

Nebraska Workforce Development Board
Meeting Minutes
(non-quorum meeting)
June 11, 2021, 9a – 12p
Administrative Services Building
Conference Room D, 4th Floor
1526 K Street, Lincoln, Nebraska 68508

Agenda item 1. Call to Order

Chair Mark Moravec called to order the meeting of the Nebraska Workforce Development Board (the Board) on June 11, 2021 at approximately 9a at the Administrative Services Building, Conference Room D, 4th floor, 1526 K Street, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Agenda item 2. Roll Call

Nicole Goodwin called roll and advised Chair Moravec that quorum was *not* established.

Members in Attendance

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Senator Greg Adams | 6. Susan Martin | 11. Becky Stitt |
| 2. John Albin | 7. Mark Moravec | 12. Paul Turman |
| 3. Lindy Foley | 8. Don Nordell | 13. Lisa Wilson |
| 4. Allan Hale | 9. Bradley Schroeder | |
| 5. James Hanson, Jr. | 10. Senator Jim Smith | |

Members Absent

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Governor Pete Ricketts | 7. Gary Dixon, Jr. | 13. Terri Ridder |
| 2. Senator Joni Albrecht | 8. Jason Feldhaus | 14. Jennifer Sedlacek |
| 3. Kyle Arganbright | 9. Michael Geary | 15. Dannette Smith |
| 4. Elizabeth Babcock | 10. Anthony Goins | 16. Carol Swigart |
| 5. Phil Bakken | 11. Tate Lauer | |
| 6. Brain Deakin | 12. Kyle Nixon | |

Nebraska Department of Labor (NDOL) Board Support Staff

Brad Pierce, Reemployment Services Director
Katie Thurber, General Counsel, Office of the General Counsel
Shauna Smith, Reemployment Services Administrator, Division of Reemployment Services
Dawn Carrillo, WIOA Program Analyst, Division of Reemployment Services
Todd Greene, State Monitoring Unit Program Coordinator, Division of Reemployment Services
Nicole Goodwin, Administrative Assistant II, Division of Reemployment Services

Agenda item 3. Notice of Publication

Nicole Goodwin announced that the Notice of Public Meeting was duly published, in accordance with the Nebraska Open Meetings Act, in the Beatrice Daily Sun, Grand Island Independent, Lincoln Journal Star, North Platte Telegraph, Omaha World Herald, and Scottsbluff Star-Herald. Nicole announced that notice of the meeting was posted on the State of Nebraska Public Meeting Calendar.

Agenda item 4. Approval of Minutes

Chair Moravec explained that in the absence of quorum, approval of the minutes for the March 5, 2021 meeting of the Board will be deferred until the September 10, 2021 meeting. Chair Moravec reminded everyone that minutes, agendas, and meeting materials for the March 5, 2021 meeting are available on the Board's webpage, which is accessible at <https://dol.nebraska.gov/ReemploymentServices/Training/WIOA/NWDB>.

Agenda item 5. Old Business – Nebraska Department of Labor Update

a. Local Area Adjusted Levels of Performance for PY19

Bradley Pierce updated the Board on the Local Area Adjusted Levels of Performance for Program Year 2019. Adjusted levels of performance are calculated by NDOL for local area Title I adult, dislocated worker, and youth programs on an annual basis. The adjusted levels of performance reflect actual characteristics of participants that were served, as well as actual economic conditions experienced during the program year. Brad directed the Board's attention to Handout 2, which detailed NDOL's assessment of Program Year 2019 performance results for Greater Lincoln, Greater Nebraska, and Greater Omaha Title I programs, which are assessed based on each local area's negotiated levels of performance, actual levels of performance, actual participant characteristics, actual economic conditions, and coefficients provided by the US Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration in the State's adjusted levels of performance for Program Year 2019 at the state level for Nebraska's Title I adult, dislocated worker, and youth programs.

Local area performance based on adjusted levels of performance are based on three Federally defined performance thresholds:

- Individual local-area single indicator score
 - Failure to meet an adjusted level of performance for a single indicator occurs when the single indicator score falls below 50 percent of the area's adjusted level of performance for the single indicator, calculated by dividing the actual level of performance achieved by the adjusted level of performance
- Overall local-area single program score
 - Failure to meet overall adjusted levels of performance for the program occurs when the overall local-area single program score falls below 90 percent. The overall program score is the average of all individual single indicator scores for the program

- Overall local-area single indicator score
 - Failure to meet adjusted levels of performance by a local area for a single indicator occurs when the individual local-area single indicator score falls below 90 percent of the adjusted levels of performance for that indicator when compared to the overall local-area single indicator score. The overall local-area single indicator score is the average of scores for an individual local-area single indicator across all local area adult, dislocated worker, or youth programs.

Greater Lincoln failed to meet performance for its:

- adult program at the *individual local-area single indicator level* for employment during the second quarter after program exit, achieving 83.78 percent compared to the 90 percent success threshold;
- youth program at the *individual local-area single indicator level* for credential attainment after program exit, achieving 30.37 percent compared to the 50 percent success threshold; and
- youth program at the *overall program score level*, achieving 74.11 percent compared to the 90 percent success threshold.

Greater Nebraska failed to meet performance for its youth program at the *individual local-area single indicator level* for credential attainment after program exit, achieving 80.61 percent compared to the 90 percent success threshold.

Greater Omaha failed to meet performance for its:

- dislocated worker program at the *overall program score level*, achieving 87.55 percent compared to the 90 percent success threshold; and
- youth program at the *overall program score level*, achieving 85.67 percent compared to the 90 percent success threshold.

Lisa Wilson asked why local areas have fallen below 90% threshold for youth program over *all program score levels*. Brad explained that all areas utilize NEworks as a management information system and haven't been accurately recording program activities during the last two program years, but that proper case management will become a technical focus to resolve this issue.

Mark Moravec asked if there would be the same failure rate if the data had been entered correctly. Brad explained that it is difficult to make that determination, but that they local areas have most likely been successful regarding those performance indicators.

Bradley Schroeder asked what constitutes success on the credential attainment performance indicator. Brad Pierce explained that successful performance on the credential attainment performance indicator is based on participant attainment of a credential upon completion of an occupational skills training program and accurate documentation of credential attainment in NEworks.

b. Unemployment Insurance and COVID-19

Commissioner of Labor John Albin presented to the Board on the provision Unemployment Insurance benefits during the COVID-19 pandemic. A brief timeline was given of the various unemployment programs that were rolled out during COVID-19, including Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) and Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) and the effects it had on Nebraska's workforce and economic recovery. A total of 171,985 individuals received Unemployment Insurance benefits from the State of Nebraska during the pandemic,

totaling \$1,456,487,733. Unemployment fraud proved to be an issue for numerous states across the United States, including Nebraska. NDOL implemented the *Notice of Requirement to Report* process to verify individual's identity. Claimants were asked for documentation for this reason and to ensure efficient communication between adjudicators and claimants. As a result, NDOL was successful in their effort to adjudicate Unemployment Insurance claims and provide reemployment assistance throughout the pandemic, while simultaneously mitigating fraud.

Workers quitting jobs during the pandemic over concerns of exposure to the virus was an ongoing issue. NDOL implemented a *Work Refusal* email inbox, as well as a process to disincentivize people from quitting their jobs by denying Unemployment Insurance benefits (and future unemployment benefits) to those who chose to do so. The *Short-Time Compensation* program was implemented to help prevent layoffs by allowing employers to reduce affected employees' hours by 10 to 60 percent while permitting employees to receive a prorated Unemployment Insurance benefit. This averted a total of 9,851 layoffs.

Commissioner Albin advised the Board that the Nebraska Department of Labor received four years' worth of unemployment claims in a four-month span. NDOL responded by borrowing staff from other agencies to assist with adjudication, hiring 425 new employees, and accelerating Unemployment Adjudication training. Metropolitan Community College (Omaha) loaned facilities to NDOL to assist with claimant services and local offices stayed open and shifted to virtual meetings. Because of these efforts, 89,388 individuals were assisted virtually by job centers, and 55,868 individuals were assisted in person.

April's unemployment rate was tied for lowest in the nation at 2.8 percent, and there are currently approximately 39,000 job openings posted on NEworks.

James Hanson, Jr., asked how Nebraska's June 19 cut-off for extra benefits would get people back to work. Commissioner Albin explained that the unemployment rate drop-off would be gradual, as it will have a delayed effect over 30 to 60 days.

Lisa Wilson expressed gratitude to NDOL, particularly Deb Andersen, for assistance during the pandemic. Mark Moravec asked if there was anything that will incentivize people to go back to work. Commissioner Albin explained that this could happen by gradually phasing out unemployment benefits or offering reemployment bonuses using CARES Act funds.

Agenda item 6. New business

a. 2021 Workforce Development Excellence Award Presentation

Joan Modrell presented Jan Norlander-Jensen with the 2021 Workforce Development Excellence Award for her 44 years of work and dedication to providing Nebraskans with the opportunity to participate in employment and training programs offered by Greater Nebraska and Lincoln local areas.

b. Subcommittee Reports

James Hanson, Jr. provided the Policy and Oversight Subcommittee report. The Subcommittee has been collaborating with State Plan partners and has formed workgroups to ensure effective implementation of State Plan goals and strategies for career pathways development and implementation and alignment of Nebraska's workforce development system, as well as planning and development of the mandatory 2022 State Plan modification. Each workgroup will focus on the three modes of State Plan implementation and will be headed by the following individuals:

- Paul Turman – career pathways
- Stan Odenthal – system alignment
- Deb Andersen – 2022 State Plan modification

Work groups will meet separately and then report back monthly to the Policy and Oversight Subcommittee to provide updates on the progress of the implementation of State Plan goals and strategies, and activities relating to development of the 2022 State Plan modification. In addition, the Policy and Oversight Subcommittee, State Plan partners, and the Subcommittee's workgroups will coordinate with the Board's Strategy and Innovation Subcommittee in relation to the career pathways and system alignment goal and strategies. The Subcommittee will also coordinate with other workforce system partners to ensure effective implementation of the State Plan goals and strategies, as well as timely and coordinated development of the 2022 State Plan modification, which is due no later than April 1, 2022.

Senator Jim Smith provided the Strategy and Innovation Subcommittee report on behalf of Michael Geary. The Subcommittee has two projects in progress: developing an MOU with Nebraska's three homeless continuums of care and documentation of statewide workforce initiatives. Progress on these were stalled in March of 2020 due to COVID-19, but the Subcommittee will resume its work during its June 23, 2021 meeting.

Senator Smith provided a recap of the Subcommittee's past efforts. A meeting was held January 14, 2020 where a vote was held to recommend the establishment of an MOU between the Board and the Continuums; the Board voted to proceed with the establishment of an MOU. Efforts to finalize implementation of an MOU have been ongoing between NDOL Legal and representatives of the continuums, which will be a topic of discussion during the June 23, 2021 meeting. In addition, the Subcommittee previously began work on development of a database of existing workforce initiatives in Nebraska, which would support the Board's goal of alignment of workforce-focused groups and initiatives and support development of career pathways efforts. During the January and February meetings in 2020, approaches to identifying these initiatives were discussed. During the March 6, 2020 meeting of the Board, the Subcommittee recommended a low-tech, networking method and distribution of a form to collect information on existing initiative. Senator Smith directed the Board's attention to Handout 4, a preliminary draft of the form. The Subcommittee asked at that time for comment from the members of the Board on the form and its content, advising that the form could be completed by anyone who is aware of a workforce-focused group or initiative, or a representative of a group or initiative, and then distributed widely in digital and paper format.

Agenda item 7. Member Updates

Chair Moravec asked Members of the Board for updates on their respective industries or organizations and local workforce development area activities for the Members who also serve on local workforce development boards. Members of the Board provided updates as requested.

Agenda item 8. Public Comment

Chair Moravec opened the floor for public comment. No public comments were made.

Agenda item 9. Upcoming Meeting – Date and Time

Chair Moravec reminded the Members of the Board that the next meeting of the Board is scheduled for September 10, 2021 from 9a to 12p, with the location pending. If the date or time of the meeting changes, Members of the Board would be notified by email.

Members of the public may confirm the dates and times of the meetings of the Board by checking the Upcoming Meeting section of the Board's webpage. The Board's webpage is accessible at <https://dol.nebraska.gov/ReemploymentServices/Training/WIOA/NWDB>.

Agenda item 10. Adjournment

Because quorum was not established and motions to adjourn were not required, Chair Moravec adjourned the meeting at approximately 11a.