



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

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Agenda Item Number: 2

Agenda Date: February 28, 2023

In Control: Economic and Workforce Development Committee Meeting

DEPARTMENT: Workforce Development Office

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Michael Ramsey

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

Briefing on the Ready to Work program and related workforce development initiatives.

SUMMARY:

This item provides an update on the progress of Ready to Work (RTW) and related workforce development initiatives, including pilot programs for paid internships once participants complete training and opportunities for military-service connected individuals.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

RTW is the City's premier training and employment program that launched in June 2022 and will offer thousands of residents subsidized tuition for industry-recognized certifications, and associate and bachelor's degree completion. The Economic and Workforce Development Committee was last briefed on this program in November 2022.

Workforce Solutions Alamo, Alamo Colleges District, Project Quest, Restore Education and over

20 subcontractors are performing intake, assessment, and case management services. Workforce Solutions Alamo, Alamo Colleges District, Project Quest, Restore Education and over 20 subcontractors are performing intake, assessment, and case management services. There are approximately 50 training providers offering over 900 approved courses aligned with well-paid, high-demand careers. Roughly 280 local employers and numerous community-based organizations have pledged to support RTW.

A variety of national, state, and local technical advisors are assisting RTW to ensure transparency, accountability, flexibility, and continuous improvement. The Ready to Work Advisory Board and its Employer Engagement and Community Outreach Subcommittees meet regularly to provide input and accountability. RTW has an Advisory Board with 11 members, including two City Council liaisons, Manny Pelaez (D8) and Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia (D4). The Advisory Board has two subcommittees, supporting employer engagement and community outreach. The Advisory Board has met 21 times to date to provide input and guidance.

ISSUE:

This briefing will include an update on the City's RTW program and related initiatives, including a breakdown of participant demographics, enrollment, training programs and industries, as well as job placements to date. Staff will also brief the Committee on two pilot programs: (1) increased support for military-service connected individuals; and (2) paid internships.

As of February 20, 2023, 3,957 RTW applicants have been interviewed, 1,371 have enrolled in training, 188 have successfully completed training, and 57 have found quality employment earning a median wage of \$19.06/hour and representing an average hourly wage increase of \$9.67/hour. Most RTW participants have graduated high school and have attended some college. Sixty-five percent of participants are female, and 85% are people of color. The median household income at intake is \$17,952 annually.

In December 2022, RTW eligibility guidelines were updated to include applicants that are currently enrolled in college or post-secondary courses. This update was made to provide additional supports to current post-secondary students and trainees, who are often facing significant barriers to completion. In addition, the U.S. Health and Human Services Department updated the federal poverty guidelines last month which in effect raise the income limit for RTW applicants (e.g., to \$36,450 for an individual with a household of one, and to \$75,000 for an individual with a household of four). This exceeds the median income in San Antonio (approximately \$52,000) and will allow even more individuals to increase their educational attainment and to provide for themselves and for their families.

In an effort to support San Antonio's position as Military City USA, a new pilot program will expand RTW eligibility to military-service involved individuals. This pilot will allow transitioning and former military personnel and their dependents that live outside the San Antonio City limits, but within Bexar County, to access the resources provided by RTW. RTW partners will ensure to leverage tuition funding and other resources already available to this population.

An additional pilot program, "Pay-It-Forward", will pay wages for adult interns being housed by

RTW pledged employers in IT, cybersecurity, and fintech fields. FY 2023 General Fund dollars allocated for workforce development will be used for this pilot. RTW participants that have completed training in these fields, but that are not yet employed, would be eligible for the internships. A third-party staffing agency would temporarily employ the intern. If the host company chooses to hire the intern, it would contribute funds into a “Pay-It-Forward” workforce account to support future internships.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This item is for briefing purposes only.

ALTERNATIVES:

This item is for briefing purposes only.

RECOMMENDATION:

This item is for briefing purposes only.