

**STATE OF NEVADA
GOVERNOR'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
BARRIERS SUBCOMMITTEE**

Wednesday, April 24, 2024 - 2:00 p.m.

Virtual Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85880877314?pwd=VzE0RlMvVWQzNDh5YisxeE5NbExCQT09>

Teleconference Line

1-669-900-6833

Meeting ID: 858 8087 7314

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MINUTES OF MEETING

Present: Ken Evans (Chair), Dr. Tiffany Tyler-Garner (Vice Chair), Jerrie Merritt, George Gault, Kevin Landry, David Dreibelbis, Derrick Gyamfi, Evelyn Thompson-Hilbert, Crystal Slaughter, David Schmidt, Kam Green

Absent: Michael Yoder

Also present: Katie Gilbertson, Henry Bartholomay, Armando Leiva, Milt Stewart, Clarissa Cota, J.D.

1. CALL TO ORDER - OPENING REMARKS

Chair Evans called the meeting to order and welcomed participants.

2. ROLL CALL – CONFIRMATION OF A QUORUM

Katie Gilbertson took roll call and confirmed the presence of a quorum.

3. VERIFICATION OF PUBLIC NOTICE POSTING

Katie Gilbertson affirmed that the agenda and notice of the Governor's Workforce Development Board (GWDB) Subcommittee meeting on April 24, 2024, was posted pursuant to Nevada's Open Meeting Law, NRS 241.020.

4. FIRST PUBLIC COMMENT(S) NOTICE

Chair Evans opened the first period of public comments. There were none.

5. *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION – Approval of January 24, 2024 minutes

Chair Evans called for any discussion on the January 24, 2024 meeting minutes. **It was moved by Evelyn Thompson-Hilbert and seconded by Kevin Landry to approve the January 24, 2024 minutes.**

6. DISCUSSION/INFORMATIONAL ONLY – Update from Work Group

Vice Chair Tyler-Garner communicated her appreciation of the laser-like focus to ensure movement around employment challenges for the greater need in each community. She is ecstatic about the work progression and thankful for the vision and leadership of Chair Evans.

Evelyn Thompson-Hilbert echoed the sentiments of Vice Chair Tyler-Garner and brought up a continued goal to receive feedback from the community members or individuals we are serving to have a full, well rounded task force. She also added the committee can collaborate and act once the meeting was adjourned to continue sharing resources, ideas, innovations, etc.

Kevin Landry also shared his fellow members’ enthusiasm and included that he is excited about the Good Jobs Challenge grant that focuses primarily on serving communities in the north, that will make an immediate impact.

Chair Evans concluded by stating that he invites members that directly or indirectly know of community groups, grassroots organizations, or frontline organizations that serve the underserved population, to kindly inform the committee so that they can get feedback to follow up with them to create space for them in future meetings.

7. **DISCUSSION/INFORMATIONAL ONLY – Presentation from Opportunity @ Work and data dive on STARS (Skilled Through Alternative Routes)**

Henry Bartholomay, Senior Policy Manager, Opportunity @ Work, began by sharing the purpose of the organization, aiming to promote a skills-based economy, acknowledging that bachelor’s degrees aren’t the only path to development and success. Referring to individuals as STARS who build skills through alternative routes such as associate degrees, work experience, job training programs, or apprenticeships (anything other than a bachelor’s degree). Sharing his presentation, he covered key national and Nevada data points for this population. Additionally, discussing Opportunity @ Work’s efforts to support STARS in the public sector with the following key points:

- Nationally there are over 70 million STARS in the US economy; over 50% of the active US labor force. In Nevada, there are nearly over 800,000 STARS.
- Black workers are more likely to be STARS.
- It takes 30 years for a STAR to match the wages of a bachelor degree holder. Additionally, STARS earn 70 cents for every dollar that a bachelor degree holder earns.
- There are three trajectories of STARS:
 1. Shining Stars – based in high wage jobs today
 2. Rising Stars – based in roles with highly transferable skills and multiple pathways to higher wage work
 3. Forming Stars – based on skills that will provide small wage gains through limited pathways
- Trends in the public sector that include State initiatives, challenges in implementation, and collaborating with different states on pilot programs.
- Stars are underrepresented in the public sector. Government has an opportunity to shape the future of work in the US, driving economic opportunity and growth through policy.
- 21+ States lead the way in removing degree requirements, potentially unlocking access to so many good jobs.
- 2024 – STARS public sector hub’s goal is to equip the public with the resources, relationships, and need to move forward and enable “STAR” economic opportunity and mobility. Stressing communication between states.

During the presentation Mr. Bartholomay announced that they would be launching a STARS public sector hub on May 16 and encouraged members to check out the website and the press release of the full launch.

Chair Evans asked if Mr. Bartholomay is aware of the Workforce Connection skills-based career ready evaluation and certification process? Along with the dovetail of Ms. Thompson-Hilbert’s question if he is familiar with the ACT National Career Readiness certificate?

Henry Bartholomay replied that he knows they are connected with the ACT but was not sure if they were connected with the National Career Readiness certificates. He proposed to take note and investigate them a little more since there are so many organizations and partners that they are/should be working with.

Chair Evans recommended Workforce Connections and Nevadaworks as potential resources with whom to collaborate further. This partnership could leverage existing efforts and initiatives aimed at supporting disconnected youth and advancing skills-based employment opportunities.

Evelyn Thompson-Hilbert commented on her prior experience with ACT that has lots of career readiness research and that ACT has a comprehensive role in certifying credentials. She echoed Mr. Bartholomay's earlier sentiment about removing silos, noting that there are tremendous opportunities when everyone comes together.

Vice Chair Tyler-Garner asked if there was any data on how a star status is impacting retention and how are individuals leveraging upskilling employer sponsored apprenticeships and internships to improve their outcomes? Additionally, asking how she can engage with Mr. Bartholomay to get the City of Las Vegas engaged in discussion for opportunities to leverage internships with possible employer sponsored apprenticeships, to get more people into public service. Finally, asking if anyone is leveraging or providing training on how STARS may talk about their transferable skills to aid them in improving their employment outcomes.

Henry Bartholomay responded to the Vice Chair's questions with the following:

1. Retention impact for STARS in public sector – He presented an example of Maryland removing degree requirements and noted improvement in job postings and applications from STARS. Yet the long-term impact on retention is still being measured and data isn't fully public yet. This ongoing evaluation will provide insights into how these policies affect retention rates over time.
2. StellarSite.org – This tool provides a way to explore the percentage of STARS in specific areas like Las Vegas or across Nevada. It helps to analyze transferable skill sets across different career pathways, which is valuable for public and private sector employers in validating STARS skills.
3. Upskilling, employer-sponsored apprenticeships, and internships – Opportunity @ Work published reports highlighting wage gains associated with apprenticeships, particularly noting progress in sectors like tech and construction. While construction has a robust history of apprenticeships, tech industries are increasingly adopting similar models, including boot camp and apprenticeship training, with some challenges remaining.
4. Partnership with the City of Las Vegas – Expressed interest in collaborating with the city to explore areas such as hiring STARS, adjusting job descriptions, or enhancing accessibility for STARS in existing roles. This could potentially involve partnerships with Opportunity @ Work or other relevant entities familiar with these initiatives.
5. Transferable Skills Narrative – Opportunity @ Work supports STARS who advocate for skills-based hiring through initiatives like "Tear the Paper Ceiling," a national Ad Council campaign aimed at promoting awareness of skills-based talent. This campaign helps shift perceptions and practices towards recognizing and utilizing transferable skills in hiring processes.

David Schmidt was curious to know if the website had data on the post-Covid period that affected the casino industry, particularly Las Vegas from 2019 to 2022. He questioned if there is a guide or details on the methodology to what is being pulled out of the O*NET, in the instance we would want to recreate some of this analysis for our own labor market?

Henry Bartholomay answered that the data on the website should be up to date by the last quarter. He recommended viewing the site to be able to see the methodology behind the data collection and presentation described on the site, ensuring transparency and reliability. He also gave the example that Nevada can use StellarSite to analyze the percentage of STARS in specific occupations like software developers, to demonstrate various career paths and industries. Opportunity @ Work is working to enhance StellarSite to include more customizable features to allow states to independently explore and present data related to STARS without requiring direct consultation.

Chair Evans thanked Mr. Bartholomay for his great presentation and pointed out that there would be an opportunity for him to interact offline with Katie Gilbertson.

8. **DISCUSSION/INFORMATIONAL ONLY** – Presentation from DWSS Workforce Development Unit and Project 354 Updates
Armando Leiva, Family Services Specialist II-Employer Relations Specialist, Nevada Department of Health and Human Services introduced himself and shared that he was here to

speak to the committee on what Workforce Development Unit does, how they may differ from the approach of other departments in the workforce system, and also explain what Project 354 is for newer members. Mr. Leiva outlined that the unit was founded in late 2019 but began their full operational model in 2020. The team is relatively small with employees covering statewide operations in Nevada. What makes this team unique is that they all had direct experience as former TANF and SNAP case management experience which gives them a better understanding of the populations the unit serves. The team serves a dual role attending strategic meetings while working directly with clients and employers, being invaluable for refining approaches and reporting outcomes. The Workforce Development Unit has a social service philosophy that emphasizes a holistic approach to addressing employment needs, considering various factors, mentorship, and overall well-being.

Mr. Leiva shared some historical background in 1996, where the Riverside, CA welfare office piloted a successful workforce model. Almost all clients were employed by the end of the program. Over time, many lost their jobs due to offshore relocations. Offices using a "train to hire" model, where individuals are assessed, trained, and then placed into entry-level professional jobs, showed more sustainable outcomes in transitioning clients out of public assistance.

The Workforce Development Unit's operation approach engages directly with employers to understand their needs in workforce recruitment. It utilizes technology for outreach, referral models, and leveraging partnerships with educational institutions and volunteer programs to assess and refer clients. All while providing subsidized vocational training funded by various sources to address barriers with childcare, transportation, mental health issues, housing insecurity and domestic violence. Mr. Leiva then touched on individual development. Similar to cohorts, individual referrals come from agencies or external sources seeking training and job placement assistance. Targeted demographics include low-income families, working-class individuals, and niche populations such as those in recovery, combat veterans, refugees, asylum-seekers, and justice-involved individuals. Partnerships with organizations specializing in these populations help in providing targeted support and training.

He explained the various screening and assessments that are used to identify barriers ranging from minor issues like lack of childcare to more significant challenges such as domestic violence or unstable living conditions. Academic background assessments determine if high school equivalency or English language proficiency improvements are needed. Soft skills and life skills assessments are conducted to enhance workplace behavior, financial literacy, organizational skills, and other relevant competencies. Cognitive skills assessments, like ACT WorkKeys, are used in manufacturing to align cognitive abilities with job requirements.

The Workforce Development Unit's current projects include Vocational ESL, introducing vocational training combined with English language learning relevant to job terminology. This aims to support immigrant populations effectively. Additionally, the Unit is developing soft skills and life skills Training: Collaborating with UNLV on a pilot program to develop and implement training aimed at improving soft skills and life skills among cohorts. With a pilot program for vocational ESL and soft/life skills training aiming to expand successful initiatives with partner organizations. Future plans are to continue use of assessment tools to refine and tailor training to individual and industry needs.

Mr. Leiva pivoted to Project 354. Project 354, initiated under AB 354 during the 2017 legislative session, aims to address disproportionately high unemployment rates in underserved zip codes. Initial efforts included traditional workforce development activities such as job fairs, resource fairs, and surveys to gauge engagement. Early stages saw some community participation, but not to the desired extent. Current efforts involve targeting cohorts specifically from high-need zip codes to recruit directly from these areas. Increased direct outreach has led to more community feedback and some success, though more improvement is needed. Utilizing community stakeholders who have established trust within the community to identify and refer potential talent. Next steps include plans to engage directly in neighborhoods with the help of community stakeholders to build trust and confidence. Exploring the possibility of conducting training sessions within these communities, despite potential logistical challenges such as the availability of specific training equipment. Lastly, encouraging interested parties to join the workforce development meetings to contribute to the

project's ongoing efforts. The next meeting is pending, as the last one was postponed to the following quarter.

Vice Chair Tyler-Garner asked for further clarification on whether they negotiate wages as part of the cohort model and to what extent do they consider employer need and match as part of their Workforce Development model (emphasizing the social service model).

Armando Leiva pointed out that he wanted to emphasize not only are they coming from the holistic (social service) model, but it is also the speed of delivery to the individuals they serve that is important.

Kevin Landry had two questions, starting with what is distinctly different or unique about the Workforce Development Unit versus the two local boards (Workforce Connections and Nevadaworks)? His second question was when an individual first begins or walks into their office, what is the average amount of time it takes them to be placed in training or an individual program?

Armando Leiva believed the difference would be through direct outreach, physically going to locations where individuals they know may need help or electronic outreach where individuals are assessed and being referred to them immediately, answering the first question. Responding to the second question, Mr. Leiva shared that considering some of their needs are taken care of (such as childcare or transportation), it could take as little as a month to a month and a half, depending on possible barriers. It also depends on some of the agencies they partner with who have their own prerequisites.

David Schmidt questioned how the Workforce Development Unit targeted individuals, what was the size of the cohort, how many individuals are participating, and what is their success in maintaining their employment?

Armando Leiva commented that this would be a much larger conversation for another time as he would need to go and pull the data and be willing to share the captured data to address in future discussions. He responded to the rest of Mr. Schmidt's questions adding that there are some limitations to what the welfare division's software and the details it may not be able to capture. As a result, they have developed their own internal data collection methods. As far as initial targeting of individuals, the employer location focuses on nearby regions rather than distant locations. Consideration is given to the nature of the training and the individuals on the caseload with relevant prior experience. Cohort sizes vary based on employer needs, ranging from as small as three to as large as twelve. Larger groups are avoided to ease placement challenges.

Vice Chair Tyler-Garner addressed confusion regarding the integration and presentation of SNAP E&T within the broader workforce development initiatives.

Armando Leiva exclaimed SNAP E&T has not been fully leveraged yet because many agreements with educators were only recently established. The goal is to enhance SNAP E&T engagement. Along with efforts being made to eliminate redundant processes, ensuring that individuals do not have to provide the same information multiple times to different agencies. Once information is verified, it should be shared across all relevant partners. The Workforce Development Unit will continue working on expediting processes while maintaining service quality.

Chair Evans added the key objective in the strategic plan is to enhance collaboration across agencies and avoid working in silos, aligning with the points raised by Dr. Tyler-Garner. The other objective focuses on improving technology to streamline processes. This area benefits from the expertise of committee members like Derrick Gyamfi and Ryan Woodward. The strategic plan is currently under review, and all subcommittee members are encouraged to look at it. The plan addresses many of the concerns raised during the session, including collaboration and technology enhancements. Emphasizing the importance of providing clients with an efficient, effective, and timely experience when interacting with the workforce system, as highlighted by Mr. Landry.

9. **DISCUSSION/INFORMATIONAL ONLY** – Presentation form Nevadaworks on Good Jobs Northern Nevada Grant

Milt Stewart, CEO, Nevadaworks, started with the grant source from The U.S. Department of Commerce EDA (Economic Development Administration) via ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds and detailed that Nevadaworks received a \$14.9 million grant. The objective is to develop regional sector partnerships that are designed to inform and shape training programs to meet specific employer needs. As well as focus on underserved populations with target groups that include justice-involved individuals, those with disabilities, low-income individuals, and other commonly underserved or underrepresented populations. Mr. Stewart believes in a concierge-level of service delivering high-quality, tailored support to individuals, addressing their needs and barriers, and providing wrap-around services such as mentoring, soft skills training, and supportive services. Employer commitments consist of employers who inform the training programs commit to interviewing and potentially hiring the trained individuals.

Implementation ensures training aligns with employer needs and prepares individuals for specific job opportunities. With comprehensive support throughout the training and placement process, so individuals receive continuous support to mitigate barriers and enhance their employability. By following this model, Nevadaworks aims to create a more effective and supportive workforce development system that directly meets the needs of both job seekers and employers.

Mr. Stewart went on to discuss the introduction to support networks as Nevadaworks has engaged with community-based organizations to identify their contributions to the workforce development system. Adopting the Unite Us platform as a referral system, initially from healthcare, to streamline and track referrals for supportive services. The Unite Us functionality acts as a broker for supportive services, ensuring referrals are tracked and managed effectively, rather than relying on informal, manual methods. The pilot implementation was rolled out through Reno’s employment hub and used by Navigators to facilitate service delivery. They are working to leverage WIOA and hub models as an integration with the broader workforce system, involving multiple partners, employers, state organizations, and workforce organizations. Nevadaworks utilizes various funding streams (state and federal) and partners with organizations to ensure individuals receive the necessary support. This includes referrals to appropriate funding sources. They hope to ensure seamless referrals between different organizations, such as TANF, even though SNAP itself is not a mandated partner. While learning from Southern Nevada, adopting and amplifying successful models to enhance services in Northern Nevada. This approach aims to create a robust and responsive workforce development system in Northern Nevada, leveraging technology, community engagement, and collaborative funding to serve individuals effectively.

Current engagement and outreach includes participant enrollment (Good jobs enrollment) there are 92 participants enrolled, 322 individuals are in the interest pathway, with 105 expected to enroll in the next two to three weeks. Ease of engagement begins with an interest form simplified to lower barriers to entry. QR codes, links, and social media are used to promote the form, making it accessible at various touchpoints like libraries and municipal offices. There is support for low computer literacy with assistance provided at hubs and other access points to help individuals navigate the system.

Mr. Stewart went on to discuss tribal outreach and support. Sharing that there is a dedicated tribal navigator, who is a tribal member, engages with the 22 tribes in Northern Nevada to understand their workforce development needs. Along with helping based on tribal needs, including grant administration and application support. Noting that a council has been established to amplify tribal voices and support collective tribal efforts in workforce development and engaging with various tribal organizations to ensure a wide range of support and opportunities.

Partnerships and feedback include ongoing discussions with employers to understand their needs and align training programs accordingly. An inventory of existing educational resources is maintained to ensure alignment with employer needs and identify gaps. Bi-monthly employer hire surveys gather real-time information and adjust training programs accordingly. With a system designed to quickly respond to changing employer needs and labor market conditions.

Starting July 1, Nevadaworks will begin tracking service delivery metrics to establish benchmarks. Initial tracking will help set performance benchmarks for program effectiveness and participant outcomes to work towards continuous improvement goals and regular review.

Chair Evans presented Mr. Schmidt's chat about the response of employers to the hiring surveys.

Milt Stewart did not have the information available at this time but will share it with the committee forthcoming.

Chair Evans advised him to share the information with Ms. Gilbertson so she may ensure that it gets out to the entire subcommittee and stakeholders. Once again, he thanked Mr. Stewart for his presentation and what Nevadaworks is doing for the tribal outreach.

10. DISCUSSION/INFORMATIONAL ONLY – Presentation from CSN North Las Vegas

Clarissa Cota, Vice President, CSN North Las Vegas Campus, conveyed her pleasure to be here to present to the committee. CSN's role in the community is to help by serving a diverse population and providing essential support services. The overall mission is to empower both students and the community, to achieve, succeed, and most importantly, prosper. CSN is one of the largest community colleges in the country serving over 50,000 students. 41,000 of those students are on the credit side and about 7,000 students are on the non-credit side through adult education, workforce development, and training programs. Student enrollment includes about 73% part-time students. Data collection becomes quite important, factoring in that CSN is funded, most students are part-time, and they represent a diverse community with a great number of first-generation students. Along with students with disabilities, PELL-eligible veterans, and serving minority students. The emphasis on student success, including retention and completion rates, was commendable, especially given the challenges posed by the pandemic. This community served by CSN saw a drop from the fall of 2019 to the fall of 2020, losing close to 4,000 students.

Dr. Cota shared a comparison of data across all three campuses (Henderson, West Charleston, and North Las Vegas). The focus on continuous improvement and strategic initiatives, such as expanding dual enrollment and enhancing workforce-focused programs, reflects a forward-thinking approach to education. CSN is focused on improving access through initiatives like dual enrollment, Nevada Promise, and prison education programs. CSN also aims to enhance student retention through increased advisor and mental wellness services. Workforce development programs like nursing expansion and the ability to benefit program are crucial for addressing community needs, including helping individuals obtain their GED. CSN is committed to fostering a supportive environment for its diverse student body while preparing them for successful careers and community engagement. The Northwest Campus' Public Safety Institute is a key project aimed at consolidating training programs for public safety personnel. She concluded her remarks with an informational video.

Chair Evans thanked Dr. Cota for the great presentation and appreciated the indulgence, as he thought it was important for the committee to see the presentation and hear directly from the individuals/students themselves. He advised to invite Dr. Cota back for a focus presentation on CSN's workforce development and economic development entities.

11. DISCUSSION/INFORMATIONAL ONLY – Items for next agenda, next steps, and concluding remarks

Chair Evans concluded with the following items for the next meeting's agenda:

1. Collaboration and Shared Learning: Encouraging collaboration and breaking down silos to effectively address the needs of underserved populations across the state.
2. Examples of Effective Practices: Highlighting initiatives like what Mr. Stewart and Nevadaworks are doing with tribal outreach, where they have community members involved directly in their efforts.
3. Call for Input: Inviting suggestions and examples from participants about successful community-driven initiatives from all regions of Nevada, including North, South, rural, and tribal areas.
4. Next Steps: Encouraging those with ideas or examples to contact Ms. Gilbertson, himself, or Vice Chair Tyler-Garner to potentially feature these initiatives in future agendas.

12. **SECOND PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chair Evans called for a second round of public comment. There were none

13. **ADJOURNMENT**

The April 24, 2024 meeting was adjourned.

Notice of this meeting was posted on or before 9 a.m. on the third day prior to the meeting on the Internet at:

<https://gowinn.nv.gov/boards-commissions/gwdb/> and
[Nevada's Public Notice website at https://notice.nv.gov/](https://notice.nv.gov/), as required by NRS 232.2175.

Supporting public material provided to Committee members for this meeting is posted on OWINN's Website at <https://gowinn.nv.gov/boards-commissions/gwdb/> may be requested from the Executive Director's Office at 1 Harrah's Court, Las Vegas, Nevada 89119; or call (702) 486-8080.