Portland Metro Workforce Development Board (WDB)  
7/10/2020  
Worksystems  
Virtual Meeting

**In attendance:** James Paulson – Chair, Travis Stovall – Vice Chair, Roy Rogers, Sara Ryan, Cupid Alexander, Caryn Lilley, James Posey, David Fortney, Maurice Rahming, Carl Moyer, Deanna Palm, Jane Leo, Keith Mays, Norm Eder, Pam Treece, Lisa Skari, Mark Mitsui, Tory Campbell, Bob Tackett, Aida Aranda, Eryn Byram, Kadie Ross, Rolanda Garcia  
**Staff:** Andrew McGough, Liza Morehead, Jesse Aronson

**Handouts:**
- October 2019 and January 2020 minutes  
- Impact of COVID-19 on the Portland Metro Labor Force  
- Worksystems COVID response update  
- WorkSource Oregon Operational Standards Report  
- Washington County and Multnomah County Demographic & Economic Profile reports

**CALLED TO ORDER:**

Meeting was called to order at 7:35 a.m. Quorum was announced.

**Consent Agenda**

*Motion: Keith Mays moved to accept the consent agenda containing the October 2019 and January 2020 minutes. Travis Stovall seconded the motion. Motion was unanimously approved.*

**COVID 19 Impact on Workers 16-34**

Andrew McGough introduced Worksystems Research Analyst, Liza Morehead. Morehead has been doing a deep dive into how industries are being impacted by the COVID crisis and looking at some of the related issues. These reports are posted on the Worksystems website.

Morehead explained she has been tracking the effects of the COVID crisis and found that the impact of job losses varies across sectors and worker characteristics.

The current crisis has been swifter and more devastating to the labor force than the great recession. During the first six weeks of the current economic crisis, employment decreased 10.2% which is more than it did during the two years of the great recession. 144,570 workers in the Portland Metro area filed initial unemployment claims (UI). This represents 36% of initials claims statewide. The accommodations and food service industry were hardest hit with 43% of its labor force affected. This number does not include undocumented immigrants and other workers who are ineligible for UI claims.

Occupations with the highest losses tend to be low-wage and require lower levels of educational attainment. Retail, food service, arts and entertainment have been hit hard during this crisis. These
sectors have traditionally been entry points into the labor force. They allow workers to gain experience at the start of their careers.

Younger workers and workers of color are overrepresented in these industries. The great recession intensified this trend and young adults continue to experience higher rates of unemployment. Before the recession there were more than 387,000 low-wage workers in the regional economy, a disproportionate share were young adults ages 18 to 24.

Entering the workforce during a recession has long-term consequences for workers. These workers face higher and more persistent poverty rates, longer periods of unemployment and lower lifetime earnings. The effects are most severe for people of color and those without a high school diploma. The long-term trends of declining labor force participating and high levels of unemployment for young adults are intensifying and this group of workers are going to face significant challenges moving forward.

The Board discussed the presentation and findings. Morehead informed that Board that the data will be updated each week and posted on our website.

**Executive Update to the Board**

McGough reviewed the April – June Executive update which includes all the initiatives we have been working on in response to the Covid Crisis.

McGough announced that we received a grant, in partnership with the State Workforce Board, to convene public/private collaboration to explore childcare issue. We also have a pending grant with JP Morgan Chase Foundation to increase the connection between workforce development and childcare.

One of the things that became apparent as people transitioned to remote services was that a substantial number of people did not have access to hardware and/or the internet. As a result, we purchased 400+ computers and distributed them through our partner networks to people engaged in training so they could continue their programs. Working with Comcast, we were also able to provide 6 months of internet services. We also joined the Digital Divide Taskforce to make sure people have access to the tools and supports they need to function in a virtual environment.

We received a couple national emergency grants. With these funds we were able to provide $10,000 grants to 43 non-profits to help them continue to operate and provide services.

We’ve established 2 hotline numbers, one for Multnomah County and one for Washington County. People can call these numbers to get information and access to an array of services and resources. In addition, we’ve been conducting daily webinars to help workers and businesses navigate the unemployment insurance system.
We have been applying for a variety of grants. We’ve been successful with the State but there are not a lot of resources at the Federal level. Typically, the federal government gets involved to help the economy shift to recovery. With the pandemic still raging, the conversation at the federal level remains primarily focused on income and small business support.

The SummerWorks program had to be modified due to COVID safety protocols. We will be transitioning to a year-round work experience model for adults and youth.

**WorkSource System Update**

Jesse Aronson, WorkSource Services Manager, provided an update on the WorkSource System. We have 2 centers in Washington County, 3 centers in Multnomah County, along with an Express Center at Washington County Jail and Central City Concern Employment Access Center. The centers include many partner agencies and community-based organizations.

WorkSource Services include:

- Employment skills workshops and tools
- Training scholarships
- In-demand cohort trainings
- Job placement assistance
- Business support in sourcing, hiring and training workers

Aronson explained that Worksystems’ role includes:

- Coordination of partnerships, programs and services
- WorkSource system oversight, monitoring and quality assurance
- WorkSource Center certification of compliance with Oregon Operational Standards
- WorkSource Operator

Aronson pointed out that due to the major fluctuation in the unemployment rate (3% to 14%), the current funding does not match the level of the current unemployment rate.

Aronson explained that our current focus is on providing a safety net of services until people are ready to focus on employment and training. We are also working with the State and our partners on re-opening frameworks for each WorkSource Center that aligns with operating standards, provides service delivery flexibility and ensures an equity lens is applied to service delivery. There are a lot of considerations, but the conversations have started.

McGough and Aronson explained the Oregon Employment Department (OED) UI backlog had diminished and they are now focused on PUA claims. These claims and applications have to be keyed in manually and will take a while for OED staff to get through the claims.
McGough explained that we have been very deliberate in forging and developing relationships with culturally specific, community trusted organizations that work with BIPOC, underserved and vulnerable populations to build and maintain relationships and make connections to the services available through the WorkSource Centers. We need to continue to build these relationships and foster additional connections. We will continue to work on changing public system policies and practices that get in the way of providing equitable services and prioritize resources to underserved communities.

**Public Comment:**
The floor was opened for public comment.

Jane Leo encouraged everyone to complete the US Census. It will influence funding for everything from childcare to public transportation systems. It will also determine the number of members Oregon gets in Congress.

Holly Whittleton wanted to call out Worksystems for their help with quickly pivoting services and continue to provide services.

James Posey would like to advocate for a very clear and accurate description of the equity lens, what the issues are and how we are closing the gap.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:52 a.m.
Portland Metro Workforce Development Board (WDB)
January 10, 2020
Works Systems
1618 SW 1st Ave., Suite 450


Staff Presenters: Andrew McGough, Liza Morehead, Patrick Gihring

Guests: Christian Kaylor – Oregon Employment Department

Handouts:
- October 2019 Minutes
- 2020-2024 Workforce Development Planning Schedule
- Strategic Plan Chronology

Called to Order:

Meeting was called to order at 7:35. Quorum was announced.

Consent Agenda

Consent Agenda was not presented and will be put on the next agenda.

A New Decade – A New Economy

Andrew McGough explained that the Board will hear from local experts on the local economy, trends and strategies.

Christian Kaylor discussed the economic outlook for 2020 and reviewed the economic data from 2011-2019.

Kaylor announced that Oregon had the 10th fastest job growth in the nation with a 19% increase between 2011-2018. The regional job growth pattern is holding up with 70% of new jobs being created in the Tri-County Area. The job growth in the Portland metro area has been good since 2010 with 16,000 new jobs created in the region from 10/2018 – 10/2019.

Between 2010 and 2018, Oregon’s population growth was up 6%. This is partly due to millennials clustering around the urban core. Oregon is #12 in fastest work-age growth from 2010-2018 and the 21st fastest between 10/2018 and 10/2019. He pointed out that many of the states in the upper mid-west are at or near a negative job growth rate. Job growth has continued for many industries but has declined for Leisure & Hospitality and Retail.

Kaylor explained that Portland residents enjoyed a 34% increase in household income from 2005 to 2018 moving it from the 22nd wealthiest city to the 8th among the 50 largest US cities. However, East Portland has the same number of middle-income residents as the Portland Region, but a much higher
number of low income and lower number of high income. This is important to remember when you talk about county prosperity. Multnomah County represents 19% of Oregon’s population and has the greatest concentration of poverty. Multnomah County also has some of the highest incomes in the State but mostly west of I-205. However, East Multnomah County has the 3rd highest poverty rate and the highest poverty rate for children.

Liza Morehead looked at workforce trends to watch for the next decade. The three areas to watch are digitization, automation and transitional economy.

We’ve seen a 12% increase in jobs with high levels of personal interaction between 2001 – 2020, most in low to middle skills occupations. We are already seeing a huge increase in demand for digital skills. In 2002, 5% of jobs required a high level of digital skills. In 2016, that increased to 20%. Most of the jobs at risk of automation are low income and don’t require a lot of formal education.

Morehead reported that automation has affected jobs across the board. Almost 15% of jobs in America have a high risk of automation by 2030. In Oregon, 17% of workers are in occupations that could shrink by 2030. In Multnomah and Washington Counties, 15% of workers are in jobs that could shrink due to automation.

Morehead explained that a transitional economy is a temporary demand in a changing economy. We are seeing an increase in some jobs, but we know it’s not a long-term need. Long haul truckers and warehouse workers are examples of jobs that are currently in high-demand but, with automation, the jobs in these fields will diminish over time.

Patrick Gihring discussed what we are doing to address some of the trends over the next 5 years.

Gihring explained that automation is already affecting the programs we serve. Truck driving jobs are one of the most listed but less filled jobs around the state. Worksystems has secured a grant to train and place low-income people, with a focus on people of color and women, into truck driving jobs with an average starting wage of $21/hr. However, according to industry experts, these truck driving jobs are likely to be impacted by automation toward the end of this decade. We need to keep that in mind as we train people for the current jobs. We need to work with them to adapt over the longer term as automation causes displacement in the industry.

Gihring explained that despite low unemployment numbers, we have persistent poverty and inequality issues. One of the most significant issues is people with dependent children living in poverty. For example, the poverty rate in Multnomah County for single women with children under five is 48%, compared to 14% for the overall population. This issue also disproportionately affects people of color. For this population, there is a barrier between them and the growth in middle income jobs. The average annual cost of childcare in Oregon is about $9,000. Our programs pay for career coaching and occupational training, but the cost of childcare is a huge barrier standing in the way of families with dependent children. With middle income jobs on the rise, there is an opportunity to address persistent poverty and inequity by helping low income families with childcare.
To address this barrier, we worked with the Oregon Department of Education, the Oregon Department of Human Services and Labors Community Service Association to create a pilot program that integrates career coaching, occupations, training, childcare and housing support. While we are still in the midst of the pilot, 88% of participants are successfully completing training and of those, 80% are entering employment in their area of training at an average wage of $17/hr.

Gihring explained that we are seeing reduced levels of Federal and State investments. WIOA funding has been declining steadily for a decade and there are very few competitive grants to pursue. As a result, we have been working to diversify our funding. Through SNAP 50/50 we have brought in about $1M to the region and expect to increase this to $2M in the next fiscal year. This means we’re serving nearly 1,000 additional people annually in partnership with 13 community-based organizations.

However, targeted funding comes with tradeoffs. It is much less flexible than federal (WIOA) funding and requires extra database reporting and compliance requirements. We currently have about 50 separate funding sources, each with different requirements, which is having an impact on participants and service providers.

**Strategic Plan Update**

McGough provided an update on the strategic planning process and reviewed a chronology of what has been done so far. We hope to have a draft within the next month based on what we’ve heard from the community and stakeholders so far.

**Public Comment:**
The floor was opened for public comment. There were no public comments.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:15 a.m.
Portland Metro Workforce Development Board (WDB)
October 11, 2019
Worksystems
1618 SW 1st Ave., Suite 450

In attendance: James Paulson – Chair, Travis Stovall – Vice Chair, Roy Rogers, Susheela Jayapal, Aida Aranda, Bob Tackett, Cara Snow, Caryn Lilley, Danell Butler, Eryn Bryam, James Posey, Joe McFerrin, Chris Olson, Keith Mays, Tory Campbell, Marc Goldberg, Maurice Rahming, Pam Treece, Phillip Williams, Sheila Holden, Komi Kalevor, Carl Moyer

Staff: Andrew McGough

Guests: Tripp Somerville - Neverstill

Handouts:
- January 2019 minutes & July 2019 meeting notes
- Revised By-laws
- 2020-2024 Workforce Development Planning Schedule
- Draft 2020-2024 Workforce Plan
- Worksystems Plan Survey Results
- 2016-2020 Strategic Plan Summary
- Washington and Multnomah Counties Profile Reports

CALLED TO ORDER:

Meeting was called to order at 7:35 a.m. Quorum was announced.

Consent Agenda

Motion: Keith Mays moved to accept the January 2019 minutes. Pam Treece seconded the motion. Motion was unanimously approved.

Motion: Carl Moyer moved to accept the July 2019 meeting notes. Keith Mays seconded the motion. Motion was unanimously approved.

Motion: Keith Mays moved to adopt the amended quorum definition in the Portland Metro Workforce Development Board By-Laws. Roy Rogers seconded the motion. Motion was unanimously approved.

2020-2024 Strategic Planning

Andrew McGough explained that according to Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) regulations each workforce board has to submit a local strategic plan every 4 years. The strategic plan is a mechanism we use to focus our work and hold each other accountable. McGough explained that staff constantly use the plan to guide our work.
The Federal law mandates the participation of a number of programs which essentially defines the public workforce system. Helping to ensure alignment and coordination among program and organizations is an essential component of the Board’s work. In addition to the mandated programs, we also work with other systems and organizations who have a stake in workforce development. Part of our work is to encourage and support others to identify and support activities that help achieve the goals outlined in the regional plan.

We have begun the process of developing the 2020 – 2024 strategic plan by sending out a survey to get feedback about our current goals. We have also looked at the lessons learned over the past 4 year.

McGough reviewed the summary of accomplishments and lessons learned over the last 4 years. Overall, the WorkSource Portland Metro (WSPM) public workforce system is working pretty well, but there is still room for improvement. The good news is there is a lot of commitment and support to continue to work together to improve the accessibility and effectiveness of the system.

McGough reviewed the handouts which provide information about the services and partners in each county. The goal is to connect community-based organizations (CBO) and other partners to the public system through common customers, priority services, career coaching, navigators and ongoing engagement. The alignment creates value for our CBO partners and their customers and works together to evolve the system to be more accessible, supportive and effective.

We also learned that diversity, equity and inclusion matter a lot to us and our partners. Persistent disparities require all of us to focus our efforts, redo systems and redefine success.

McGough explained that there has been a drastic change in resources over the years. This year, Federal workforce funding was half of what it was in the year 2000. This despite a population increase of nearly 1 million and a growing number of people in poverty. Worksystems successfully brought in nearly $32M in competitive grants, but we don’t anticipate any substantial federal awards on the near-term horizon. New resources tend to be State and local funds. These funds tend to be very targeted which impacts the overall flexibility and responsiveness of the system and are less flexible than Federal funds.

McGough reviewed the local plan timeline and some draft initial goals and strategies based on the feedback from the survey and the lessons learned over the last 4 years. We will also have some additional engagement opportunities as we finalize the plan. The final plan is due to the State in March 2020.

Tripp Somerville reviewed what we learned from a recent survey that was distributed to about 600 partners and community members to get feedback about our current goals. We received 121 responses from across the region.
The feedback was mostly positive. 76% of respondents felt the goals were relevant and about right for what the region needs. They felt the goals were aligned on impact, issues and a cross-sector approach. Respondents indicated a desire for greater collaboration, equity and shared pain.

Sommerville explained that in ranking the goals, most people felt regional workers getting the training they need to get available jobs was the number one goal. There was consistent judgement on the biggest challenges to deliver on the goals with available funding, and funding requirements/restrictions. Sommerville explained that the engagement is not just about the goals but also about the strategies.

The Board discussed survey findings and draft goals:

- Consider adding visibility to strategies around relations between employers and partners.
- Change the Youth goal to be more explicit about the youth we are serving.
- Should indicate how plan ties in with wrap-around services.
- Should add set of values.
- Enhance what we have learned from our experiences in order to be innovative and more successful in what we do.
- Add a statement about the make-up of the Board and staff. Put equity piece in operational plan.
- Tie-in “succeed and advance” language to support the idea of providing career opportunities not just filling jobs.
- Define quality.
- Staying consistent with goals will get us the results we require.
- We can create the products but need to address demand. Hold businesses and agencies accountable.

Motion: Travis Stovall motioned to move this workforce plan forward in the process. Roy Rogers seconded the motion. Motion was unanimously approved.

Public Comment:
The floor was opened for public comment.

Lynn Carter announced that DHS Vocational Rehab is having big event for disability and inclusion on 10/29. They need help outreaching to businesses.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:52 a.m.