



Workforce Coordinating Council

June 1, 2011

COIC Board Room, Redmond

Members Present: Darrel Wilson, OFCO; Tom Moore, COIC; Robin Popp, Goodwill Industries; Ron Parsons, DHS; Gary Daniele, OVRS; Beth Wickham, COCC.

Guests: Diana Soto, WorkSource Central Oregon; Rick Lakehomer, WorkSource Central Oregon; Jan Swander, OED.

WCC Staff: Andrew Spreadborough, COIC.

1. Consent Agenda.

Robin Popp moved approval of the consent agenda. Darrel Wilson seconded. The motion was approved by consensus.

2. Council Business

Funding Updates: Tom Moore discussed WIA cutbacks, which included a rescission of current year funding. Looking forward, Oregon will be "held harmless" in terms of budget cuts at 90% of current year funding. COIC is expecting a 20% cut in Adult and Youth programs and about a 30% cut in dislocated worker programs. COIC fared better than other regions in Oregon due to the amount of funding carry-over from the current year. He noted that COIC has received numerous National Emergency Grants for instances of large-scale business closures. He noted that the budget cuts for the upcoming year might be most felt in the up-front welcome process.

Robin Popp asked about the status of RWIB funding for the new year. Tom said a funding reduction should be expected, but that the Council has carried a full year of funding into next fiscal year. Andrew Spreadborough said that we are in a wait mode, and that since RWIBs are statutorily mandated, the RWIBs should be funded at some level.

Ron Parsons reviewed expected cutbacks to DHS programs. He said that the TANF program in our region was funded at \$2 million last year; it will be \$600,000 this year. He said that the JOBS contract with COIC was dramatically reduced. He discussed a tiering method that will be implemented to direct funding to where it will make the greatest impact, and that the cuts will change how DHS does business. He said that our region's cuts are equivalent to other areas of the state. Employee layoffs are not expected at this point.

Gary Daniele said that Vocational Rehabilitation is expecting a 10% cut across the board. The cut will be absorbed administratively; no staff layoffs are anticipated. Gary and Ron discussed the possibility of an employee union strike after the current contract ends in June.

Beth Wickham said that COCC is experiencing difficulty in finding qualified instructors for the new facilities being built.

Darrel Wilson said that OFCO dropped 10 FTE recently through attrition. Developmentally Disabled programs have received 15% funding cuts; he noted the difficulty in providing services with the limited funding available.

Robin Popp said that Goodwill Industries assists clients in finding work, and helps employers find workers. She noted that the economic downturn has affected sales in their stores, which reduces funding for services. She noted that private sector businesses are affected by the downturn.

3. NCRC Program Update

Diana Soto provided a handout with statistics on the status of NCRC implementation. She said a total of 688 certificates have been achieved in Central Oregon from November 1 to May 31. To draw down full funding for implementation, the region had to achieve 436 certificates. She said 41 employer letters of commitment to prefer the NCRC had also been secured. She reviewed the Central Oregon outcomes, and how they compare to the nation. About 40% of test takers achieve gold or platinum NCRCs in Central Oregon, while nationally the percentage is closer to 20%.

Diana said that Deschutes County has added an NCRC question in their online employment application. She said that the NCRC staff is beginning to track outcomes in terms of job placements for certificate holders, in an effort to document success stories.

Tom asked why Central Oregon and the state as a whole have such dramatically better test scores than the nation as a whole. The group discussed; one theory for the higher success rate is the use of the pre-assessment in Oregon to determine test-taker readiness for the NCRC.

Andrew summarized the discussions earlier in May regarding the Career Ready Communities concept. He distributed a handout that provided more detail. He said a group composed of workforce development, economic development and business was convened by COIC to discuss the concept, and to determine if there is opportunity in Central Oregon to develop a Career Ready Community model. He explained that state workforce agencies, the Governor's office, the NCRC Statewide Implementation Team and others are exploring the establishment of 2-3 pilot sites in Oregon. A Career Ready Community is established by 1) identification of certain data measures or benchmarks that would demonstrate the availability of quality workforce, and 2) tracking or monitoring trends and/or progress toward those benchmarks. The quantitative data is made available to businesses interested in locating or expanding in our region.

The group agreed generally that the Career Ready Communities concept should be further explored, and that they support the establishment of a pilot site in Central Oregon. The group plans to put together a proposal to send up to the state/Governor's office. Andrew asked the Council if they were OK with the use of Workforce Council staff time to further explore and develop the concept. The Council members agreed that this is an appropriate use of staff resources.

4. Regional Economic Update

Jan Swander reviewed employment trends in the region. She noted that unemployment is declining in all regions of the state. However, job growth is lower than would be expected this time of year. She said that OED is forecasting growth in resort/tourism industry employment; there was an uptick of 300 jobs in April. She plans to watch this trend in May and June.

She noted an increase among medium sized businesses in requesting wage analyses. This likely means they are benchmarking wages to determine what they should be paying, and that employers are not thinking they can keep wages flat for much longer. She said that the 2011 Oregon wage survey process will be beginning soon. She said that wages increased by 2% in the last year.

The 2010-2020 Occupation and Industry projections will be out in the Fall. Carolyn Eagan will provide a presentation on the projections later this year.

5. 2011-2012 Workforce Council Work Plan

Andrew said that this is the point of the year where the Council would normally be asked to approve a budget for the upcoming fiscal year. However, with the WIA funding cutbacks and uncertainties, it is

difficult to set a budget. He said that the RWIBs can expect a cutback in funding and new information regarding roles and responsibilities, but that the information will not be available until July at the earliest. He suggested that the Council authorize COIC staff to continue work in July, and that a budget be presented and approved at the August meeting.

Darrel Wilson moved approval of continued Council staff work/budget in July and August, until the next Council meeting. Ron Parsons seconded. The motion was approved by consensus.

Meeting adjourned at 11:30 AM.