

**SA: Ready to Work Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, October 28, 2021
1:00pm - 3:00pm**

**Council B Session Room
Municipal Plaza
114 W Commerce St.
San Antonio, TX 78205**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sonia Garza
Peter John Holt
Ben Peavy
Rosa Santana
Chair, Jerry Graeber
Vice Chair, Doug McMurry
Councilmember Adriana Rocha Garcia
Councilmember Manny Pelaez

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Daphene Carson
Emily Spurlock

STAFF PRESENT:

Alejandra Lopez, Assistant City Manager
Christina Ramirez, City Attorney's Office
Amy Contreras, Economic Development Manager
Mary Mills, Advisory Board Staff Liaison
Mike Ramsey, Workforce Development Office Executive Director
Ana Ruiz-Salazar, Workforce Development Manager
Lori Zamora, Workforce Development Manager
Rosalie Nino, Senior Admin Assistant for Workforce Development Dept.

A. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Graeber called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. after quorum was established.

B. PUBLIC COMMENT

No citizens registered in advance to make public comments.

C. REMARKS FROM ROSA SANTANA

Mr. Graeber requested to move Ms. Santana's items to the beginning of the meeting due. Ms. Santana is the chair of the Employer Engagement Subcommittee, which has 4 members from this Board and she is seeking 5 additional members. The subcommittee will have its first meeting on November 3rd at 9:00am, and will be discussing the recruitment and selection process to represent the program's target industries. Meeting dates have been confirmed.

Mr. McMurry mentioned that ACG member employers may like to serve on the Subcommittee, and that he would pass along the information.

Mr. Ramsey said that Ms. Matta-Barrera and SA WORX are assisting with the Employer Engagement Subcommittee. One of the strategies they helped develop was an employer pledge. While not every employer can be on the Subcommittee, every employer in the community can pledge its commitment to the program. The employer pledge offers several advantages:

1. Commitment to a level of engagement that we need in order to properly inform and align this program to hiring needs.
2. Positive momentum to create "employer champions."
3. It creates opportunity to help frame our message.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia said she is sure the Mayor can help promote the pledge and that the Board should engage the chambers to help too.

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Graeber asked members to review Advisory Board meeting minutes of September 23rd, 2021. Mr. Peavy asked for revision of minutes to include the phrase "HR and Recruiting." Mr. McMurry moved to approve the meeting minutes. Mr. Peavy seconded. The Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes.

E. INDIVIDUAL ITEMS

1. SA: Ready to Work Updates and RFP Updates

Mr. Ramsey welcomed Dr. Evans, who was appointed to the Advisory Board last week by City Council. Dr. Evans expressed his excitement to join the team. Mr. Ramsey mentioned that the Board is now filled with the addition of Dr. Evans as the Higher Education representative, so the team will continue rolling the program out in a very efficient manner.

Mr. Ramsey announced that dates need to be solidified for November and December meetings, with an aggressive timeline to review the Implementation RFP plans.

Mr. Ramsey mentioned updates with respect to the Train for Jobs SA program, including that the City has posted a dashboard that will be refreshed every two weeks, and that enrollment for the program will stop at the end of December (when enrollment into the Ready to Work program will begin).

Dr. Evans asked whether the Train for Jobs SA program is hitting its targets, and recommended including up/down arrows on the dashboard to relay such information. Mr. Holt asked if the dashboard will stay focused on Train for Jobs SA, or if there will be a Ready to Work dashboard. Mr. Ramsey said a new dashboard will be created for Ready to Work.

On Saturday, October 30th the Workforce Development Office is hosting a job fair for Train for Jobs participants at the City's Pre-K 4 SA West Center and there are currently 15 confirmed employers. 125 TfJSA participants are pre-registered for the event. Councilmember Pelaez noticed the absence of organizations like CPS, SAWS, and the County. Mr. Ramsey confirmed the need to include such organizations, and noted that WSA and SA WORX helped recruit initial employers to participate.

Mr. Holt said the best practices of job fairs have changed from before the COVID-19 pandemic and recommended that they be separated by job sector/trade. Mr. Peavy suggested that recruiting and staffing groups should give us ideas on what hiring events should look like. Mr. Ramsey agreed. Mr. McMurry offered to help develop a job fair for the construction trades.

On Thursday, November 4th the Workforce Development Office will participate in a job fair called Red, White, and You in partnership with WSA with over 500 employers pre-registered. Train for Jobs participants are invited to participate in the event.

Mr. Ramsey updated the Board on the RFPs, mentioning that the team has aggressive timelines for them to be evaluated, and recommended to City Council. The Marketing and Outreach RFP was released on Oct 12th and the proposals are due on Nov 29th. The Program Evaluation RFP was released on Oct 18th and proposals are due Dec 6th. Mr. Peavy asked what the intent of the Evaluation RFP is. Mr. Ramsey said that evaluation is required to tell us how the program is doing, and that it is only related to the Ready to Work program.

Mr. Holt asked to be reminded of the process for awarding the RFPs. Ms. Lopez responded with the timeline, which includes scoring, respondent interviews and presenting to City Council.

Ms. Santana referenced the Train for Jobs SA dashboard and the accountability of workforce agencies to place participants. Mr. Ramsey agreed and expressed that the employer pledge is the first step towards making relationships with local employers better. Ms. Garza said that the dashboard is great, but intake agencies need to do their work to make sure trainees are eligible for jobs (drug tests, background checks, etc.) and can be assisted with removing employment barriers.

Mr. Holt stated that it should be a give and take relationship between trainers and employers, and that they have to meet in the middle. An example would be making concessions on background checks. He would like to request the demographic data on applicants which they can in turn give to the employers to let them know how to connect with the participants. Ms. Ramirez replied that the City cannot share participant information.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked if Train for Jobs applications are available in Spanish. Ms. Lopez replied that the Train for Jobs SA partner agencies can assist Spanish-speakers. Ms. Santana asked if the City should get approval from participants to share their Ready to Work data. Ms. Ramirez replied that provisions in the contracts show that all data belongs to the City, but that permission can be explicitly requested from participants to share in the future.

Mr. Peavy suggested reskilling and micro-skilling for those currently in the workforce for changing jobs, while also hiring new entry-level workers. Ms. Garza replied that there are a lot of different medical sub-industries that require certain certificates, so the employer should make these options known so they can train them while working in their current field. Dr. Evans mentioned that benefits and quality childcare are more than important than ever. Mr. Graeber replied that it is true that benefits are the key to attracting hires.

Mr. Graeber started the discussion for the November 18th meeting, and it was ultimately decided that a Doodle poll would be sent out for 3-5 pm or the morning of the 19th.

2. Target Occupations

Mr. Ramsey introduced Ms. Matta-Barrera from SA WORX to present the research and analysis of the current target occupation list as these were previously approved by the Board.

Ms. Matta-Barrera presented information about what opportunities are available in various industries. Finance saw a decrease in the demand for customer service reps. Ms. Garza suggested that it is important to advertise the take-home pay and not just the salary including benefits. Mr. Ramsey noted that \$15/hour may be hard for small businesses to meet but that some fast-food restaurants are now offering \$15.

Ms. Garza asked how we are offsetting the fear for small businesses through this program. Mr. Ramsey replied agreed that we have to help alleviate fear of small businesses, and mentioned that apprenticeships are great for small companies. Ms. Matta-Barrera said it's important to have small business on the Employer Engagement Subcommittee.

Mr. Holt moved to keep the target occupations as they currently stand, and Mr. McMurry seconded. The Board voted unanimously to approve the target occupations.

4. Community Outreach Subcommittee Work Update

Ms. Garza gave a quick update on the last subcommittee meeting. The subcommittee is losing Ruby Trejo as a member as she is moving out of the area, and they are looking to fill that spot soon. The meeting cadence has moved from every 2 weeks to monthly.

F. STAFF MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Ramsey reiterated the City is actively in employer engagement mode right now, and making the circuits to the various chambers of commerce. The Mayor, the City Manager, and Mr. Ramsey have been promoting the program, and Mr. Ramsey asked that the Board members join in the efforts.

Ms. Santana asked what the process is for referring employers to do the pledge. Mr. Ramsey shared the QR code. Once it is filled out by the employers, SA WORX will be contacting them. Ms. Santana asked if there is a FAQ regarding the QR code pledge. Ms. Matta-Barrera offered to join in on future employer engagement meetings if needed.

G. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Dr. Evans asked if there should be a subcommittee for the Ready to Work training providers. Mr. Holt noted a possible conflict of interest, but. Ms. Lopez said that the City is contracting with case management agencies, not training providers, so a subcommittee would not pose a conflict. Mr. Ramsey and Ms. Lopez agreed that an education and training subcommittee would be helpful. Mr. McMurry said that the City should be collecting a list of training providers. Mr. Graeber agreed.

H. MEETING ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 2:43pm.

APPROVED:
