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Strategy & Impact Committee Meeting

Date Wednesday, April 3, 2024

Time 11:30 am MST

Place Workforce Solutions Borderplex, Inc.
304 Texas Avenue, First Floor Conference Room, El Paso, Texas 79901

Committee Members Present:

Mary Jo Ochoa, Committee Chair
Dr. Armando Aguirre
Bobby Alcala
Art Garza
Bob Gear
Emma Schwartz

Committee Members Absent:

Ernestina Fauntleroy
Leah Wood

Staff Members Present:

Leila Melendez
Abigail Ruiz
Alma Aranda
Alondra McDuffie

Carson Carter
Karina Castillo
Louis Castillo
Martha Cuellar

Monica Jasso
Myriam Guerrero
Rogelio Luna
Viviana Aguirre

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER AND NOTE OF QUORUM

(Mary Jo Ochoa, Strategy & Impact Committee Chair)

Ms. Mary Jo Ochoa, Strategy & Impact Committee Chair called the meeting to order at 11:30 am. MST. Quorum was cited.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

A: Discussion and update on Partners For Reentry Opportunities In Workforce Development (PROWD) Grant Initiative *(Louis Castillo, Industry Project Manager and Alma Aranda, Director of Innovation and Development)*

Mr. Louis Castillo, Industry Project Manager, discussed the Partners For Reentry Opportunities In Workforce Development (PROWD) Grant Initiative by the DOJ and DOL to provide targeted employment services to federally incarcerated individuals as they approach reentry. Mr. Castillo added that the grant aims to improve employment outcomes while increasing the capacity of justice and workforce system partnerships.

B: Discussion and update on Pathway for Heroes Grant Initiative (*Carson Carter, Project Manager and Alma Aranda, Director of Innovation and Development*)

Mr. Carson Carter, Project Manager, provided an update on the Pathway for Heroes Grant Initiative and added that the spending per person is coming in lower than projected. Ms. Aranda mentioned that she is working with the accounting team and the account manager to ensure the target is met and the money is spent by the end of the grant.

C: Discussion and update on Texas Rising Star (TRS) Certification Requirement (*Marisela Correa, Family Services Director*)

Ms. Martha Cuellar presented and discussed that childcare providers contracted to provide childcare services must be certified as TRS quality providers. Child Care Providers not already certified as TRS Providers must be in the TRS pathway by March 31, 2024. If not, they will not be able to receive any new referrals for childcare services past this date. Childcare providers in the TRS pathway must be certified as TRS Providers by September 30, 2024. If not, the CCS Provider Agreement will be terminated. Children in care will need to be transferred to a TRS Certified Provider.

D: Discussion on labor force participation (*Leila Melendez, CEO*)

Ms. Leila Melendez, CEO, discussed that staff will be focusing on who is actually participating in the labor force. The State's trend is at 67%, and El Paso is at 65%, with a 2% difference. For El Paso to reach 67%, 17,000 people must be added to the labor force and actively looking for work.

E: Discussion on idea for Housing Authority scattered sites (*Leila Melendez, CEO*)

Ms. Melendez stated that staff received a letter from the Housing Authority as they are looking to resell a scatter site project. They want to resell these sites to nonprofits; the nonprofit organization must bid for at least five houses to qualify to purchase them. While WSB will not buy houses, WSB can partner with nonprofit organizations that purchase houses and serve as work-based learning, as the houses will need to be remodeled significantly.

F: Discussion regarding contractor and board organizational structure. (*Leila Melendez, CEO*)

Ms. Melendez discussed the workforce system based on the legislation that created workforce boards at the federal level, WIOA. At the federal level, the agency responsible for WIOA is the Department of Labor.

3. ADJOURN

A: Discussion on items of interest for next agenda

The meeting adjourned at 12:45 pm. MST