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**STATE OF HAWAII
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL**

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YOUTH SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING

**Tuesday, August 7, 2018
9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.**

Princess Ruth Keelikolani Building
830 Punchbowl Street, Director's Conference Room 321
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

MINUTES

ATTENDEES:

Ian Kitajima, Committee Chair, Director of Corporate Development, Oceanit
Winona Whitman, State Director, Employment & Training, Alu Like, Inc.
Troy Sueoka, DOE – Career and Technical Education
Stacy Clayton, Strategy and Innovation, Kamehameha Schools
Melissa Wilson, Strategic Project Manager, Kamehameha Schools
Steve Sue, Chair, Bizgenics Foundation
Brooke Ward, Assistant Program Coordinator, Imua Kakou, Hale Kipa

GUEST:

Kirsten Thornton, Program Manager, Youth Program, City & County of Honolulu

STAFF:

Maria-Elena Diaz, Employment Analyst, Workforce Development Council

- I. Call to Order.....Committee Chair, Ian Kitajima**
The meeting was called to order at 9:10 a.m. by Committee Chair Kitajima.

Chair Kitajima welcomed those who attended meeting for the first time and started with introductions.

- II. Approval of Minutes**
A. May 17, 2018 Minutes

A motion to approve the May 17, 2018 minutes was made by Winona Whitman. The motion was seconded by Melissa Wilson. The minutes were approved unanimously.

- III. Overview of youth services programs at the Oahu American Job Center as presented by Kirsten Thornton, Program Manager, Youth Program, City & County of Honolulu**
Kirsten Thornton discussed programs at Youth Services Center. YouthBuild is their longest running program for out of school youth (17 years). It's a preapprenticeship program in construction that could

lead to participation in an apprenticeship program upon graduating. This year they added three tracks: health, office and administrative services, and food services training with the community college programs. In addition they manage the WIOA Title 1 Youth formula funds. In the American Job Center (AJC) Youth Program, they combined the WIOA Youth Program and the YouthBuild program. To be in YouthBuild, the client must be co-enrolled as a WIOA youth.

The WDC youth handout with eligibility and program requirements was provided to committee members to follow along with Thornton's discussion. She explained how different youth elements are provided to youth clients through onsite programs and case management. Oahu AJC has 6 case managers who offer about half of youth program elements. Remaining elements will be offered every month, starting in September.

Chair Kitijima encouraged committee members to consider how they could share their strengths with the Youth Program, as committee members ponder, "why are we here?" Steve Sue spoke of the importance of engaging students in his programs, like with financial literacy and leadership skill building, and empowering teachers. He also spoke about other programs and how he might connect with YouthBuild.

Maria-Elena Diaz discussed broadly the organizational structure of workforce development under WIOA and summarized the relationships between the major parts. Then she discussed the work of the committee, which is to identify priorities, and develop goals and a timetable to support the advancement of comprehensive youth development services in Hawaii. A handout with more detailed information about youth elements was disseminated.

Thornton discussed the Hi-Set program, Competency-Based Diploma program, and college federal funding issues. The Youth Program will switch over from the Competency-Based Diploma program to Hi-Set by next summer. In the past, a major client focus was high school drop-outs, but the program is interested in refocusing on high school graduates with low-level functioning. The Oahu Youth Program is now working with the Business Engagement Team, and with Community Colleges.

She also discussed the Juvenile Justice program, a diversion program for first-time offenders and their families. On staff they have a trauma-informed care team; a substance abuse prevention and "Proud to Be a Jerk" promoter/counselor. Her program's involvement with the Summer Youth Employment Program ended last summer, but her program can help youth with disabilities. According to Thornton, youth with disabilities and foster youth have been hard to reach populations because her program didn't have any clear access point to agencies that primarily help these special groups.

Brooke Ward of Hale Kipa identified her program as a potential access point. She partners with RISE and works with homeless youth, and she is also a housing specialist with the Section 8 Step Up voluntary program for former foster youth. She discussed her work with these programs. Ward indicated that there are lots of financial resources and case managers ready to support youth, but they cannot be forced to participate.

Sue asked if Ward's clients favored any career pathway. He discussed a chef he knew from one of his food competitions who came through the foster care system and is inspirational. The chef is in talks to work with Kapiolani Community College, and Sue suggested a culinary program could be one career pathway.

Ward indicated that her clients in postsecondary education struggle because they are not ready. Once they age out, youth must go to college to continue receiving support and just recently they have been allowed to take just one class. She has agreements with community colleges, but youth don't always communicate about their difficulties. *Ohana is Forever* and *Epic* provides mentoring, especially with those who are former foster youth. But getting youth to communicate their needs is a challenge.

Stacy Clayton brought up the deeper issue related to academic issues facing at-risk youth. Kamehameha Schools is partnering with a group supporting at-risk youth, Kinai Eha, to research studies that connect brain studies and toxic stress syndrome (TSS). They will be conducting their own research to examine how socioeconomic characteristics are related to those impacted by TSS. The assessment for 80 at-risk kids is expensive and will be paid by Kamehameha Schools. Toxic stress syndrome manifests in social-emotional issues and destructive behavior, and includes experiences of alienation, bullying or disruption in the school environment. Trauma-informed care is the wraparound for all other services. The study will allow service providers to better understand special populations and the challenges they face in accessing the benefits that can be gained from available resources.

Ward affirmed her experiences with foster clients who suffer from TSS, and the negative impacts on clients. She discussed policies at Department of Human Services (DHS) that lacked understanding of TSS and the challenges faced by clients.

Clayton stated that the need for mental health care and learning differences are related to root causes of challenges faced by at-risk youth in schools and the workplace. Chair Kitajima suggested we bring DHS to the table.

Since stressors are multiplied and nuanced for at-risk youth, Sue asked about common support and treatment paths, in addition to mentorship. Ward discussed that through case management of foster youth, they are referred to therapy, and were being referred to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR, part of DHS), who is no longer providing services due to lack of funding. Part of the problem, according to Ward, is that at-risk youth don't want to acknowledge that they are traumatized. Thornton discussed the importance of a good connection between therapist and client for youth to continue therapy, and how in some cases they have already had bad experiences with a therapist and so are no longer interested.

Clayton discussed the importance of trust. Sue suggested that being creative and innovative can be a solution to helping people out--not all at-risk youth may be capable of benefitting, but some would. Ward discussed the importance of consistency and recruiting people who care as part of the solution. Jonathan Leong's Kupu model is a good example of a program that could work. Clayton discussed how Kupu is hands-on, has few constraints, and is work-based learning. Thornton shared how in YouthBuild youth must be there every day for a year, and this makes a difference.

IV. New Business

A. Recruitment of members to Youth Services Committee

Chair Kitijima asked those present to consider who else they might invite to our meetings.

B. Determine focus and projects of Youth Services Committee

Diaz asked the committee to think about what they might choose as priorities and provided a handout to help them consider the possibilities.

C. Action Plan, Next Steps and Timelines

Chair Kitijima suggested that the group meet monthly to develop a plan that would eventually go to the WDC Board. He asked the committee to be prepared to share which parts of the youth development system they might have a passion for. Everyone at the next meeting will share which target audience they work with and the issues that they face, as well as identify elements that are important to the work that each person does. After this discussion, then the committee can choose which elements to focus on. Melissa Wilson appreciated hearing from Thornton and hopes that the

committee can support the Oahu Youth Program.

V. Schedule Next Meetings

A. Next meeting: Tuesday, Sept. 18, 2018, 3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

VI. Adjournment

Chair Kitajima adjourned the meeting at 10:10 a.m.