

Governor's Council for Workforce and Economic Development

MEETING MINUTES

Date: November 13, 2020

Time: 9:00 A.M.

Place: Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Call to Order/Welcome

Chair, Michelle Choquette called the meeting to order and welcomed the group. She announced that if there is an interruption with the audio and/or video of the virtual meeting and connection can't be made within thirty (30) minutes, then the meeting would be continued later on November 13 at 3:00 p.m.

A roll call of the Governor's Council members was taken and a quorum was announced.

Cabinet/Governor's Office Update – Secretary of Commerce and Workforce Development Sean Kouplen

Secretary Kouplen, reported the following:

- They increased their communication by having weekly calls for months on end with eight different industry calls with sometimes 1,000 callers at a time. They brought any data, programs, funding, etc., that they could do to their businesses.
- They really focused on PPP to make us a top ten state in terms of paycheck protection program dollars within the state of Oklahoma. We have \$5.4 billion that's come into the state and almost 64,000 loans that we're in the middle of forgiveness for PPP right now.
- They took dollars that are normally used to recruit businesses into Oklahoma and used them to help existing Oklahoma businesses. They created the Oklahoma Manufacturing Reboot Program, the Bounce Back Program, PPE Source Directory, and the Supplier Scouting Program in partnership with the Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance.
- They created the Bounce Back Task Force to advise the Governor on how to handle business issues as it relates to COVID.
- They were able to disburse about \$1.25 billion of CARES Act money and over \$300 million of that went into economic support. \$145 million went into the Oklahoma Business Reboot program which was the largest business reboot program per capita in the country. We spent more dollars in Oklahoma towards businesses and employees as a percentage of our total CARES money than any state in the country and that is very important for us to know.
- More recently, they have launched an Automotive Accelerator program and are heavily recruiting automotive suppliers. They have billboards in San Jose and Los Angeles, California, and have sales people on the street. They also are doing geo targeting and social media and doing a major push in California because they are very antibusiness at the current time. As a result, already 17 new businesses have moved from California to Oklahoma.
- They had \$143 million paid out to the Oklahoma Business Relief Fund for 8,600 businesses and 344 communities in all 77 counties. Twenty-five percent of those businesses were minority owned.
- Secretary Kouplen said that he wanted to brag on the Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development Team because this has been a challenging year. Some of the things that they have done are:
 - They revamped Business Services so they could ensure consistency statewide and meet employers' needs. Our job is to connect businesses with people who need a job. So we've been supportive in hiring one FTE in each of our Local Workforce Areas.
 - They set up an Incumbent Worker Training fund available to businesses looking to upskill or reskill their current workers

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- They partnered with OKHR to launch a skills-based hiring initiative that will help businesses focus on transferrable skills and competencies instead of credentials as a way to attract better candidates, increase retention, and decrease time to fill jobs.
- Sector Partnerships were funded to implement industry driven workforce strategies. This year's grantees represented the health care and manufacturing industries. With the funds provided, the Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance launched a statewide Career Pathways website.
- The Workforce Team implemented job seeker and business support strategies in response to the COVID pandemic. They very quickly purchased a virtual job fair platform to connect job seekers to open positions. The virtual job fair platform is free to employers and has had a great impact across the state.
- The Team launched a Talent Exchange in partnership with the Oklahoma Grocers Association, Oklahoma Retail Association, and the Oklahoma Restaurant and Hospitality Associations to match out-of-work Oklahomans with industries that need employees to quickly fill current job openings for essential business activities.
- They brought in a national consultant to develop a COVID-19 Response and Recovery strategic plan to identify a nimble response to economic disruptions.
- Registered Apprenticeships - Oklahoma was one of 14 states selected to receive \$1.5 million to expand opportunities for youth apprenticeships in high-demand, high-wage careers. Oklahoma was also awarded \$450,000 to expand apprenticeships through innovation. The funds will support the development of new and expanding apprenticeship opportunities for all Oklahomans in businesses across the states.
- Where We Stand as a State Economically:
 - We have added 265,000 jobs since April. We have about 1.75 million employed individuals right now in the state.
 - Our unemployment rate has dropped from 14.7% to 5.3% in September, ranking us as ninth in the nation. We added 52,000 jobs in September alone. Unemployment was 2.9% back in March and we're at 5.3% now. We know that's not where we want to be, we want to drive that number down and get more people back to work and we're working on that.
 - We've added 32 new companies to Oklahoma this year (17 were from California) which is about 4,000 new jobs and the average salary on those jobs is over \$61,000.
 - We had over \$800 million of capital investment committed in Oklahoma this year. Even though things are not where we want them to be, we are continuing to make progress and he feels that we are positioning ourselves to come out of COVID very strong.
 - Going forward, Workforce is finally getting the spotlight. Yesterday, we have the beginning of a workforce task force which includes all cabinet secretaries that are impacted by workforce. There were seven or eight cabinet secretaries on the call yesterday and they are going to really dig in and use the experts on this Zoom call today like Don Morris and Sarah Ashmore from the Office of Workforce Development, and Marcie Mack from CareerTech, and the other partners, to make it really work. Secretary Kouplen shared with the cabinet secretaries the recording from the last Governor's Council webinar where Texas, Alabama, and Utah were guest speakers and they shared what they were doing in their centers. We know that they are a little bit different than we are and we are not trying to copy anybody, but we do realize that there are ways to better align around workforce, so this group is going to be meeting to discuss this.
 - On the big picture, Secretary Kouplen said that they are going to continue aggressively recruiting for Oklahoma. There will be television ads in surrounding states featuring Oklahoma and the governor, they will be bringing bills and investors together, they are launching a supply chain portal, restructuring their recruiters by industry so they can focus on becoming experts in different industries.

Consent Agenda

- Approval of Meeting Minutes for July 31, 2020
- 2021 Calendar of Meetings
- OWDI #07-2016, Change 1 Transfer of Formula Funds Policy

- OWDI #07-2020 Adult and Dislocated Worker Program Policy
- OWDI #08-2020 Special Issue and Investigative Monitoring Policy
- OWDI #09-2020 Eligible Training Provider Policy
- OWDI #10-2020 Local and Regional Planning Instructions
- OWDI #11-2020 Access for All Star Accessibility Framework Phase I – Initial Assessment

Katie Altshuler made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, seconded by Michelle Choquette. Voting for the motion via roll call was unanimous. Those voting against the motion were none. The motion carried.

Northeast Planning Regions Reorganization and Plan – Don Morris, Office of Workforce Development

This agenda item will be included in the Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development update by Don Morris.

COVID-19 Response Plan and Recommendations – Maher and Maher

Maher and Maher, talent development and change management consultants, were asked to develop a COVID-19 Response and Recovery Plan that identifies and prioritizes strategies the state of Oklahoma can undertake to strengthen the public workforce system response to job seekers and employers now and in the future. Lynn Bajorek and Gretchen Sullivan with Maher and Maher, gave the following presentation on recommendations and strategies.

- Recommended Strategies in Five Focus Areas:
 - Workforce System Organizational Structure
 - Workforce System Infrastructure and Capacity
 - Data Sharing, Data Infrastructure, and Data Limitations
 - Joint Communications, Messaging, and Branding
 - Customer-Centered Service Design and Delivery
- Workforce System Organizational Structure – *Challenges*: The siloes structure of Oklahoma’s workforce partners inhibits system-wide coordination and collaboration and causes fragmentation and navigation difficulties for employers, job seekers, and system staff.
 - *Recommendations*
 - Structurally align WIOA partner agencies
 - Establish a WIOA Partners’ Group
 - Advance state and local boards as strategic leadership entities for the system
 - Functionally organize Oklahoma Works Center service delivery
- Workforce System Infrastructure and Capacity – *Challenges*: Oklahoma’s workforce system faces challenges related to UI infrastructure and staffing, system staff capacity to support integrated service delivery, and broadband coverage to support customers and staff.
 - *Recommendations*
 - Invest in UI online infrastructure and staffing
 - Implement cross-training for system partners
 - Expand broadband capacity and access
- Data Sharing, Infrastructure, and Limitations – *Challenges*: The Oklahoma workforce system lacks the infrastructure and ability to share participant data, as well as real-time labor market information, to inform and continuously improve service design and delivery.
 - *Recommendations*
 - Improve MIS capacity, functionality, and sharing
 - Advance labor exchange functionality and ease of use
 - Expand data-informed decision making
 - Establish a Governor’s Council data initiative
- Joint Communications, Messaging, and Branding – *Challenges*: Communications from state to local partners and among local partners are siloed, and inconsistent adoption and use of the Oklahoma Works brand among partners inhibits customer system awareness and access.

- *Recommendations*
 - Implement coordinated state-to-local partner communications
 - Enhance system-wide local communications
 - Expand adoption of the Oklahoma Works brand among partners
- Customer-Center Service Design and Delivery – *Challenges*: Oklahoma’s siloed and often compliance-driven workforce system does not achieve WIOA’s “one-stop” service delivery vision and burdens customers in accessing and navigating services and supports.
 - *Recommendations*
 - Make service delivery more integrated and customer-friendly
 - Expand and diversify virtual service delivery capacity
 - Unify and integrate business customer outreach and service delivery
- Plan Implementation Process Recommendations
 - Use the Board Committee structure to advance implementation of Plan strategies
 - Standing or ad hoc committees (e.g. Plan Data Committee recommendation)
 - Committee Chairs should be private sector Board members
 - Committee members should be other Board partners
 - Other Board partners will need to be empowered to enlist their staff support for implementation of strategies
 - Develop dashboard approach to report on progress to Committee Chairs and full Board at regular intervals
 - Transparency and accountability on Plan progress and activities across partners will be essential
- Q&A

Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development, Executive Director’s Report – Don Morris

Don Morris, Executive Director, gave the following update:

- Northeast Planning Region Reorganization and Plan – Don said that several of the Oklahoma county commissioners from the northeast part of the state were invited to the Governor’s Council meeting and he wants to welcome them. Regarding the Northeast Planning Region reorganization, Don said that they have been working on this issue for several months and a lot of work has gone on so far but there is still a lot more left to go. In talking about the process, he said the law requires reorganization within a planning region. The Northeast Planning Region is made of up the Tulsa, Eastern, and Northeast Workforce Development Areas (including all counties within each area). In order to make the initial decision as to how we are going to organize and to also facilitate the transition itself, they’ve procured a consulting group, Thomas P. Miller and Associates, and they have started this process. We hope to be completed with the process sometime around the end of March.

The three options are:

- To combine all three areas into one large local workforce development area,
- Move the counties from the Eastern Area into one or the other area,
- Split the counties from the Eastern Area and add to each of the other two areas – Tulsa and Northeast.

They are very close to a decision that will be satisfactory to everyone involved including Commissioners Dan DeLozier, Leon Warner, and Ken Doke.

Don wants to emphasize what this does and doesn’t mean:

- It **DOESN’T** mean –
 - Loss of funds to any county
 - Loss of control of local workforce
 - Focus only on large cities
 - Loss of services to individuals we serve

- Loss of services to Business and Industry Clusters we serve
 - Funding redirected to any business
- It **DOES** mean –
 - Local decision process
 - Updated workforce footprint aligned with Economic Development Areas
 - Representation from all areas
 - Funding continues to be allocated by county
 - Economy of scale as more people work together to combine funding and resources toward a common set of goals and outcomes
 - Maintain a high level of workforce services and continued mission success
- Dislocated Worker Grant Funds and Activities – OESC was kind enough to send out information to UI claimants on various grants and activities that we put into place:
 - CompTIA Pilot Project (100 DLWs)
 - Virtual Training Activities (250 DLWs)
 - Humanitarian Relief Employment
 - Supportive Services (child care, transportation, rental assistance and PPE)
- Workforce Outreach Campaign – we are about to launch a new campaign greatly utilizing social media such as Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, etc. Don asked Council members to share the information with their networks.
- Don said that OOWD had intended to have an Annual Workforce Conference this fall, but because of the “*new normal*” and not being able to meet together, they have planned a virtual workforce conference and are featuring webinars on various workforce system topics and will have speakers from various states to talk about what they are doing and what works for them. The one-hour sessions are:
 - November 4 – Efficient WIOA Structure
 - December 2 – Workforce Data Systems and Infrastructure
 - January 6 – Sector Partnership Networks
 - February 3 – WIOA Cross Training
 - March 3 – Workforce System Awareness and Marketing
 - April 7 – Virtual Service Delivery
 All Council members are encouraged to register for the free webinars.
- Federal and Military Event, September 30, 2020 – This was an all-day virtual hiring event and was very successful in hiring individuals at various businesses.
- A State Workforce Leaders Meeting was held on October 14. Many workforce leaders were present and discussed what develops and builds and creates a strong workforce. They also discussed the results from the Maher and Maher survey which gave them a platform to rekindle some strategic planning that was done about 18 months ago. They will be meeting monthly going forward.
- Workforce Metrics – A monthly one-pager will be widely distributed to stakeholders and legislators. Don said if you go to OklahomaWorks.gov, there are a lot of tools available on the website. He said if anyone needs data, to reach out to us. We also partner with OESC, CareerTech, DRS, and Commerce and other data sources, so let us help support you in your data decisions.

Senator Pugh asked if there are additional CARES funding that happens with the start of the next calendar year, and do we have a list of priorities on how to spend it? Will it be for companies that were not able to access it for PPP or for certain sectors such as hospitality or travel and tourism? Is there a strategy moving forward since it looks like more money is coming and the pandemic is not going away?

Secretary Kouplen said in the last round of CARES funding, they formed a team that worked on the business relief program to see who would get the money. His belief is that they would have the same type of structure

going forward and do something similar to that. Secretary Kouplen said that he would prefer that they have a more targeted approach to spending. He said a lot of businesses through PPP got a lot of money, money that they really didn't need, so when they did the business relief program, they made it so you had to be down at least 25% in revenue. He said he is a big advocate in targeting industry sectors that need it the most.

WIOA Annual Performance Report – Dr. Natalie Daugherty, Office of Workforce Development

The Annual Performance Report covers the period July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020 (PY19)

- PY19 WIOA Performance Outcomes
 - Updated, intuitive dashboards available at www.OklahomaWorks.gov
 - Tools are available to Local Workforce Boards
 - Performance Assessment emailed to Local Directors
 - All PY19 Performance Success Thresholds met at State Level for Title I Programs (pending DOL's official review and application of the Statistical Adjustment Model)
 - All PY19 Performance Success Thresholds met at Local Levels for Title I Programs
 - Employment 2nd Quarter and 4th Quarter after Exit
 - Adult, Dislocated Workers, Youth, and Wagner-Peyser
 - Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit
 - Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Wagner-Peyser
 - Credential Attainment Rate
 - Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth
 - Measurable Skills Gains
 - Not Negotiated for PY19
 - Effectiveness in Serving Employers
 - Statewide
 - Remains in Pilot Phase – Not Negotiated

- PY19 Participants Served
 - Overall, there were 3,259 Adult participants, 484, Dislocated Workers, and 1,330 Youth participants served from July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020
 - Demographics captured include age, race/ethnicity, and sex (male/female)
 - Several barriers are captured at time of program enrollment (e.g., low income, individuals w/disabilities, ex-offenders)

• PY20 & PY21 Negotiated Goals

State Negotiated Targets (Title I & III)

| Indicator | Title I Adults | Title I Dislocated Workers | Title I Youth | Title III WP |
|--|----------------|----------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| Employment 2nd Quarter After Exit | 66.7% | 75.0% | 70.0% | 63.5% |
| Employment 4th Quarter After Exit | 67.0% | 75.5% | 66.0% | 64.0% |
| Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit | \$5,700 | \$8,200 | \$3,200 | \$5,800 |
| Credential Attainment Rate | 65.5% | 68.0% | 50.0% | N/A |
| Measurable Skill Gains | 62.5% | 65.0% | 59.9% | N/A |
| Effectiveness in Serving Employers | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline |

- Local Negotiations
 - Local Areas are required to negotiate performance goals with the state for Title I programs

- Process Overview
 - Local areas submit their proposed goals and narrative to OOWD
 - OOWD reviews the proposed goals and narratives
 - OOWD notifies local areas of acceptance or rejection of individual indicator goals
 - Negotiation process with local areas, as needed
 - Local performance negotiated levels due to DOL by 9/30/20

For the full report, go to link: <https://oklahomaworks.gov/performance-outcomes/>

For the PowerPoint Presentation, go to link: [WIOA Performance Outcomes](#)

Apprenticeship Program Update – Megan Scott, Office of Workforce Development

Megan Scott said that this week is National Apprenticeship Week in the U.S., but Governor Stitt issued a proclamation declaring that November is National Apprenticeship Month in Oklahoma. The proclamation recognizes that Registered Apprenticeship programs are uniquely able to meet the changing demands of the Oklahoma economy and provide a competitive edge for economic development by providing tangible value to both job creator and apprentices. Due to COVID-19, they've had to keep most of their apprenticeship celebration activities to a virtual level. They had their Annual Work-based Learning Summit on November 4, and it was all virtual and very well attended. They had more than 70 attend their live event and will have many more watch the recordings online on their YouTube channel. Megan said that they will be posting live events on apprenticeships over the next two weeks on their Facebook page featuring interviews with Don Morris with the Office of Workforce Development, Sharon Harrison with the Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance, Maria Brady with the U.S. Department of Labor, Registered Apprenticeships, and Jimmy Fish and other members of the Oklahoma Building and Construction Trades Council.

Megan said that 16 new registered apprenticeship programs in Oklahoma have been added over the past year and in total there have been 20 programs registered since December 2018. The majority of programs registered in the past year have been manufacturing and production jobs but they also have programs in IT, home care, and automotive maintenance and repair. Despite an increase in apprenticeship programs, Megan said that there is still a long way to go when it comes to diversifying the apprentice workforce. Ninety-eight percent of the apprentices in Oklahoma are men and 65% have identified as being white, so they will be strategically targeting their apprenticeship engagement to women, individuals of color, youths, and individuals who may have barriers to employment over the next several months.

Megan reported that they received an additional almost \$2 million in federal discretionary grants to support apprenticeship expansion. One and one-half million has been designated to increase opportunities for youth apprenticeship for youth who are 16-24 years of age. Oklahoma is one of 14 states to receive this grant, so we are very honored and excited about this project. Staff are working closely with the Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance to develop ten additional apprenticeship programs for youth out of this grant and the Oklahoma Building and Construction Trades Council to recruit youth into building and construction apprenticeships. Megan added that they are working strategically with agency partners who serve youth with barriers to employment to streamline our referral processes so that we can funnel youth into high quality jobs.

The Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development have announced grant opportunities for employers who want to register a new apprenticeship program. This is very similar to the incentive grants that they issued last year. Employers can apply for \$10,000 per an occupation if they are a single employer or they can apply for \$15,000 per occupation if they are part of a multi-employer consortium application. Monies can be used to offset the costs of on-the-job learning, related technical instruction and supportive services. Employers are required to partner with their local workforce board. This is a rolling application grant so there are no deadlines for applying. Megan said to send this information out to your networks and to anyone who might be interested in the program.

Megan added that they have contracted with a firm for communication and messaging outreach for apprenticeships. They plan to launch a robust social media campaign at the beginning of December to share apprenticeship stories from both the employer side and the apprentice side. They are also launching a micro site for employers and apprentices called "apprenticeshipsok.com" and the target date to launch it is

on December 14. This will be a one-stop area where anyone who has an interest in an apprenticeship in Oklahoma, they will be directed where to go whether it is someone looking for an apprentice job or an employer wanting to develop an apprenticeship program.

Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance (OMA) – Career Ladders for In-Demand Occupations – Dr. Sharon Harrison, OMA

Dr. Harrison said that about 18-24 months ago they realized that manufacturing was having continuing workforce problems and as a result of that, they formed a committee of about 35 from manufacturers around the state. They went through strategic planning to see what needs they had and what processes they could put in place to address those needs. The Workforce Committee formed three subcommittees: Technology- they are working with CareerTech; the second subcommittee was focused on Department of Rehabilitation services and the employment of people with disabilities in the state. This subcommittee expanded with a pilot with Ditch Witch. The third subcommittee was focused on career pathways.

A survey was sent out to manufacturers asking them what positions they were going to be hiring for, what occupations in the next five years, what skills they were looking for in their current and also in their future workforce. The survey results are listed below:

- Priority occupations identified:
 - Assembler
 - Material Handler
 - Machine Operator
 - CNC Machinist
 - CNC Programmer
 - Maintenance Technician
 - Welder
 - Front Line Supervisor

They developed career pathways for each occupation to show employees where their jobs may lead them and what training they could take to lead them on a different career path. They applied for and received a Sector Strategy grant to help them with their research. Dr. Harrison shared three of the career pathways in her presentation: CNC Machinist, Maintenance Technician, and Welder. For her PowerPoint presentation, go to link: [OMA Workforce Committee Career Ladders](#).

For additional information on the Manufacturing Career Pathways Tool, go to the Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance website: www.okalliance.com.

Benefits Cliffs Partnership Project-The Oklahoma CLIFF Pilot – Sarah Ashmore, Office of Workforce Development

Sara said that she is filling in for Council member Steve Shepelwich who couldn't be here today. The Office of Workforce Development has been partnering with the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City as well as the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta on a project to develop a data dashboard focused on benefits cliffs and examining what the impact of those are, not just on people's choices for the kinds of credential programs they enroll in but using it as a tool to examine our own policies and regulations and to see if we can mitigate some of the long-term impacts of that.

There are three primary goals or strategies associated with this tool. Primarily, it is looking at mapping benefits cliffs and trying to raise awareness and calculate the drop in benefits that occur, and looking at workforce development specifically and trying to use it as a tool to advise on career pathways and options so that jobseekers have a better understanding of the long-term impact of their choices. They also wanted to look at policies we have in place, either legislative or internal agency policies, and think about how we might alter those and using the tools to understand any changes to policy and the impact they might have.

Sarah gave a demonstration of the CLIFF: Career Ladder Identifier and Financial Forecaster dashboard. The mission is advancing careers for low-income families and to conduct research on benefits cliffs and

develop tools to support community and state efforts to improve economic security for families and meet the talent needs of businesses for a healthy economy.

A working group has been convened with agency partners that help oversee these programs, so they have childcare subsidy, Head Start, SNAP, TANF, Workforce, etc. They will be looking at what these benefits cliffs look like at different levels and if there are potential solutions that as a state we can address through policy to make these less severe for jobseekers and families that we serve. They are planning on doing an in-depth report on what they find and will provide it to the Governor's Council next year sometime to help with the Council's strategic planning.

For additional information, go to link: [Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, Benefits CLIFFS](#).

Centers of Excellence – Dr. Marcie Mack, Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education

Dr. Mack said that she, Dave Stewart, and Scott Fry had the opportunity to walk through the application process for Centers of Workforce Excellence in August and today they are pleased that they have communities that have stepped up and provided applications to be designated as a Center of Excellence. From the information that they received, they took the primary core that was coordinated around the state system of workforce. They did add a few pieces to that to help clarify for those who applied for the positions, still sticking with the purpose and mission of leveraging educational infrastructure. The strategy is local and regional, its demand in aligning with many of the conversations they've had here today about the labor market and what it looks like in the local community and making sure it is meeting their needs, and then being able to include various groups and also making sure that all of the partners are at the table. There were individuals who provided evidence in each of the certification areas outlining specifically their education and innovation, and their partnerships with advisory boards. Their advisory boards are an executive level and also a subject matter level, making sure that they realize that this is not a one and done kind of conversation but this is about progress over time to be designated as a Center of Workforce Excellence. Then the promotion and recognition and what is going on in their community and how are they recognizing at the various levels and how are they going to sustain this over time.

The applications they received were evaluated with all of the variables that fell into the rubric. Dr. Mack said that they did update some pieces after the conversation with the Council in July. After looking over the draft of applications that they had received, they defined more clearly what collaboration means - an active collaboration, not just a letter of support, as well as defining the industry focus. She said that some of the applications are very specific to one industry while others are broader and more specifically dedicated to workforce development. All of those provide critical infrastructure for workforce development for the state, so they delineated those out as well as better defining organizational structure and ensuring that the planning and progress component were a part of the application. Also, there will be checkpoints on the ones that are approved that will come back to the Council so you can see what progress has been made and how best practices are being captured to improve the processes.

All of the applications (nine total) that are to be considered today for approval have met the criteria in the rubric and have been reviewed by the committee. Dr. Mack asked if anyone had questions regarding the applications or the criteria.

Q. Secretary Kouplen commented that it looks like there are three applications that are non-specific in terms of industry. How does that work?

Dr. Mack replied that if someone is non-specific, it means that the area they're providing in workforce development touches on multiple factors. For example, Canadian Valley Technology provides training and skillsets across multiple industry sectors. So if they are providing welding, it's not just for manufacturing, but could be for aerospace or transportation, distribution and logistics. They cover multiple ecosystems or industry sectors. It may not be a primary ecosystem (as defined by the Dept. of Commerce) but definitely is a complementary one, so in all of their pieces they have multiple targets of industry that they support so that's where they fell into non-specific because they are using those transferable skillsets to make sure they are meeting local needs.

Q. Senator Pugh asked if Dr. Mack could explain to him what does this do for those particular centers, will they have access to additional dollars or federal dollars or will this be tied to specific appropriations requests either by CareerTech or by Higher Ed to the State Legislature? When one of these become designated as a Center of Excellence, what is the advantage to those entities that you have listed as a convener?

Dr. Mack replied that as they have had conversations around the Centers of Excellence, they have been very upfront about this – it does not ensure any funding or any additional dollars, although at some point they would like for it to lead to that in future conversations. The first piece, and the most critical piece, is making sure that we are communicating and marketing out what we can do for workforce development in the State of Oklahoma. So we have specific communities who have infrastructure in place that help us to illustrate as we are either recruiting individuals to the State of Oklahoma or to retain our great companies that we already have in Oklahoma, we want to assure them that we do have workforce development and have multiple groups that can provide for their workforce development. That is the first step in becoming designated as a Center of Workforce Excellence.

Q. Senator Pugh said that there are multiple types of entities, and he will just focus on the education entities for the moment. He said, for example, Rose State is tied to aerospace and cyber security, which obviously makes sense for them geographically, they already have a lot economic leverage there. Is the goal for education institutions is to drive them towards specific offerings that are compatible with their Center of Excellence? My frustration is that you have a higher ed institution that may have some competitive advantages to be really good at a couple of things and then they build a \$20 million building and open up a philosophy department, which makes no sense. So is the goal to get some of these institutions to maybe leverage their advantage and go with some of the Centers of Excellence concepts so we can have these areas of specificity?

Dr. Mack said that the conversations that they have had around Centers for Excellence is that they are locally driven. What the conversation has been with the executive or advisory group that they have from that local area is that they are determining what their targets are and what their focus is. They are defining that at the local level, it is not defined by the Governor's Council or the Statewide Workforce Group. She said in the applications that they received, it does not signify other programs or other components that they may be shifting to the focus of aerospace, but it does show a very concentrated effort on aerospace and cyber security for both of them.

Q. Senator Pugh asked what is the strategy going forward for how this will be communicated to high school students or maybe repatriating manufacturing companies – will it be through Commerce or CareerTech? What is the plan to be able to go and tell industry in Oklahoma but when Secretary Kouplen and the Governor are out in California, how are we going to communicate to them that we're kind of being very intentional about creating a solution to some of their needs?

Dr. Mack said that, hopefully, with the approval of the first set of applications for Centers of Excellence presented today, our next step will be that branding and marketing piece and Dave has a group that he already has ready and waiting as soon as we have Centers of Excellence approved. There will be schools that will be communicating that out and the Department of Commerce has been part of that conversation as well as Tony Hutchison with the State Regents, SDE, and CareerTech. So as soon as the Centers of Excellence are approved, we will communicate with Secretary Kouplen and his team as well as any group that would be economic development and bringing companies into the state.

Q. Tony Hutchison said that as far as he knows they don't have any \$20 million philosophy buildings in the system. Also, on any of our campuses, for any degree approval, there are policies that require that they have to look at the 100 Critical Occupations. Generally, what the four largest degree granting areas in Higher Ed are in the Business Management areas, Health occupations, STEM occupations, and Education. Each of those campuses, especially in the Business and STEM areas, will try to tailor their degree programs to the industries in the area or in the state. In the case of both TCC and Rose State, Aerospace is such an important piece in those areas that they tailored those Centers of Excellence to be around their IT and their Engineering Technology to serve those areas. Another example is manufacturing. Murray State College has a manufacturing technology oriented focus. So, all of the colleges will have generalized areas but will

have specifics that relate to those industries in their area. Tony said that they're hopeful that this marketing piece on the Centers of Excellence will draw more industry and hopefully as that becomes apparent, there'll be investment in the Centers of Excellence.

A motion was made to approve the applications for the Centers of Excellence by Sean Kouplen, seconded by Chuck Gray. The motion was carried unanimously.

Core Partners Updates

- Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) – Randy Weaver
 - On October 15, DRS hosted their first virtual Business Summit – Breaking Barriers for an Inclusive Workforce. The event was designed for business partners and it was a huge success. It was attended by over 400 employers, staff, and human resource professionals. Thanks to Secretary Kouplen for giving the opening remarks and support for the event.
 - The DRS Business Services Team provides many benefits for employers offering a wide variety of free training for staff, tax incentives for hiring our candidates, and making the workplace accessible. There's on-the-job training, paid internships, paid work experience, and support for our candidates with follow-up and accommodation needs. Employing people with disabilities has helped employers to tap into the disability market, build brand trust and loyalty and create new products and services. For more information on DRS Business Services, visit: www.okdrs.gov or e-mail businessservices@okdrs.gov.
 - On December 3rd from 11:30-1:00, Share Fair Online Webinar for parents highlights services they offer to assist parents of children with disabilities to achieve their dreams of an education and an independent future. The webinar is sponsored by DRS, Department of Human Services, Central Tech, and Sooner Success. Registration can be found on www.okdrs.gov.
- Career and Technology Education (CT) – Dr. Marcie Mack, State Director
 - As they were talking previously about Measurable Skills Gains for Title II, they have met all of their criteria for High School Equivalent.
 - All of their sites are back open and they have ways to serve individuals entirely virtually.
 - They have one program that they are working to expand on, an integrated pilot program with CareerTech and Oklahoma City Community College. They are working on expanding English Language in Civics and Pharmacy Tech.
 - Marcie wanted to give special thanks to Shelley Zumwalt, OESC, and her team regarding data sharing. They were able earlier this year to have a very successful data share with OESC. Oklahoma has some of the best targets for Title II.

Next Meeting

The next Governor's Council meeting is January 29, 2021.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at approximately 11:12 a.m.

*Respectfully submitted,
Linda Emrich*