certification for nursing assistants and they are no longer running those classes so we don’t have a pool of new CNAs ready to start. Skilled nursing facilities can’t be training clinical CNA students or nursing students during a pandemic – training has to happen outside the building. Need a better idea to meet clinical training for certification programs so we can bring qualified personnel on staff.
- Licensed nurses.
- Nineteen healthcare facilities are looking for infection prevention certified nurse

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positions.

Victoria Keliioomalu, St. Joseph Health

- Clinical training professionals.
- Nurses.
- Communication so that all are aware we are hiring. Healthcare is a great career to support your community and is rewarding. We also provide in house training for non-technical roles.

Dr. Jason Cunningham, West County Health Centers

Echo all the needs previously mentioned. We need staff all across the board - physicians, nurses, medical assistance, front office, data, communications, human resources. There is opportunity for support around resilience to make sure our workforce can handle stressful conditions. Social equity is needed for stigma around certain diseases and addictions. We need more soft skills and emotional intelligence.

At this time Ananda allowed for questions from WIB members.

Q. The one thing needed for all these needs is funding. The country has historically responded to a threat with funding. Would it be reasonable to expect cooperation from the government to provide funding on a federal or state level in a fairly massive way to address this crisis and prepare for future crisis? Should the WIB be looking for grants to help training workers.

D'Arcy Richardson, County Dept of Health Services

Yes, I hope so. We expect to see some level of funding with the recent changes in leadership.

Connie Smith, EmpRes Post Acute Health and Rehabilitation

We hope a new administration will have more coordination. There are so many regulatory agencies not agreeing with each other at the beginning of COVID. We are hoping for more congruent method.

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Q. Do you see a need for additional hiring for the deployment of the vaccine – or is the current infrastructure adequate?

D’Arcy Richardson, County Dept of Health Services

What we have is not adequate, but exactly what will be needed is not clear yet. The first phase will be supplemented by our community partners to get the vaccines out to front line workers. As we get into more widespread vaccinations we will need additional workers to deal with administering, logistics, and data. It will be a massive effort. There is also the issue of communication to ensure everyone will want it.

Katie offered that Job Link may be able to help train prospective staff for vaccine deployment.

Ananda thanked the panelists for joining us today and for all the work they do in our community.

IX. Adjourn 5:01 pm

Next meeting: **January 13, 2021 via Zoom**

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