

**Workforce Development Board (WDB)
Executive Committee
Worknet Merced County
1900 Airdrome Entry
Atwater, CA 95301
May 13, 2021, 4:00 p.m.**



www.worknetmerced.com

Members Present:

Leslie Abasta-Cummings	Tim O'Neil
Daron McDaniel	Jack Mobley
Michael Altomare (Via phone)	Vinton Thengvall

Members Absent:

Others Present:

Erick Serrato, Reyna Espinoza, Linda Gutierrez, Jeff Segars, Patricia Hinson

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1. **Call to Order/ Roll Call** – Board Chairperson, Mrs. Leslie Abasta-Cummings, called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.
 2. **Approval of Agenda** – *O'Neil/McDaniel* approved the meeting agenda as presented.
 3. **Approval of Minutes** – *Mobley/Thengvall* approved the March 11, 2021 minutes as published.
 4. **Public Opportunity to Speak:** None
 5. **Chair Comments:** Mrs. Leslie Abasta-Cummings shared with members that the healthcare system is currently very busy providing vaccinations to the public. In regards to delivering vaccinations, presently the county is at 40% where they were three weeks ago. Merced County is in part with the rest of the nation at about 30%. The rural areas are at a little bit of a lower percentage approximately 8 to 10 percent lower. This trend includes all rural areas, Shasta County and Yuba City as well. The county is at 20% fully vaccinated, and people who have had at least one dose are at about 18%, 19% percent. The next phase is going to be more challenging to meet. Most people are requesting the Pfizer vaccine. She added that the healthcare system is currently experiencing a shortage of healthcare employees who do not want to return to work. She thanked and welcomed Jeff Segars for attending the meeting and applying to be part of the Workforce Development Board.
 6. **Director's Comments:** Erick asked members if possible to please connect with Michael Altomare and invite him to the meeting via phone call. He also thanked Jeff for being present and thanked him for submitting his application to be part of the Workforce Development Board. He shared with members that he has recently talked to employers and shared their concerns about not finding a skilled workforce to hire.

Jack Mobley shared that he has noticed a shift in the morality of the people looking for work. About ten years ago, he hired an employee struggling to find a job due to language and cultural barriers. After the employee realized that he was offered the job, he cried and thanked Jack for giving him his self-respect back.

Jeff agreed and added that the new generation of workforce replacing the retiring workers wants to control their schedule, and this has been an ongoing struggle at the plant where he works. He asked members how they motivate that group of the young workforce.

Vinton added that one of the challenges all businesses are currently facing is the lack of childcare. He asked where we are at with childcare services now that the schools are going back to class.

Erick shared that he looked at the number of childcare providers in Merced County and stated that it is lower than in other counties. There is a low number of home-based licensed childcare providers in general. Last week he talked with different employers and Merced County Office of Education (MCOE) staff and asked them the top three barriers to success, and they all agreed that it's the lack of transportation and childcare providers.

Michael added that currently, there is a huge problem with businesses not finding the workforce needed to do the job. He feels that this is due to the incentives offered through the State's UI benefits. He stated that something has to be done. He asked if the WDB would benefit if they wrote a letter signed by all WDB members and sent it to government officials. The letter should include what businesses are going through in regards to the lack of workforce.

Erick stated that he would draft the letter and share the concerns of what the employers are going through in regards to the staffing challenges. Once the letter is finalized, they would forward it to the BOS to assist with the matter. The draft letter will be presented at the next Full WDB meeting.

7. Financial Dashboard: Members were briefed on the rate of the expenditures through March 31, 2021. The meeting packet included a copy of the fiscal report and dashboard documents. The documents include any grant active during the program year (PY) is featured in the Fiscal Report and Dashboard. All grants have different start and end dates during the PY. Data represented on the Dashboard displays the pacing of expenditures for each grant program.

8. Monitoring Reports: Erick shared with members that the State selected Merced County Department of Workforce Investment to be audit on its Annual Single Audit for Fiscal Year ending on June 30, 2020, via Brown Armstrong CPA. The auditor randomly selects departments for inclusion. The Single Audit results were released on March 19, 2021, and identified no material weaknesses or findings in the financial administration of the Department of Workforce Investment. Currently, the Workforce Board/DWI staff are preparing for EDD's Fiscal and Program monitoring scheduled for the week of June 7 thru 11, 2021, and June 14 thru 18, 2021.

9. Grants Update: Following are all grant submissions of the current program year.
a) Grants Requested: Together Toward Health Public Health Institute.

Status: Funded (\$25,000)

b) CA-EDD: ELL Programs

Status: Declined

c) CA-EDD: Workforce Accelerator Fund

Status: Declined

d) Merced County American Rescue Plan Funds

Status: Pending

Grants in Development:

350,000- Together Toward Health to support allied healthcare and public health worker pipelines.

250,000- Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to support small business grants.

10. Workforce Board Bylaws: The WDB Bylaws were updated on June 10, 2015. Changes to the bylaws require a 2/3 vote of all members in the affirmative and ratification by the Merced County Board of Supervisors. Staff will make the updates and present them at the next Full WDB meeting for review and approval.

Following are changes proposed by Board staff:

- Section A: Name change from “Workforce Development Board of Merced County” to Merced County Workforce Development Board” to align its public identity and with how the State of California recognizes the Board.
- Section C: Address updated to 1900 Airdrome Entry, Atwater, CA 95301
- Section G: Item 2A: Removal of “Immediate Past Chairperson” from list of required members, as the Committee; and to align with 501 c-3 leadership
- Section H: Change from a minimum of six meetings per year to a minimum of four per year

11. Board Vacancies: Mr. Jeff Segars introduced himself and shared with members that he is currently Working for Foster Farms and has been working there for 34 years. He is interested in joining the WDB and brings to the Board his experience representing the business industry sector.

Motion by Tim O’Neil, second by Vinton Thengvall to approve Introduction of and advancement of Jeff Segars, Foster Farms, to the full Workforce Development Board for nomination and sent to the Board of Supervisors (BOS) for appointment on the July 13, 2021, BOS meeting. Carried by unanimous roll call vote. Abstain: Daron McDaniel.

12. Business Services: Staff gave an update of the plans to develop a regular job fair calendar through the fall and looking to do sector-specific job fairs as well. In addition, the plan is to do a job fair exclusively to recruit truck drivers that are in demand in Merced County. Some recruitment ideas for the job fair is to have a barbeque with a friendly environment. Looking at some infinity branding to recruit truck drivers to the event to use Radio Lobo as one of the largest radio stations targeting a wide variety of Spanish-speaking audiences. This will connect the community to the jobs more quickly. Next month staff is focusing on all Castle tenants. This will be done by doing a survey with the businesses in Castle and asking what their needs are and how Worknet can assist them. There will be two focuses, on-the-job

training opportunities, and the second one will be to create a hub activity for youth workers. They are also working with other agencies to develop entrepreneurial workshops and offer classes for potential candidates interested in starting their own businesses. The goal is to start with an initial cohort of ten and subsequently increase it.

13. AJCC Service Locations: Looking at how we can expand our services targeting the rural areas in the county. WDB staff is looking at the performance base outcomes and wants to increase rural enrollments by changing the process to have participants be eligible within the Merced County supervisorial districts or by identifying zip codes that are more in the rural part of the county. Moreover, we asked our Service Providers to get more enrollments that are within the zip codes more in the county's rural part. This will add a wide variety of participants within Merced County Districts. In addition, the staff is planning to develop satellite/portal spots in rural libraries within the branches. The plan is to start with the first satellite/portal located at the 1900 Airdrome Entry Administration office. The goal is to learn from it and then make necessary changes. The portals will allow customers to come into the office and connect directly with staff from the job center, no need to make an appointment. In addition, customers will get the same kind of services as if they were at the center. The plan is to start with two portal sites and increase it to eight portals by the end of the year.

14. 501 c-3 Progress: Staff met with County Council to discuss the draft Bylaws, and the County council agreed on the changes identified. The draft Bylaws will be presented at the next Full Board meeting.

15. Legislative Update: None

16. Workforce Board Reports: None

17. Future Agendas and Meetings: WDB Staff is proposing to change the Full Board meeting from June 23, 2021, to June 9, 2021, at 2:00 p.m. Members asked for a doodle poll to be sent out to all Board members asking for their availability. Patricia will send out a doodle poll tomorrow via email to all WDB members.

18. Adjournment

Adjourned at 5:08 p.m.