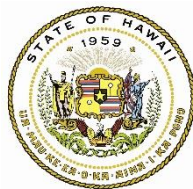


DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR

JOSH GREEN  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



ALAN HAYASHI  
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**STATE OF HAWAII  
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL**

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**EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Thursday, July 29, 2021**

**1:00 P.M. – 2:30 P.M.**

**Online via Zoom**

*Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, protecting the health and welfare of the community is a priority. The meeting was held remotely, with Board members and staff participating via an online meeting venue.*

**MINUTES**

**ATTENDEES:**

Brian Tatsumura, Committee Chair, Briant 808 LLC  
Cheryl Cross, Booz Allen & Hamilton  
Jackie Kaina, Kauai Economic Development Board  
Sheryl Nojima, Hong Gray Nojima & Associates  
Rep. Jackson Sayama, State House of Representatives  
Linda Pupplolo, Maui County Workforce Development Board  
Derek Kanehira, Alexander & Baldwin  
Sandra Goodale, Hawaii County Workforce Development Board  
Erika Lacro, UH Community Colleges  
Ryan Shimabukuro, Hawaii P-20 Partnerships for Education  
April Acquavella, Hawaii Carpenters Apprenticeship and Training Fund  
Jean Isip-Schneider, Pacxa  
Faustino Dagdag, Leeward Community College  
Lois Hamaguchi, Hawaii P-20 Partnerships for Education  
Alan Hayashi, WDC Vice Chair  
Jason Chang, Queen's Medical Center/Oahu Workforce Development Board  
Evan Nakatsuka, Lanakila Pacific  
Keala Peters, Chamber of Commerce  
Erin Yagi, Hawaii P-20 Partnerships for Education  
Kaala Souza, Workforce Resiliency Initiative

**STAFF:**

Allicyn Tasaka, Executive Director  
Jarret Yip, Program Officer  
Harrison Kuranishi, Employment Specialist

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 1:02 p.m. by Committee Chair Brian Tatsumura.

Brian Tatsumura has assumed the Committee Chair position after serving as Vice Chair for the past year. Former Chair Glen Kaneshige's term on the Workforce Development Council has ended.

Chair Tatsumura welcomed Representative Jackson Sayama who was newly appointed by Speaker of the House to serve on the WDC. The Chair also welcomed Jackie Kaina on Kauai, and board members Sheryl Nojima and Jason Chang as new committee members.

**II. Approval of Minutes for April 29, 2021 Meeting**

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting held on April 29, 2021 was made by Jason Chang. The motion was seconded by Faustino Dagdag. There were no amendments, questions, objections or abstentions. The motion to approve the minutes passed unanimously.

**III. Presentation on Pacxa's Huaka'i Program**

Jean Isip-Schneider is the new Executive Director of Workforce Development at Pacxa. She presented Pacxa's Huaka'i program which accelerates training to prepare people for entry into IT careers with on-the-job training, mentoring, IT industry certifications and career services.

Pacxa presentation link:

[https://labor.hawaii.gov/wdc/files/2021/07/PacxaHuakaiOverview\\_WDC\\_ER\\_Engagement\\_2021-07-29.pdf](https://labor.hawaii.gov/wdc/files/2021/07/PacxaHuakaiOverview_WDC_ER_Engagement_2021-07-29.pdf)

**IV. Update on the Workforce Resiliency Initiative**

Kaala Souza updated the committee on the Workforce Resiliency Initiative (WRI)'s pilot program which started on April 30, 2021, of providing basic computer classes at the UH Community Colleges. Participation ranged from 5% to 36% which resulted in increase knowledge of basic computer functions, use of internet, email and other online features by up to 20%.

Workforce Resiliency Initiative presentation link:

<https://labor.hawaii.gov/wdc/files/2021/07/WRI-Update-Presentation-for-July-Committee-Meetings-7.28-and-7.29.2021-1.pdf>

**V. Report from the Opportunities Population**

Evan Nakatsuka and Keala Peters presented the Opportunities Subcommittee update. The subcommittee identified the Micronesian/ Pacific Islander jobseekers to explore outreach and service awareness needs, primarily through the American Job Centers. Activities and support services are in the works at the local areas such as on Maui there is a collaboration with Imua Family Services and their Kokua Outreach and Navigator who supports Marshallese jobseekers to access AJC services. Imua Family Services helps with overcoming the language barriers; on Hawaii County, Goodwill Industries is the service provider for adult and dislocated workers and jobseekers through the Office of Community Services program which services immigrant and low-income populations; and on Oahu they are establishing relationships with the Office of Economic Revitalization, We Are Oceania, the Counsel General of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Marshallese Community of Hawaii. The subcommittee will continue to work with the AJCs to identify outreach needs and jobseekers on partnering with community organizations to access services and overcome barriers to employment. For business engagement, focusing on outreach and information on the advantages of hiring people from the opportunity populations. They met with Oahu AJC staff and business service team to learn what Oahu and the other local areas are doing to engage employers. There are two areas on Oahu that the subcommittee could support: (1) hiring events at the AJCs – on Oahu they an event in July, a Zippy’s specific hiring event, and another event scheduled on August 3; and (2) holding a webinar for employers specifically to discuss why hiring from the opportunity population is good for business, how to open recruitment processes and share success stories. The next steps for the subcommittee include attending the Oahu hiring event on August 3 to observe first hand; meet with subcommittee to learn more about the each island’s business services team efforts; and possibly holding a webinar for employers in November.

**VI. Discussion on Current and Future Projects and Funding Requests**

Chair Tatsumura shared that Vice Chair Alan Hayashi has asked for all committees to start thinking of statewide projects and budgets recommendations for consideration through the new Workforce Development Division process. All funding requests will be reviewed and approved based on availability of funding. The project and funding is based on fiscal year which ends June 30, 2022.

Project proposals should minimally include:

1. Name of project;
2. Be a statewide project;
3. Detailed narrative of the proposed project, including outcomes; and
4. Budget with breakdown and justification of costs.

No project proposals were submitted.

**VII. Brief Discussion on Pandemic Impact on Businesses**

Cheryl Cross of Booz Allen & Hamilton shared that after working remotely since the beginning of the pandemic, staff are able to go into their new offices located at First Hawaiian Bank for ten days each month. As a recruiter, she was able to hire over 100 people to work in Hawaii and Pac Rim during the pandemic. Her industry has not been impacted by the health outbreak. Their clients from the military, Department of Defense, and government are still very strong. The US Indo Pacific Area Of Responsibility (AOR) is bringing many new government contracts and increased recruitment activities.

Faustino Dagdag reported that from the Leeward Community Colleges, there has been a slow start of enrollment for the fall semester. He expressed concerns of not knowing if high school graduates who took online classes have a good or not so good experience that would prompt or deter continuing education. There is increase in promoting students to return to school and attract high schoolers to consider higher education.

Linda Puppolo from Maui County Workforce Development Board and American Job Center stated that the Valley Isle experienced the highest loss of businesses than any other county in the State. The situation for businesses is dire and employers are in need of hiring qualified workers. Residents would like to close the road to Hana to deter tourists. She has noticed that the people coming to the AJC are completely deflated and they do not know what they want to do for work or a new career. There are a lot of difficult and challenging dynamics on Maui.

Sandra from Hawaii County Workforce Development Board and AJC reported that the hotels are maxed capacity and suffering from not enough workers to accommodate the demand. Hotels on Kona side are working 40% staff capacity. Restaurants are closing early due to not enough staff to keep hours open longer. Baristas on the West side of the island are being hired at \$25 per hour to serve coffee. Employers are desperate and willing to pay higher wages and are also giving employee incentives of between \$300 - \$1,000. Jobseekers are slow in coming to the AJCs for assistance but many are not interested in the rates they were making before the pandemic because they want to make more based on what they were getting unemployment insurance benefits and federal stipends like PUA. When the job search requirement was reinstated, unemployment insurance claimants applied for positions and when employers contacted the jobseekers for interviews and background checks and potential workers are ghosting the employers who are willing to offer them jobs. Employers cannot report them unless the applicant is offered a position. Employers are having a difficult time.

Representative Jackson Sayama expressed interest with the comments by members and thinks his peers would be excited expand and/or invest in the many workforce programs that the WDC, WDBs and AJCs are working on that helps to reposition Hawaii's workers towards a sustainable economy. It sounds like a matter of exposure and educating

officials and the public on the services at the AJCs and opportunities through the workforce system.

**VIII. Next Meeting Schedule**

A committee meeting will be scheduled prior to the next Board meeting which is set for November 18, 2021.

**IX. Announcements**

No announcements were made.

**X. Adjournment**

Committee Chair Tatsumura adjourned the meeting at 2.34 p.m.