

**SA: Ready to Work Advisory Board
Employer Engagement Subcommittee
Meeting Minutes
VelocityTX Community Resource Center
1305 E Houston St, San Antonio, TX 78205
Monday, July 10, 2023
1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.**

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jennifer Cantu
Paul Garza
Ben Peavy
Yvette Gomez
Jordan Hooten
Jarvis Moore

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Joseph Garcia
Stephanie Talley
Councilmember Pelaez

STAFF PRESENT:

Amy Contreras, Assistant to the Director, Workforce Development Office
Mary Mills-Nguyen, Advisory Board Staff Liaison
Ana Salazar, Workforce Manager, Workforce Development Office
Cynthia Trevino, Senior Manager Analyst, Workforce Development Office

A. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Jennifer Cantu called the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m. after a quorum was established.

B. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Cantu asked members to review the Employer Engagement Subcommittee Minutes of May 8, 2023. The subcommittee voted unanimously to approve the minutes.

D. INDIVIDUAL ITEMS

1. Ready to Work Program Update

Mr. Ramsey gave an update on Ready to Work programmatic data. Mr. Peavy mentioned that because San Antonio is at a record low unemployment rate, an option is to pivot marketing to emphasize the benefits and resources Ready to Work provides to participants in addition to training and job placement services.

Ms. Cantu asked what efforts can be made to learn from the first year of the program, specifically in the area of streamlining intake and case management. The partner agency representatives provided feedback on their best practices in recruitment, case management, and collaborative strategies with training providers.

2. Presentation on Clinical Research Professional Occupation

Ms. Cantu introduced Mr. Charles Oyesile from TPKR Scientifics to present background information and local data on the Clinical Research Professional occupation being considered for addition to the list of Ready to Work target occupations. His presentation included the high demand for this role, the qualifications required, and the actual work candidates considering becoming a Clinical Research Professional can expect to do.

Ms. Cantu asked whether there are enough local employers ready to hire for this occupation. Mr. Oyesile responded that between medical research entities, military contractors and medical device companies, he is confident that there is sufficient demand locally.

3. Presentation on Child Development Associate Occupation

Ms. Kim Arispe from Family Service Association briefed the Subcommittee members on the Child Development Associate (CDA) occupation generally, how the shortage of CDAs is causing early childhood education providers to close their classrooms, the career pathway to higher-level educator positions, and the pilot program they engaged in to train and employ 18 participants so far in CDA roles.

4. Roundtable Discussion on Proposed New Occupations

The Subcommittee members discussed the presentations given on the two occupations for consideration.

Mr. Peavy asked about the potential talent pipeline for CDAs in the future. Ms. Arispe responded that Family Service has the capacity to team 4 CDA cohorts a year, and that they currently have healthy interest from prospective trainees. She also mentioned that Family Service provides flexibility for students in the format of the class, and also pays for necessary experiential training hours.

Mr. Peavy then asked what relationships Family Service has with local childcare providers. Ms. Arispe responded that Family Service is part of the Workforce Solutions Alamo Consortium, which partners with United Way to provide early childhood education. Mr. Peavy followed up by asking if there is any way to partner with independent childcare centers to raise wages across the board for CDAs. Ms. Arispe responded that targeting HeadStart and Early HeadStart providers might be a good way to do this.

Mr. Lopez with WSA mentioned that there is a deadline in September of 2024 for Texas childcare providers to achieve Texas Rising Star status, or risk losing state subsidies. He emphasized the importance of CDA training programs to the success of early childhood education locally.

Ms. Salazar asked Ms. Arispe to explain what pathways exist locally to connect those with a CDA credential to higher education and higher pay. She responded that Palo Alto and Northwest Vista have established pathway programs to an associate degree in early childhood education, and that TAMUSA also has a bachelor's program attached to their CDA pathway. She also explained the difference between Child Development Associates and "childcare workers", which are positions that don't necessarily require certification and pay less.

5. SA WORX Update

Mr. Mammen from SA WORX provided an update on recent TPM collaboratives in Manufacturing, Healthcare, Finance, Construction, and IT/Cybersecurity. He explained that they are working to focus on expanding work-based learning opportunities.

He also mentioned some concerns within the Education collaborative resulting from a recent poll that reported that 77% of Texas teachers are considering leaving the field. He discussed opportunities to promote upskilling and other training opportunities for incumbent teachers.

D. STAFF MEMBER COMMENTS

Ms. Salazar briefed the Subcommittee members on the outcomes of JobFest 2023. There were 879 recorded attendees, and 75 vendors. The attendees' reported industry interests were aligned with what is seen among Ready to Work participants generally.

Upcoming Ready to Work events were also shared with the group.

F. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

No future agenda items.

G. ADJOURN

Meeting adjourned at 2:33 p.m.

APPROVED: