

**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 November 9, 2021
8:30am - 9:30am**

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Atree Desai
Yadira Gonzales
Frances Gonzalez
Jason Smith
Jerry Graeber
Co-Chair, Doug McMurry
Councilmember Rocha Garcia

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Co-Chair, Sonia Garza

STAFF PRESENT:

Christina Ramirez, City Attorney's Office
Amy Contreras, WDO Assistant to the Director
Mary Mills, WDO Advisory Board Staff Liaison

A. CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Doug McMurry called the meeting to order at 8:34a.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 October 12, 2021. Ms. Gonzalez stated page 2 should say Sonia Garza instead of Francis Gonzalez. Next page about the 60/40 allotment is flipped. It should be 60 for training and 40 for college. Jerry Graeber moved to approve the meeting minutes. Francis Gonzalez seconded. The Subcommittee voted unanimously to approve meeting minutes. Ms. Gonzalez requested that a running tally of Committee and WDO action items be placed in the minutes.

D. INDIVIDUAL ITEMS

1. Discussion on SA: Ready to Work Employer Pledge

Ms. Contreras welcomed the committee and stated that Michael Ramsey is in a meeting right now with the Mayor and the City Manager.

Mr. McMurry asked if there is a formal introduction to the employer pledge.

Ms. Contreras mentioned that the introduction for the employee pledge is included in the pledge link that was developed with the assistance of Yadira with Greater SATX. The pledge offers employers easy engagement opportunities with various choices. An employer is not required to do all the things listed but have the opportunity to commit to different actions, such as identify training programs, assign HR staff spend some time with program case managing agencies to identify the needs for interviews, participate on the Employer Engagement Committee, or in sector-based roundtables, etc. Businesses should offer at least some positions with starting pay at least \$15/hour but we are not requiring that all positions pay \$15/ hour.

Ms. Contreras also mentioned that the SA: Ready to Work Advisory Board has 4 members representing employers, and the Employer Engagement Subcommittee is limited to 9 people. The Employer Engagement Subcommittee will identify what trainings would benefit businesses and will create industry sector meetings to allow for additional opportunities for employers that want to be involved. There is an opportunity for the Community Outreach Subcommittee to engage employers and other community members as well.

Mr. McMurry congratulated on helping with this piece and said the question now is that from a marketing and outreach standpoint, what can this Subcommittee do to help? Ms. Contreras requested that Subcommittee members help staff help them to frame the message on how to share the pledge. Mr. McMurry said he didn't want to overstep and asked if we can start promoting now. Ms. Contreras said Mike Ramsey has already presented to City Council, so it is available to promote now.

Ms. Gonzalez asked if the pledge has been converted to Spanish and mentioned that some construction executives are Spanish speakers. She said the format needs to be flexible and inclusive. The YWCA is also promoting an employee pledge around job training and asked if there is synergy there and if we can reach out to them.

Yadira Gonzalez said within her company there is a marketing format already in place they have right now and mentioned maybe we can make a pledge seal that we can add to a website for the businesses that promote. Mr. McMurry asked if she can send that over to us so we can use.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked Victoria Shoemaker if the Mayor is going to ask for a rollout. Victoria mentioned an employer asked whether there is going to be a press conference for Ready to Work. Councilmember Rocha Garcia said someone from Toyota asked about it.

Mr. McMurry agreed that we should plan a press conference and Councilmember Rocha Garcia said she will work with Victoria on getting this done.

Ms. Gonzalez asked for clarity about whether employers can help employees sort out other social services that are needed, or help them refer to social service agencies. Ms. Contreras said that the main task for employers will be to get involved early in the process so that they can align job openings with Ready to Work graduates' skill levels. Ms. Gonzalez said that we don't want to lose data, so if people are being helped from this investment, we need to know how we are connected to this other huge investment around the referral system.

Mr. Graeber mentioned the press conference and said that we should invite prominent local companies to make the pledge first so it can be mentioned at the press conference. Mr. Graeber said that we should reach out to construction companies and other associations. Mr. McMurry is actively networking with major companies. Ms. Contreras requested that if the members think of more employers or associations then to please send them to staff to start setting up the press conference.

Ms. Gonzalez said what Mr. Graeber mentioned is very important and that the main companies like SAWS & CPS are hiring contractors so they can ask their contractors to take the pledge as well.

Mr. McMurry said that many years ago, SAISD adopted some language into its contracts to encourage contractors to join their own job training program and said that the City should make this suggestion. Councilmember Rocha Garcia mentioned that a similar strategy is already in process, and it can be discussed with the Subcommittee at a later date.

Mr. Graeber asked if the Board is able to see the data as far as who has pledged. Ms. Gonzales said that SA WORX can share that data.

Ms. Contreras said that EDD's Small Business Office issues a monthly newsletter, and that they have access to all the City vendors. She suggested that we can try to engage them that way.

Mr. McMurry said that with all the work that's being done now, that it's good to know that nothing is sitting idle. He then asked for a reminder on the RFP deadlines. Ms. Contreras said that the Marketing & Outreach RFP closes on November 29th, and that the selected vendor will be presented to City Council in January.

Ms. Gonzalez asked what the Subcommittee members' role is before the Marketing & Outreach selection goes to Council. Mr. McMurry said that ultimately the Advisory Board would give the recommendation on who to select. Ms. Gonzalez asked if someone from the Subcommittee can be present at that Advisory Board meeting. She also asked that the Subcommittee members receive any documents being presented to Council. Ms. Contreras said that that information can be shared.

E. Discuss SA: Ready to Work Intake process and connecting to target populations.

Ms. Contreras told the Subcommittee members that City staff would like to keep them updated on progress with the Ready to Work intake portal. She explained that the City has partnered with Signify Health to build out the portal. The Alamo Area Community Network (AACN) uses the platform so that Ready to Work clients will have easy access to social service referrals. She then explained that there will be three points of entry into the intake process. The first method is to access the Intake Portal via a number of website including WDO's, the second is to access the program through other agencies in the AACN, and the third is to be assisted in person or by phone by a Ready to Work partner agency.

Mr. McMurry asked who owns the data platform. Ms. Contreras replied that Signify Health is the organization that owns the platform, and they are helping us utilize it for Ready to Work. Ms. Gonzalez said that while one agency can't handle all services, this platform can take care of the gaps.

Mr. Graeber asked how the homeless would access this intake process. Ms. Contreras replied that agencies like Haven for Hope would be able to help with the intake process, and that homeless individuals can use their current shelter location as their address, per guidelines that the Department of Human Services currently uses.

Mr. Graeber asked whether the financial benefits provided by Ready to Work can be considered taxable. Ms. Contreras responded that the Ready to Work agencies will be providing a warning about the taxability, similar to what is done for the Train for Jobs program. Christina Ramirez confirmed that a disclaimer to clients upon enrollment is appropriate. Ms. Contreras said that the City is coordinating with federal agencies to gain a funding match for the program. Ms. Gonzalez added that federal tax policy dictates what financial benefits can be taxed in programs like this.

Ms. Contreras then presented on the Ready to Work target populations and eligibility criteria, and asked the Subcommittee members for input, especially regarding the income requirement for eligibility.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia suggested that the criterion regarding college enrollment be changed to stipulate that applicants are not currently enrolled in college when they apply for Ready to Work.

Mr. McMurry asked what potential downsides to changing that requirement might be. Ms. Gonzalez replied that one downside is the potential budget impact. People who may not require this program may use up the finances meant for those in greater need. Mr. Graeber suggested that the education requirement can be adjusted down the road. Ms. Gonzalez said that at the end of the day, every dime must be spent throughout the 5 year period. She then advised not to put up too many barriers too soon.

Ms. Gonzalez asked Ms. Contreras to clarify her comment that the income requirement was too low. Mr. Graeber asked about dependents, and whether the requirement is on household income and Ms. Contreras said that Ready to Work will follow DHS guidelines that look at household versus individual income.

Mr. Graeber motioned to recommend changing the college enrollment requirement from 2 years to 1 year. Ms. Gonzalez seconded. All were in favor to approve the recommendation.

Ms. Contreras showed the businesses that are already assisting our target populations through the Alamo Area Community Network to illustrate the resources available.

Ms. Gonzalez asked how long the Advisory Board terms are, and Ms. Contreras replied that the terms are two years long. Ms. Gonzalez asked whether this Subcommittee will dissolve after that point, and Ms. Contreras replied that it would not, and stressed that guidance regarding outreach would still be needed.

F. STAFF MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Graeber mentioned that the meetings should be extended to an hour and a half instead of an hour because it always seems to go over.

G. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Ms. Gonzalez suggested the members continue the discussion on income and previous job employment during the intake process. The calendar hold for next meeting is December 14th and will book it for an hour and a half.

H. MEETING ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 9:38 am.

APPROVED:
