

SA: Ready to Work Advisory Board

Meeting Minutes

WebEx Meeting

Tuesday, March 30, 2021

3:00pm – 4:00pm

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councilmember Adriana Rocha Garcia

Councilmember Rebecca J. Viagran

Chair, Jerry Graeber, Senior Project Manager, Leonard Contracting

Vice Chair, Doug McMurry, Executive Vice President, Associated Contractors (AGC)

Daphene Carson, Risk Manager, Edgewood ISD

Sonia Garza, VP of Operations, WellMed Medical Management (joined meeting at 3:20pm)

Ben Peavy, Managing Director, Accenture Federal Services

Emily Spurlock, Registered Nurse, Methodist Hospital

Cynthia Teniente-Matson, President, Texas A&M University-San Antonio (joined meeting at 3:10pm and left meeting at 3:44pm)

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Peter Holt, CEO, Holt Cat and Spurs Sports and Entertainment

Rosa Santana, CEO, Santana Group, Integrated Human Capital and Forma Automotive

STAFF AND OUTSIDE COUNSEL PRESENT:

Alejandra Lopez, Assistant City Manager

Amy Contreras, Economic Development Manager

Christina Ramirez, City Attorney's Office

Christina Reck-Guerra, Pre-K 4 SA West Center Director

Heber Lefgren, Director, Animal Care Services

Mary Mills, Advisory Board Staff Liaison

Olympia Cuellar, Senior Economic Development Specialist

GUEST PRESENTER:

Dr. Edith Westfall, CALCO Consulting

A. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Graeber called the meeting to order at 3:08pm after quorum was established.

B. PUBLIC COMMENT

No citizens registered in advance to make public comments.

INDIVIDUAL ITEMS

C. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Graeber asked members to review Advisory Board meeting minutes of March 23, 2021 and March 25, 2021. Mr. McMurry moved to approve both meeting minutes. Mr. Peavy seconded. The Board voted unanimously to approve.

D. Individual Items

1. Overview of Train for Jobs SA program.

Ms. Lopez provided an overview of the Train for Jobs SA (TfJSA) program, including a discussion of lessons learned. (See **Attachment A**, Board Presentation). Mr. McMurry noted that the TfJSA program will likely be viewed by the community as a trial run, but that the SA: Ready to Work program may face more scrutiny. He mentioned that a critic may view the current statistics of jobs placements as low compared to the program's overall budget, and that the SA: Ready to Work will need to be more efficient. Ms. Lopez noted that over 2,300 people are in training, another 4,600 are ready to enroll, and many residents are expressing interest in the program. She noted that there is a healthy pipeline and that the process takes time. Further, the persons identified as being placed in jobs have retained their jobs for at least 90 days.

Dr. Matson asked whether some of the participants being trained would fall into the category of participants that may have earned a certificate, but may not have completed requisite job experience. Ms. Lopez responded that at the beginning of the program, participants chose not to elect on-the-job training (OJT); however, that may shift going forward and need to be remembered as we develop the SA: Ready to Work program.

Ms. Garza asked if employers receive incentives for hiring TfJSA participants, other than access to a trained pool of employees. Ms. Lopez responded that the program pays participants' salaries as part of the OJT program, but that no other incentives are offered to businesses.

Ms. Garza asked what lessons were learned with respect to the intake process. Ms. Lopez mentioned that originally the City envisioned just one or two intake agencies. Workforce Solutions Alamo (WSA) was an obvious choice, considering that unemployed residents seek assistance through this agency. The City opted to offer easy access to residents via additional agencies based throughout the city, which ended up causing some confusion and duplicate records.

Ms. Spurlock asked whether the TfJSA program included a personality test as part of the process, to identify which career would work best for each participant. Ms. Lopez noted that was another lesson learned, in that different agencies offer a variety of tools and the SA: Ready to Work program should instill standardization among partners.

Ms. Garza raised the point that participants may need assistance with self-awareness and emotional intelligence as part of the career exploration process. Ms. Spurlock agreed, and offered an example relating to childcare, and how Project Quest helps participants develop backup plans and support networks.

Mr. Graeber noted that these discussions transition well into the next item, wraparound services.

2. Discussion and possible action related to wraparound services for the SA: Ready to Work Program.

Dr. Westfall presented an overview of City-recommended wraparound services, as adjusted to reflect Board input from the prior meeting. (See **Attachment A**).

Mr. Peavy noted that his view of case management is slightly different than wraparound services, in that a case manager has a relationship with participants and guides them through the process. He added that it is important to make sure that participants stay in the program and a case manager can be an essential connection. Dr. Westfall replied that the City envisions assigning a case manager to each SA: Ready to Work participant, and that the case managers will provide customized services to meet the needs of the resident.

Ms. Spurlock recommended that standardized career matching be added as a required wraparound service, to make sure that a participant is compatible with a particular job and career.

Ms. Garza requested details about case manager qualifications and requirements. Ms. Lopez noted that depending on the level of need, case manager qualifications may change. She also noted that the City will seek services from existing case management agencies based on their specific strengths and service specialties, and that the City is issuing a series of solicitations.

Mr. Graeber requested confirmation that addiction and drug abuse counseling support would fall under referral services. Dr. Westfall confirmed that such services fall outside of the scope of the SA: Ready to Work program, but that case managers would need to refer participants to available service providers. She also noted that the career exploration services would include customized education regarding specific industry requirements, which may include background checks and drug screening.

Mr. Graeber asked whether wraparound services would be available to participants once they have obtained gainful employment. Ms. Lopez responded that while the case manager will continue to track the participant's progress, wraparound services would no longer be available after job placement.

Mr. Peavy asked whether the City has already created a centralized database and intake system. Ms. Lopez responded that the City has begun designing a system and will include an expectation of system use in upcoming solicitations.

Councilmember Viagran asked whether standardized career matching would be considered a case management service or as a separate service to be solicited. Ms. Lopez responded that the City would include it in case management services.

Ms. Garza asked whether a participant who has completed a training or an educational program may re-enroll into the program to stack credentials. Ms. Lopez mentioned that the City does not envision allowing re-enrollment.

Ms. Spurlock asked whether the income eligibility requirements are based on household or individual income levels. Ms. Lopez responded that they are based on household income levels. Ms. Spurlock noted that may limit opportunities for one member of the household interested in participating. Ms. Lopez remarked that the City has limited resources and is trying to help those residents who do not have alternative household support.

Mr. Graeber mentioned the critical need for consensus on levels of wraparound services and asked whether Board members had any recommendations other than standardizing the career matching process. Ms. Garza recommended that the City add alcohol and substance abuse counseling to the list of referral services offered. Mr. Peavy mentioned that overall, the recommendations are very good, but that the Board needs to set targets and determine methodologies to track progress and to adjust as needed. Mr. Graeber agreed.

Ms. Garza noted that one of the lessons learned from the TfJSA program relating to obtaining experience for participants has not been addressed. Ms. Lopez replied that the Board can continue advising during the next conversations regarding program training and education allotment.

Mr. McMurry moved to accept the City's wraparound services recommendations as amended by the Board. Ms. Spurlock seconded. The Board voted unanimously to approve.

Mr. Graeber tabled items 3 and 4 until the next meeting.

3. Discussion and possible action related to target occupations for the SA: Ready to Work program.

Due to time constraints the Board did not cover this item.

4. Discussion and possible action related to allotment of certificates versus two- and four-year degrees offered through SA: Ready to Work.

Due to time constraints the Board did not cover this item.

E. STAFF COMMENTS

Ms. Lopez mentioned that she will be presenting the SA: Ready to Work program to City Council on April 7, 2021, and that she appreciates the Board's input. She also noted that it will be essential for the Board to continue to inform the program, as the City prepares its annual budget in May.

F. MEETING ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Peavy moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. McMurry seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 4:06pm.

APPROVED:
