

**SA: Ready to Work Advisory Board
Community Outreach Subcommittee
Meeting Minutes**

Meeting Room at Alamo Colleges District Support Office

2222 N Alamo St., San Antonio TX 78215

Tuesday, October 12, 2021

8:30am - 9:30am

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Yadira Gonzales

Frances Gonzalez

Jason Smith

Jerry Graeber

Co-Chair, Doug McMurry

Co-Chair, Sonia Garza

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Atree Desai

Councilmember Rocha Garcia

STAFF PRESENT:

Christina Ramirez, City Attorney's Office

Amy Contreras, Economic Development Manager

Mary Mills, Advisory Board Staff Liaison

Mike Ramsey, Workforce Development Office Executive Director

A. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. McMurry called the meeting to order at 8:41a.m. after quorum was established.

B. PUBLIC COMMENT

No citizens registered in advance to make public comments.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. McMurry asked members to review Community Outreach Subcommittee meeting minutes of August 24, 2021 and September 28, 2021. Mr. McMurry moved to approve the meeting minutes. Mr. Graeber seconded. The Subcommittee voted unanimously to approve both meetings' minutes.

D. INDIVIDUAL ITEMS

1. Review SA: Ready to Work Target Populations

Mr. McMurry shared with the group that Ruby Trejo is moving out of San Antonio, and contacted him via email to let him know that she can no longer continue to serve on the Subcommittee.

Mr. Ramsey and Ms. Contreras presented on the target populations for SA: Ready to Work, the City of San Antonio's Equity Atlas, and recent demographic data on Train for Jobs SA participants.

Ms. Garza asked whether the target populations listed in the presentation count as requirements for participants entering the program. Mr. Ramsey responded that they are not requirements, but priorities. He elaborated that there is a need to provide clear guidance regarding target populations versus requirements.

Ms. Gonzales asked what requirements or priorities were being considered for employers to potentially partner with for Ready to Work. She recommended implementing a pledge form like the one used by during the "Greater. Safer. Together." campaign. Ms. Contreras responded that it was a good idea to implement a similar strategy.

Ms. Garza suggested that small businesses can be helped by referring their employees and clients into the program for training and upskilling. She mentioned the example of independent physicians referring their employees and patients to the program.

Mr. Graeber expressed his desire would that target populations listed in the presentation to be considered as a starting point, and that they could be flexible in the future. He asked whether the program could expand the eligibility requirements to make the program accessible to more populations. Mr. Ramsey responded that we will evaluate the eligibility criteria from year to year.

Mr. Graeber suggested that if there are any unused program funds at the end of the first year, that the requirements could be made less stringent, to allow more people to qualify. Ms. Contreras mentioned that the budget for Ready to Work will need to be approved by City Council on a yearly basis, and that the City could adjust the eligibility requirements at that time.

Ms. Gonzalez relayed comments from Frances Gonzalez, suggesting that the Workforce Development Office team should include the income eligibility amount as an hourly wage to make it easier for residents to see if they qualify (rather than annual income). Further, the team should take into consideration the minimum hourly pay required to afford basic housing in San Antonio (\$19/hour) in setting these requirements.

Ms. Garza asked how eligibility requirements for participants will be verified during the intake process. Mr. Ramsey replied that clear expectations will need to be made to the intake and case management agencies, as they will be responsible for ensuring clients are eligible.

Ms. Ramirez added that the verification of client information will rely on some self-attestation from clients. She suggested that some consequences be put in place for residents who do not

provide accurate information, like potentially barring residents from participating if they willingly give false information.

Mr. McMurry mentioned that he had recently been in a meeting with COPS/Metro, where their membership gave guidance on not prioritizing college degrees too much over certificate programs. He then asked whether the current plan to place 60% of Ready to Work clients in college programs and 40% in vocational training was informed by public survey results from San Antonio residents. Mr. Ramsey confirmed that the allocation was in line with survey results that the Workforce team received. He also added that while both college degrees and vocational certifications are valuable, that higher education levels are correlated with higher employee salaries long-term.

Mr. Smith asked whether the implementation plan for Ready to Work assumes that a percentage of clients will remain in the program from one year to the next. Mr. Ramsey confirmed this to be true.

Mr. McMurry asked in response to viewing the City's Equity maps whether the Marketing RFP referred to the Equity Atlas, and whether the selected agency will be encouraged to make use of that data. Ms. Contreras responded that the RFP language includes mention of the Equity Atlas.

Mr. Graeber asked whether SA: Ready to Work will only be available for San Antonio residents. Ms. Contreras responded in the affirmative, based on the ballot proposition approved.

In response to reviewing the Train for Jobs SA demographic data, Ms. Gonzalez suggested that white participants should also be listed.

Mr. Graeber asked how Train for Jobs SA tracks homeless participants in terms of their associated Equity Matrix Score. Ms. Contreras responded that participants have the option to list homeless agencies as their address, and that it is difficult to track over time, as such as participants may be transient.

2. Discuss SA: Ready to Work Client Personas

Mr. Ramsey and Ms. Contreras presented the initial persona list that the Workforce team developed in collaboration with CALCO.

Ms. Gonzales suggested that residents over age 60 be included in the list of personas.

Mr. Smith mentioned that he thought this list of personas was quite broad, and asked whether it will be shortened in the final version. Ms. Contreras responded that this list is a starting point.

Ms. Gonzalez suggested that in addition to developing personas, the selected marketing agency arrange focus groups with residents to develop the marketing, and leverage VIA's market testing.

Mr. McMurry asked whether a request could be made for the marketing agency to perform focus groups. Ms. Contreras responded that focus groups were an example strategy included in the RFP.

Mr. Smith asked whether the RFP included language on the various barriers that San Antonio residents face, and Ms. Contreras responded that they were.

Ms. Gonzales said that marketing for IT positions should be mindful of the fact that the IT industry is quite large, and that there are a large number of job seekers in that field who already have entry-level IT certifications but who are struggling to gain employment. She suggested that marketing for IT be targeted towards mid- and higher-level certificate programs to help those already in the field be more competitive.

Mr. Graeber asked what SA: Ready to Work will be doing to help residents expunge their criminal records. Ms. Contreras mentioned that emergency funding is being offered for this service, and that case management agencies will be asked offer a referral for this service if applicable.

Ms. Garza asked whether thought has been put into providing wraparound services and case management in Spanish through Ready to Work. Ms. Contreras responded that the awarded agencies will provide those services for Ready to Work, and the Train for Jobs program provides language assistance currently.

Mr. Graeber asked whether Ready to Work participants will be able to get assistance with paying off their past student loans, as this was an example barrier included in the personas. Ms. Contreras responded that while the program will not pay student loans outright, that emergency funding will be available for participants to help with their day-to-day expenses, so that they may focus on repaying their loans.

Mr. Smith asked whether these personas going to be incorporated into the work the marketing agency will do. Ms. Contreras responded that the Workforce team will provide them as examples for the agency to use, but that they will use their own expertise to develop a marketing framework.

Ms. Garza suggested that a column be added to the persona chart to include referral into the program.

E. STAFF MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. McMurry posed the suggestion to the Subcommittee members to reduce the meeting cadence from twice monthly to once monthly. Upon receiving positive feedback from the members, Mr. McMurry motioned to change the schedule to once monthly. Mr. Smith seconded.

Mr. Graeber asked what the role and involvement of the Community Outreach Subcommittee will be when the marketing agency for Ready to Work is selected. Mr. Ramsey responded that the agency staff will be required to attend the Subcommittee meetings and work closely with the members while developing their strategy.

