

## **Governor's Council for Workforce and Economic Development**

### **MEETING MINUTES**

**Date:** February 11, 2022

**Time:** 9:00 A.M.

**Place:** 900 N. Portland Ave., Oklahoma City, OK 73107, Student Center, North & South Conference Rooms

#### **Call to Order/Welcome**

Chair, Chuck Gray called the meeting to order, welcomed the group and reviewed the agenda.

#### **Governor's Address to the Council**

Chair, Chuck Gray, introduced Secretary of Commerce and Workforce Development, Scott Mueller. Secretary Mueller gave a brief update and said that we need a highly capable, highly trained workforce for employers. We are at the intersection of opportunity and investment.

Secretary Mueller introduced Governor J. Kevin Stitt.

Governor Stitt thanked everyone for attending and acknowledged many of the agency heads in attendance. He said that Secretary Mueller is the greatest Secretary of Commerce in the country and thanked him for his leadership and the great job that he's been doing representing Oklahoma.

Governor's update:

- Canoo will be adding up to 2,000 new jobs.
- 40,000 more Oklahomans have jobs today compared to when I took office.
- We are well positioned to continue our momentum to becoming a Top 10 state.
- 27,000 people have moved to our state. Many from places like California because of our freedom here.
- Our unemployment rate is 2.3%.
- Our revenue is up and we now have the largest savings account in the state's history. We will be able to cut taxes for families and business. We are working to cut the grocery tax.
- Tinker Air Force Base – a huge asset for the state – is rapidly expanding. We expect to hire 6,000-10,000 over the next five years.
- Our State's workforce needs to grow at the same pace as our businesses. It is imperative that we train for aerospace, engineers, etc.
- Our entire education system must be aligned. We must tear down the silos to train the next generation. We need to reward universities for producing graduates in critical occupations such as engineering and nursing.
- Every student needs to be college ready or career ready. That's why we have to provide career paths to match the skills of our students with the jobs in our communities. Let's increase both apprenticeships in high school and pathways to jobs that don't require a college degree.

- There's a learning loss due to COVID. In Arizona, Gov. Ducey, gave parents the flexibility to ensure their child has access to in-person instruction without disruption if their school shuts down for even one day.
- Gov. Stitt is pushing the Oklahoma Empowerment bill.
- Lindsey Nicole Henry Scholarship Act for a public school student with disabilities to attend a participating private school approved by the State Board of Education.
- We need more innovation and to keep the momentum going.

### Introductions

Chair, Chuck Gray, introduced the new Chancellor of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, Allison Garrett, who will be attending Council meetings. He also introduced new Council member, Cliff Stewart with the Electrician's Training Center.

### Approval of April 30 and July 30, 2022 Minutes

A motion to approve the April 30 and July 30, 2022 minutes was made by Marcie Mack, seconded by Melinda Freundt. No further discussion. The motion carried unanimously.

### Consent Agenda

A motion to approve the Consent Agenda was made by Jimmy Curry, seconded by Dan DeLozier. The motion carried unanimously.

### Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development Update

Don Morris, Director, Office of Workforce Development, gave the following information on 2022 Workforce Strategies:

## Strategy 1: Expand Access to Services

**Purpose** – To improve Labor Participation through awareness and service availability

#### Strategy 1A: Mobile Workforce Units

- Expands services to more rural communities across the state
- ARP Fund Request of \$3M
- Annual Operating Expense of \$65k per unit funded through OOWD funds
- Schedules set quarterly with partner agencies, local business and Local Boards

#### Strategy 1B: Library System Partnership

- Provides more opportunity to school age citizens to attain a high school diploma
- \$200k spend from Governor's Discretionary funding (WIOA)
- Partnership with K-12 and the Library System
- 18-month program at no cost to the student

#### Strategy 1C: Co-location with other State agencies

- Working with DHS to include space in their growing strategy for Hope Centers statewide.
- Helps connect participants to other services creating a true one-stop

#### Strategy 1D: Connect with the ICAP process through a statewide publishing

- In partnership with K-12, CTE, and OSRHE

## Strategy 2: Continue to Enhance Workforce Business Services

**Purpose** – To create awareness of the Business services we offer in an effort to deepen partnerships and pave the way for future employment

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**Strategy 2A:** Increase funding and awareness for Sector Partnership Grants

- Double the 2022 spend from \$500k in 2021 to \$1M
- Conduct Statewide meetings to roll-out the application process and answer questions
- Strategically target talent pipelines in the most needed economic sectors

**Strategy 2B:** Hardwire Workforce communication with Economic Leadership

- Meetings between Local Business Services Representatives and Commerce's Regional Development Specialists
- Attend and present updates at Chamber meetings (Ref. Strategy 2d)

**Strategy 2C:** Continue the momentum of Apprenticeship Program growth

- Fill open positions
- Examine more grants and funding opportunities
- Continue taking full advantage of media and social media opportunities

**Strategy 2D:** Communicate Business Services

- Provide timely and relevant information to GCWED members, Legislators, Social Media, Partners, and etc.
- Incumbent Worker Training Sector Partnership, the Skillful Talent series, and the Business Services investment from OOWD.
- Make presentations to EDOs via Commerce calls, Chambers of Commerce and other speaking opportunities



## Strategy 3: Connect State and Local Workforce Missions

**Purpose:** To hardwire communication between State level strategy and the Local Workforce Board Mission. To share success stories, best practices, and challenges for the purpose of improving the Workforce System as a whole

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**Strategy 3A:** Conduct a quarterly call between the GCWED leadership and Local Board leadership

- Calls to be held virtually with each individual Local WF
- Initial Focus will be on the Governor's 4 strategies
- Local Directors will present an update to GCWED members
- Time for open discussion and Q&A
- An atmosphere of supportive collaboration

**Strategy 3B:** Continue monthly strategy calls with OOWD and Local Directors

- Opportunity for detailed answers from State experts

**Strategy 3C:** Obtain Local expertise and input prior to the implementation of new policies and products



## Strategy 4: A New Workforce Management System

**Purpose** – To update and upgrade the system currently in use across the Workforce System to create synergy, efficiency and effectiveness

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### Issues with the current System:

- Old/Low technology
- Upgrades are not keeping pace with needs
- Customer services
- Data sharing barriers
- Not impressive to Job Seekers or Employers

### Opportunities with Advancement:

- Increase in Employer participation
- A more relevant job search engine and App
- Built in reporting for multiple agency requirements
- Better analytics to create understanding and on-time metrics
- A look and feel that is competitive with current technology expectations
- Keeping pace with WIOA and other rule changes (ensures compliance)



Don added that going forward at the meetings we will have financial reports from our Director of Fiscal Compliance and Operations, Connie Littleton, and Legislative updates from Gen. Brent Wright

### Autism Foundation of Oklahoma

Emily Scott, Executive Director, Autism Foundation of Oklahoma, presented the following information on Increasing Neurodiversity in Oklahoma Workplaces – A Workforce Development Initiative from the Autism Foundation of Oklahoma:

- Mission of the Autism Foundation of Oklahoma is to improve the lives of Oklahomans with autism and their families.
  - Program Areas
    - Advocacy and Awareness
    - Early Childhood Intervention
    - Workforce Development
    - Criminal Justice Reform
    - Public Safety
- What is Neurodiversity?
  - Neurodiversity refers to the concept that differences in brain functioning within the human population are normal, and that brain functioning that is not “neurotypical” should not be stigmatized or excluded.
  - People with autism, ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia and other neurological differences are collectively referred to as neurodivergent individuals.
- Untapped Workforce
  - 6.5 million – approximate number of people in the U.S. with autism, intellectual, and/or developmental differences
  - 85-90% - Percent of adults with autism or autism spectrum disorder (ASD) are unemployed or underemployed

- 42% - Percent of adults with ADHD less likely to be employed full-time than adults without the disorder
- 1.1 million – Number of young people with autism turning 18 over the next decade
- Why This Matters
  - 81% - Never lived independently
  - 64% - No postsecondary education
  - 24% - Social isolation
  - 42% - No employment
- The Solution
  - Two-Pronged Approach
    - Employee Training Programs
    - Employer Training and Hiring Programs
- Competitive Advantage
  - Unique ability to hyperfocus for long periods of time
  - Ability to focus on small details
  - Superior analytical skills
  - Creative and novel ways of approaching problems
  - Ability to recognize and learn patterns
  - Ability to think in 3D
- Industry Leaders
  - SAP
  - Hewlett Packard
  - Microsoft
  - Ford
  - Caterpillar
  - Dell Technologies
  - IBM
  - JPMorgan Chase
- Results
  - Improved Cybersecurity
  - Fewer Workplace Errors
  - Talent Retention
  - Dependability, Motivation, Engagement and Peer Integration
- Call-to-Action
  - Training for management and peers
  - Implement mentoring programs
  - Neurodiversity hiring initiatives and partnerships
- Our Role
  - Partner and collaborate
  - Recruit and train
  - Create a network of neurodiverse-friendly workplaces in Oklahoma that will:
    - Increase employment for this population
    - Enhance business productivity and bottom-lines

- Support independent living
- Employer Resources
  - ADHD@Work: Initiative from the Attention Deficit Disorder Association. Help for companies that employ adults with ADHD.
  - Workplace Inclusion Now: Nonprofit Autism Speaks' employment system.
  - SourceAble: Tools to tap and recruit unique talent.
  - Neurodiversity Hub: Tools for tech companies to recruit, hire and retain talent.
  - Blog and Tools: From the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy.
  - Neurodiversity in the Workplace: Supports for neurodiverse job candidates and employers.
- Get Involved, Make A Difference
  - Visit [www.AutismFoundationOK.org](http://www.AutismFoundationOK.org) for more resources, ways to get involved, and to donate to our programs.

### **State Plan 2-Year Modification For Approval**

Susannah Gravley, Deputy Director, Office of Workforce Development, explained that as part of the requirements from the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education, the Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development, Oklahoma Employment Security Commission, Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education, and Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services will be completing a 2-year modification to Oklahoma's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) State Plan. The plan is due March 15, 2022 to the U.S. Department of Labor.

The Plan was open for comments on the Oklahoma Works website and public meetings regarding the Plan were scheduled as follows:

- January 7, 2022, 9:15 a.m. at OSU-OKC, Student Center, Pruitt Suite, 900 N. Portland Ave., Oklahoma City, OK 73107.
- January 21, 2022, 11:00 a.m. at Tulsa Technology Center, Conference Center Meeting Room, 801 E. 91<sup>st</sup> Street, Tulsa, OK 74132.
- January 28, 2022, 10:00 a.m. – Virtual Meeting, to register: <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJUqdeCpqD4rEtcPlfo1r8uwf7MyHmMTgCKZ>

Deadline for public comments was January 31, 2022.

Summary of Modification Focus –

- Data-driven decision making
- Re-employment
- Equity
- Enhanced Supportive Service Offerings
- Stakeholder collaboration
- COVID-19 impact and response

One question was received regarding the Earn and Learn opportunity and Susannah said that we cannot repeat that funding opportunity anymore.

Susannah thanked all of the Core Partners for their timely contributions.

Chair, Chuck Gray, asked for a motion to approve the 2022 Oklahoma State Plan. Jenna Morey made a motion to approve it, seconded by Marcie Mack. No further discussion. The motion carried unanimously.

## Core Partners WIOA Titles Update

- Title II – OK Career and Technology Education
  - Dr. Marcie Mack, State Director, reported that the Adult Basic Education program is now called Adult Education and Literacy and is in the process of going through regranting which will be effective July 1, 2022. There are currently 31 providers, 111 sites.
  - They have three specific programs in partnership with the Department of Corrections: CDL, Welding and Career Ready. They are in the process of hiring instructors.
  - Starting on February 1<sup>st</sup>, in partnership with the Dept. of Public Safety, they have three pilot centers that will start CDL testing at the Technology Centers. Once they work through any issues with the pilots, they will expand the testing to additional Technology Centers.
  - Aerospace – Junior and senior A&P (K-12 & Career Tech pilot) in partnership with the Aeronautics Commission
  - They have launched their electrician series to excite people to get into the industry to fill the jobs that are there.
  - This month is National Career Tech month.
  
- Title III – OK Employment Security Commission

Cody Cox, Regional Office Director, introduced Michelle Britten, Chief Operating Officer. They reported on the following items.

  - National Governor’s Association Workforce Innovation Network
    - OESC was awarded \$100,000 and invited to join NGA’s Workforce Innovation Network.
    - OESC is representing Oklahoma in this critical workforce initiative that specifically targets Oklahoma’s rich rural areas.
    - They are championing a pilot rural workforce solution that will close the digital skills gap and bring upward economic mobility to members of the workforce that lack college degrees and or have low digital skills.
    - The grant period runs through this summer. OESC is partnering with Commerce, DHS, the Governor’s policy team, and the Legislature to leverage all available strategies and funding.
  - Agency Initiatives
    - OESC is working towards holistic solutions to strengthen and build the workforce.
    - They are creating a pay for performance framework to drive outcomes that reward staff for robust case management and provides long-term employment solutions for citizens who are entering the workforce.
    - OESC’s new vision: Empowering Oklahomans to work and live well.
      - OESC’s reach and ability to impact Oklahoma’s economic wellbeing is broad
      - Their work empowers Oklahomans to not only reenter the workforce, but to have a renewed passion and purpose for their lives.
      - Oklahoma’s workforce touches every aspect of our citizens lives
    - Mission: Connecting Oklahomans to the workforce through reliable and innovative services.
  
- Title IV – OK Department of Rehabilitation Services

Melinda Fruendt, Executive Director, reported the following:

  - People with Disabilities Awareness Day – On March 8, 2022, DRS will host the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual People with Disabilities Awareness Day which will be held at the Oklahoma History Center in Oklahoma City. The event will host more than 70 disability-centric exhibitors and will celebrate the success of the Awareness Day winners. The event

will be from 12:00n – 4:00 p.m. To sign up as an exhibitor or to attend, visit link: <https://www.okdrs.gov/pwdad/2022>.

- Process Improvement Report – The DRS Process Improvement Unit recently released a report on the COVID impact on the Workforce for Individuals with Disabilities. DRS will share the report with the Governor’s Council.
- The Oklahoma Inclusive Post-Secondary Education Alliance Partnership (IPSE) with DRS – DRS entered into a new partnership with Sooner Success and Oklahoma State Department of Education/Special Education Services. This partnership highlights the need to ensure that Oklahoma students with intellectual and developmental disabilities have opportunities to attend higher education institutions and participate fully in campus life. The alliance is a group dedicated to support the IPSE programs and the students they serve to achieve independence and competitive integrated employment.
- Vocational Rehabilitation and Services to the Blind and Visually Impaired – In 2021, the VR/SBVI program has received 3,986 applications, which is an increase of almost 600 more applicants than 2020. 2,769 plans of employment were written reflecting an increase of 584 employment plans since 2020.
- Pre-Employment Transition Services (ETS) and Youth Camp – The Pre-ETS Specialists are working with 135 schools statewide and have served over 3,200 students since 2019. Most students are potentially eligible for DRS services or have the intent of applying for services, or are current DRS clients. There are 15 Pre-ETS Specialists and they are expanding the contract to hire an additional four specialists.
- VIBE-Visually Impaired Blindness Empowerment – VIBE will be held on June 26-July 1, 2022 and July 24-29, 2022. The transitional VIBE program provides assessment and career/higher education exploration for students. This two-week program is designed to prepare the individual for higher education, competitive workforce opportunities and independent living. Communication skills, team building, resume skills, interviews and career exploration are a part of the two-week program.

### **Roundtable Discussion**

- Sub-committees – Chair, Chuck Gray, said that the mission of the Governor’s Council is to assist the Governor in the development, recommendation, implementation, and impact assessment of wealth-generating policies and programs within the workforce system and consistent with the WIOA State Plan and the functions of the State Workforce Development Board as required by WIOA.
  - The Council has the Executive Committee, Workforce System Oversight Committee and the Health Care Workforce Committee as standing committees. The Health Care Workforce Committee needs to be reinvigorated with some new members. Which Council members want to be on what committees? Teresa Huggins is currently a co-chair and we appreciate the work that she is doing, but we need to get her some help.
  - Youth Programs – Focuses on K-12, and Career Pathways Committee
    - Need to create a continuous seamless progression to college ready or career ready. We want to develop a college ready, career ready initiative that integrates with the restart of the Career Pathways Committee. That will provide career pathways from entry level to CEO for those who want to take advantage of the opportunity.
    - The proposal is to reignite Career Pathways and integrate it with the Youth Programs committee to provide a seamless path from Kindergarten through higher education that supports the technology skill base that Oklahoma’s



present and future workforce requires. So, we are taking volunteers to join the committees and get the ball rolling.

- Business Engagement and Legislative – Chair Gray suggested that the Council look at forming a business led committee that will integrate those things that our legislative team needs to be aware of so it can help them advocate the things that Oklahoma needs. Chuck said that he would like to propose the establishment of a joint Business Engagement-Legislative Committee. Any thoughts?
- Geoff Hager said on the Legislative Business aspect of it, he and a few others at the meeting have seen so many talented personnel here that come from education, human and health services, etc., that he and Chad feel that they can be of most value on the Legislative and Business Engagement Committee because of their business experience. Geoff said that he would like to make a motion to form the Legislative and Business Engagement Committee. Michelle Choquette seconded the motion. Further discussion that Chad Mariska chair the committee and Chad agreed that he would chair. The motion carried unanimously. (They will work on the name of the committee.)
- Career Pathways and Youth Programs Committee combined – Dr. Mack said that there is a critical need for an aerospace pipeline and that process needs to start early. Chancellor Garrett added that it likely should begin with pre-K kids, and goes all the way through K-12, Career Tech, and Higher Education.
- Jenna Morey said as a CBO non-profit provider, she thinks it is very important to integrate that committee to assist people that she serves, women who are criminal justice involved, that fell out of the education system when they were 14. Many of these individuals have not had opportunities for career exploration or to attain a GED. Jenna thinks that it is super important to help those who may have gotten lost in the system as well.
- Marcie Mack made a motion to combine the Career Pathways and Youth Programs Committees into one committee. Melinda Fruendt seconded the motion. No further discussion, the motion carried unanimously.
- Chair, Chuck Gray, said that he would like for the committee (need volunteers) to develop a seamless mission statement for the integrated committee that we can move forward with and achieve the Governor’s goal of Career Ready/College Ready.
- The Council was asked if there were any other sub-committees that they felt was needed and no other committees were suggested.
- If anyone wants to volunteer to be on a committee, please contact Linda Emrich at [linda.emrich@okcommerce.gov](mailto:linda.emrich@okcommerce.gov).

**Old Business**

None.

**New Business**

None.

**Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Governor’s Council will be on April 29, 2022 at 9:00 a.m.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 10:45 a.m.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Linda Emrich*