

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT
Workforce Development Board Meeting
Thursday, November 18, 2021

The Employer Engagement Committee met on October 21, 2021.

Chair Brian Tatsumura and Vice Chair Sheryl Nojima asked committee members for feedback of what issues and concerns their respective industries are facing. The following is a snapshot of responses that were discussed.

1. COVID Pandemic
 - a. Vaccine and other mandates
 - b. Insurance
 - i. Health care
 - ii. Unemployment
 - c. Economic impacts
 - d. Impacts on special groups (kupuna and people with disabilities)
2. “Affordable” and “Reasonable” housing
 - a. Loss of mid-career professionals
 - b. No reversal of brain-drain
 - c. Unable to attract talent to move to Hawaii
3. Recruitment and retention of employees
 - a. Limited pool of qualified applicants within the state
 - b. Retention of talented/skilled employees
 - c. Impacts across multiple industries (tourism, engineering, nonprofit, healthcare, etc.)
4. Opportunities for industry leaders to work together to address common
5. Training programs need to better align with employer needs

Hawaii Remote Work Overview

Scott Murakami, Economic Development Coordinator at the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) reported based on Microsoft’s 2021 Work Trend Index Annual Report that flexible work is here to stay. Approximately 66% of leaders surveyed say their company is considering redesigning office space for hybrid work; and 73% of employees want flexible remote work options to stay. Talent is everywhere in a hybrid work world. Remote job postings on LinkedIn increased more than 5 times during the pandemic. In Hawaii, job listings identifying remote work are on the rise. Duration of time that a job posting is listed is declining. Median salary for listings that include remote work are increasing. Between 2019 and 2020, the median annual salary that include remote work for positions in Hawaii increased by \$7,400 or 16%. Between 2020 and 2021, median annual salaries increased by \$9,200 or 17%. The increases in median salaries suggests that either annual income is increasing and/or the types of occupations are changing. Between 2019 and 2020, more technology occupations were available such as Computer User Support Specialist and other computer occupations displaced post-secondary teachers and tutors and other instructors. Between 2020 and 2021, the postings for management positions were in the top 5 occupations, and Marketing Managers displaced Computer User Specialists.

DBEDT's Research, Economic Analysis Division has contracted Anthology to survey Hawaii employers and employees to address business readiness and household appetite for remote work. The final report is due December 31, 2021.

The Hawaii Remote Work Pilot project is a collaboration between DEBDT, DLIR's workforce development and the Broadband Hui. It supports access, literacy and livelihood: increasing the opportunities for livelihood and increasing access and literacy through refurbished laptop computer initiative and the Workforce Resiliency Initiative. The project is designed to provide Hawaii's unemployed, underemployed, and disadvantaged with a hand-up by facilitating the transition and adoption of remote work opportunities. The project recognizes that "brain drain" is no longer an issue about geography. For more information: <https://invest.hawaii.gov/remote>

Link to presentation: <https://labor.hawaii.gov/wdc/employer-engagement-committee-meetings-2021/>

Workforce Resiliency Initiative

Kaala Souza, former Project Manager for the Workforce Resiliency Initiative (WRI) provided an overview of the progress underway. The National Skills Coalition estimates that 30% of the US workforce lacks basic, fundamental computer skills. In Hawaii, that's roughly 200,000 people who are struggling with day-to-day computer tasks. The WRI's goal is to have Hawaii as a digital literate state (up to 91%) by providing training on basic computer skills and upskilling opportunities through online learning tools such as Northstar, Coursera and LinkedIn. The key partnerships and collaborators include: Hawaii State Libraries, UH Community Colleges, Hawaii Literacy/HUG, Broadband Hui, American Job Centers, Waipahu and McKinley Community Schools for Adults, Department of Human Services' Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Northstar and Minnesota Literacy, Omnitrak, Microsoft LinkedIn Philanthropy and Learning, and Coursera.

The next phase of the WRI is an employer-led digital literacy assessment project by recruiting employers to provide both an assessment and access to online curriculum of basic computer skills to their employees. This will help quantify the business overall level of digital readiness. The Northstar Assessment in basic computer skills, internet basics and using email will provide employers and employees a chance to identify gaps in their basic computer knowledge and learn the skills that are vital to advance in our tele-everything world. Employers will be able to have a digital map of skill levels and move to a more productive and efficient workforce and business. The organizations that will be part of the digital literacy assessment project includes Zippy's, Outrigger Hotels and Resorts, HARIETT, Hawaii Community Federal Credit Union, and the Hawaii Carpenters Apprenticeship and Training Fund.

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Opportunities Population Subcommittee

Co-Chairs Evan Nakatsuka from Lanakila Pacific and Keala Peters from the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii reported that the subcommittee last met on September 2, 2021. They discussed the two customer bases at the American Job Centers who are jobseekers, especially those with barriers to employment (opportunities population) and connecting employers with the resources and services at the AJCs. There is a new collaboration with Farrington High School and Oahu AJC for the Kinaole Program, which serves at-risk students, English language learners, and students with disabilities who are predominately of Pacific Islander descent. Discussion is underway on how the AJC can connect and serve these students.

The subcommittee is also outreaching to the Micronesian community and has scheduled an online informational meeting with leaders and AJC staff on November 15. The focus will be sharing resources and services at the AJC and learn of the needs of the community.