

**Workforce Development Board (WDB)
Executive Committee
Worknet Merced County
1900 Airdrome Entry,
Atwater, CA 95301
March 10, 2022, 4:00 p.m.**



www.worknetmerced.com

Members Present:

Leslie Abasta-Cummings Tim O’Neill
Michael Altomare Daron McDaniel Jack Mobley

Members Absent: Vinton Thengvall

Others Present:

Erick Serrato, Reyna Espinoza, Linda Gutierrez, Mario Pena, Patricia Hinson

1. **Call to Order/ Roll Call** – The Board Chairperson, Mrs. Leslie Abasta-Cummings, called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.
2. **Public Opportunity to Speak** – None
3. **Approval of Minutes** – Mobley/O’Neill approved September 9, 2021, meeting minutes and to correct the spelling of the last name for member O’Neill.
4. **Chair Comments:** The Chair thanked the members for attending the meeting.
5. **Director’s Comments:** Erick thanked everybody for being present at the meeting. He briefly summarized the WDB and WDB Executive Committee activities done in 2021. He shared with members that at the beginning of the year, DWI gave a presentation at the Board of Supervisor’s meeting on February 1, 2022. The BOS congratulated WDB members for all of their dedication to the Board.

6. 2022 Activity Calendar: Erick shared with members the following projects

2nd Quarter (April-June)	3rd Quarter (July-September)	4th Quarter (Oct-Dec)
Micro-B12 Grant Launch	Present Childcare Innovations	5 th Grade Guest Spkr Program Launch
MC3-MCOE Construction Graduation	Los Banos Job Center Re-Opening	2nd Annual H.R. MGRs. Breakfast
Announce “ESP” Grant w/CBOs	First Job Center “PD” Opening	Manufacturing Job Fair
Workforce Fact Sheet Launch	Castle Job Center Opening	
Launch Merced Youth Jobs		
2 nd Annual Truck Fest		
Launch New Website & Branding		
Health Care Job Fair		

7. Fiscal Update: Staff provided an update on the following items:

Equus Contract

For the 2021-2022 year, the Equus contract was reduced to approximately \$1.9M. While representing a reduction, this contract size is still larger than most comparable job centers across the State. DWI had multiple meetings to develop a solution with Equus corporate leadership which resulted in the following:

- Reduction of 13 Equus Staff (staff were reassigned to non-Merced County projects)
- Notification to County CEO Office on impacts
- Internal budget modifications to all Equus contracts adding a total of \$393,622.67 to salaries, pulled from other budget line items.

MCOE

WIOA Youth formula allocations have a 20% work experience (WEX) requirement, which is passed down to the Board's subcontractors. MCO FY 21/22 WEX requirement is \$380,000. DWI has continuously monitored contract expenditure rates and noticed the WEX expenditure rate was below minimum benchmarks. As of December 2021, MCOE had spent \$46,504.00.

- As of January 2022, WEX expenditures are \$49,759.50, an increase of \$3,255.00
- MCOE has committed to spending their entire contracted WEX budget
- DWI requested an expenditure plan with key benchmark dates and expenditure marks.

NDWG Opioid Grant

Kern County has let us know that they will not be able to spend \$66,125.93 of their contracted obligations. DWI has been in contact with State to complete a budget modification to the grant, allowing the redistribution of funds to use the funding for staff salaries. This new fund will help address previously mentioned budget modifications.

FY 22/23 Preliminary Budget

Merced County has started its multi-step process of preparing for the county FY22/23 budget. Final budget details will be shared with the Executive Committee at its May 12, 2022, meeting.

8. Grants Update: DWI has been awarded eight (8) grants of approximately 2.2 million dollars. The team has been writing grants, and there are approximately 4M pending.

9. Youth Work Experience Programming: Reyna shared with members that the Youth Committee had its first Youth Meeting on March 10, 2022. The meeting went well. There was a lot of positive feedback from members in regards to the Youth Purpose Statement. The staff took notes and will be redrafting the Youth Statement. Once the redrafting of the Youth Statement is done, it will be shared with the Youth Committee members. Other items shared with members were the Youth Performance outcomes for PY 21/22 youth programs. The Youth committee received a grant from the City of Merced for 1M to do the WtW program together with HSA. Some WDB Executive committee members would like to attend the next Youth Committee meeting in June.

10. CERF: (Community Economic Resilience Fund): In 2021, the State introduced the Community Economic Resilience Fund (CERF) program designed to encourage and fund regional economic development aimed at equity and community stability. CERF identifies more than a dozen regions; Merced County falls within a region containing the counties of Merced, San Joaquin, and Stanislaus. Funding is organized into two categories; Planning and Implementation. The State will consider proposals submitted by non-profits with a history of regional economic and community development known as Conveners. The Merced-Stanislaus-San Joaquin region must first identify a

convener and then develop a proposal for the Planning Grant. Erick has expressed the Board's openness to any role helpful to the CERF process and support for CEO/CED's leadership in identifying the appropriate Convener and organizing proposal components for Merced County.

11. Business Services: Staff shared current activity highlights to include:

Annual Sector Employment Events: Working on exact blueprint of the Truck Fest, staff is exploring two other sector-based employment events tailored to the job seekers and employers of that sector.

- Healthcare Event: May-June 2022
- Truck Fest: (2nd Annual) July 2022
- Manufacturing Event: October 2022

Business Support and Funding: DWI, CED, and SBDC continue their partnership with area chambers to support small businesses.

- CA Microbusiness Grant program: DWI/Board will distribute \$2,500 to very small businesses (\$50,000 revenue or less) as a partner in this grant.
- Working with MCOE Childcare Agency to help home-based childcare providers apply for up to \$75,000 to make necessary renovations or purchase equipment in order to better support children in their care. Staff developed and hosted two application trainings in English and Spanish and will be hosting an application clinic on March 19th.
- Working together in partnership with Merced College and Volt Training Institute to develop Incumbent Worker Training.
- DWI Staff is developing a new model for On-the-Job training that focuses on high-barriers participants and exploring the leveraging of State hiring credits, such as those for the unhoused.

Labor Market Information and Joint Recruitments

- Recruitments events, such as a plan to help Districts recruit and support school bus drivers, job fairs in partnership with the Library in rural communities.
- Development of a Workforce Fact Sheet for Merced County.
- Development of a new website to host County-wide recruitment events and job fairs and also to share labor market information.

12. 501 c-3 Progress: Erick gave an update on the process for the 501 c-3. He shared with members that Board staff have completed the application elements, including 1) Form 1023 Non-Profit Application; 2) Secretary of State Article of Incorporation (Form and Long Form Narrative); 3) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining the relationship between the County and the Non-Profit.

All members received copies of forms 1-3 in their meeting packet.

These items are currently under review with the County, and the goal is to have them approved at the Board meeting on March 23rd. The board staff continues working on the procurement of Officers Insurance.

13. Future Agendas & Meetings: WDB meeting at Hilmar Cheese Company-Visitor's Center, on March 23, 2022.
Tour afterward

14. Adjournment

Adjourned at 5:09 p.m.