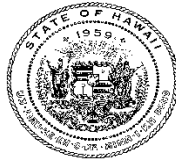


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ADMINISTRATOR

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KA 'OIHANA PONO LIMAHANA
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

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YOUTH SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING
EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
Thursday, July 18, 2024
1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.
In-person and online via Zoom

MINUTES

MEMBERS:

Derek Kanehira, Committee Chair, Senior Vice President, Human Resources, Alexander and Baldwin
Cheryl Cross, Principal, Owner, C.A. Cross & Associates
Rona Fukumoto, CEO, Lanakila Pacific
Lea Dias, Administrator, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Dept of Human Services

GUEST:

Deborah Leong-Yep, HR Generalist, UHA Health Insurance
Pamela Roberts, HR, House Mart Stores
Sonya Koki, Human Resources Manager, SSFM International
Ann Katekaru, SHERM Hawaii Representative
Arthur Romero, Army Reserve Employment Specialist Lead Public Private Partnership Army Reserve Program (P3)
Mark Menard, Business Services Coordinator, American Job Center, City and County of Honolulu
Cary Miyashiro, President, Quad D Solutions

STAFF:

Bennette Misalucha, Executive Director, Workforce Development Council
Harrison Kuranishi, Executive Director, Oahu Workforce Development Board
Daven Kawamura, Oahu Workforce Development Board
Leila Shar, Acting Program Officer, WDD, DLIR

I. Call to Order

Chair Derek Kanehira called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.

II. Approval of Minutes

Chair Kanehira presented the minutes from the April 18, 2024 meeting for review.

The minutes are posted on the website and were distributed with the meeting invite. Motion to approve was made by Cheryl Cross and seconded by Rona Fukumoto. No amendments or discussions were raised. The motion carried unanimously.

III. Budgets Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Bennette Misalucha reported that the Unified Plan has received approval and emphasized the importance of proper implementation.

Misalucha detailed organizational changes effective July 1st, noting ongoing work with the Workforce Development Division on WIOA program transitions.

Regarding upcoming initiatives, Misalucha reported on the development of a board member training academy, and noted a successful training session held on June 24th. She discussed plans for an economic trends seminar sponsored by the National Governors Association, which had been rescheduled from its original July date.

For September's Workforce Development Month, Misalucha outlined plans for the Future of Work 2024 conference in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce, building on the previous year's success which drew over 300 attendees. She also discussed the Workforce Development Heroes recognition program, noting that several committee members had submitted nominations for individuals making significant contributions to workforce development.

Misalucha update on the long-term care workforce task force, which emerged from a March summit. The initiative addresses challenges related to Hawaii's aging population and low birth rates, focusing on developing both immediate and long-term solutions for kupuna care. She concluded with focus areas for the next quarter.

IV. Presentation on the Public Private Partnership Army Reserve Program

Arthur Romero presented on the Army Reserve Private Public Partnership (P3) Program, describing his role as Army Reserve Employment Specialist Lead for the Indo-Pacific region. His jurisdiction encompasses Hawaii, Alaska, Guam, Saipan, American Samoa, Japan, and Korea, with Reserve units specifically located on Oahu, Big Island, and Maui. Romero explained that P3 serves as the official employment arm of the United States Army Reserve under Army Regulation 600-81. Romero's priority is assisting army reserve soldiers and their families secure employment. Although additionally as he is able, he supports any military personnel, veteran, and their families located within his service area. The program operates under Program Director Alicia Grady, who began as a GS-4 and now reports directly to Lieutenant General Daniels. Romero highlighted Lieutenant General Daniels' role in revitalizing the program, citing a 2023 Congressional report that identified 8% of Army Reserve soldiers as either underemployed or unemployed.

The program has established over 300 partnerships across 30 industries, including local partnerships with Trident Adventures and Pond Company, which was involved in Red Hill cleanup efforts. A significant recent partnership is with Bayer Science, whose agricultural operations are located near Schofield Barracks.

For June 2024, Romero reported program-wide placements of 75 soldiers, 8 veterans, and 11 dependents, with his specific region accounting for 3 soldiers, 2 veterans, and one spouse. The P3 program includes a Skillbridge initiative providing up to 26 days of paid time for reservists pursuing certifications or training.

V. Update on Work Opportunity Tax Credit

Leila Shar reported on the status of the WOTC program's data migration to a new provider. She indicated approximately 45% of applications face validation challenges with partner agencies such as SNAP and TANF. The system is expected to become operational within weeks, representing a reconversion of data uploaded in January. Committee member Cheryl Cross requested specific backlog numbers reporting at the following committee meeting.

VI. Roundtable Discussion

The discussion opened with education-employer workforce partnerships, initiated by Deborah Leong-Yep's as she cited the statistic that 50% of Hawaii high school students do not pursue college education. She highlighted Farrington High School's successful certification programs in medical assisting, CNA, pharmacy tech, and EMT. Cary Miyashiro provided context about educational partnership challenges, explaining the impact of Act 51 (2004) which decentralized education and granted individual school autonomy. He outlined three primary challenges: school autonomy, the weighted student formula affecting funding, and collective bargaining agreements. Miyashiro also emphasized Hawaii's relationship-based culture in establishing educational partnerships.

Mark Menard shared information about the American Job Center's collaboration with the DOE's workforce development branch, specifically highlighting work with Teresa Sanchez. He described their graduating seniors hiring event that attracted 82 employers, with plans underway for next year's event to include additional preparatory workshops for resume writing and interview skills.

The discussion shifted to American Job Center (AJC) awareness and perception issues. Deborah Leong-Yep addressed historical challenges, noting that despite offering incentives like free bus passes, the AJCs struggles with public engagement. She identified three main barriers: institutional perception issues dating back some time, limited job diversity particularly in white-collar positions, and challenges with the HireNet system.

Cheryl Cross provided perspective from visiting AJCs across six states, noting that Hawaii's centers maintain better engagement than the mainland locations she visited. Mark Menard acknowledged the historical perceptions, particularly the transition from "Work Links" branding, and described efforts to provide personalized service and career guidance. He described their outreach team's work in libraries and community locations, while noting limited advertising resources compared to private sector organizations. Harrison Kuranishi suggested creating success story videos, referencing existing content on the WDC website featuring successful placements from various counties.

The committee discussed potential promotional strategies through SHERM Hawaii's newsletter, which reaches approximately 800 members. Ann Katekaru noted the need for strategic communication to avoid overwhelming members with information.

VII. Announcements and Constituent Comments

No announcements or comments.

VIII. Next meeting

Equal Opportunity Employer/Program

Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

TDD/TTY Dial 711 then ask for (808) 586-8877

The next meeting is scheduled for October 17, 2024. Chair Kanehira proposed holding the meeting at the AJC.

IX. Adjournment

Chair Kanehira adjourned the meeting at 2:30 p.m.

DRAFT