

Meeting Minutes

Workforce Policy Committee

Wednesday, September 7th, 2022

12:00-1:00pm

Teams Virtual Meeting ([Click here to join the meeting \[teams.microsoft.com\]](https://teams.microsoft.com))

Meeting ID: 224 407 774 018

Passcode: e3nRkq

Attendees: David Smith
Heather O'Hara
Paddy Fleming
Representative Ed Buttrey
Senator Jason Small

Chair Smith started meeting at: 12:00 noon.

I. Review State Workforce Innovation Board Goals:

a. [SWIB Board Goals](#)

- i. Develop and review statewide policies for the coordinated service delivery through the state's one-stop delivery system

Reviewed goals of the SWIB currently. Requested if a time with the Lt. Governor may be helpful in regards to the "Red Tape Initiative"?

II. The State of the Workforce Discussion

- a. What challenges exist in your communities and businesses for the workforce?
 - Manufacturing: Still desperately seeking employees for skilled labor in manufacturing. Department of Commerce may be offering 0% loans for business automation. Housing is still also a significant issue.
 - Healthcare: Hospitals continue to struggle. Montana seems to be more fortunate, finding traveling staff – however, they come at a high cost. Housing is still also a significant issue. Montana licensing information is not readily available. Healthcare industry would like to learn more about licensees' demographics. Can SWIB help foster a process to obtain data more easily? Especially nursing.
 - Senator Small: Inflation and travel distance continues to be an issue for Montanans. Are Montana wages keeping up in comparison to other states, especially considering wage and housing.
 - Representative Buttrey: Cascade County especially, job shuffling. Benefis is losing lower wage workers to service industry, as pay and flexibility may be better. What statute may inhibit the boards sharing data about licensing. Is this something that can be legislatively, or rules changed?
 - Construction: Although pay may be great, hours are not always as good.
- b. What opportunities exist that the committee should consider to improve workforce readiness and employability in Montana?

- Senator Small: Local tribal colleges have identified that trades organizations and unions are not as active on reservations. He continues to believe that students need to be reached in high school.
- Representative Buttrey: State is beginning to do dual enrollment better, but need to ensure that the time invested is well utilized, and not as structured as it always have been.
- Paddy Fleming: Partnering with organizations like Reach Higher Montana who are creating strong opportunities with Work Based Learning may be beneficial for the SWIB and associated organizations.
- Construction: Delivery system for education has to be adapted and there are multiple models that may be helpful.
- Manufacturing: Society of Manufacturing Engineers, there are over 500 online courses available and are strong courses to learn many trades.
- Healthcare: HOSA has provided good opportunities. In rural areas, healthcare educators are difficult to find.
- Representative Buttrey: Is there an ability to do more with licensing reciprocity?
- David Smith: Master Plumber in another state, as an example, has a difficult time obtaining proper credential in Montana. Is updating rules to allow more opportunities for easier licensing possible? Healthcare agrees.
- Senator Small: Montana is one of the most expensive places if in short term employment. Traveling workers realize this and go to less expensive locations to temporarily work and live.
- Representative Buttrey: Workforce housing is coming and being built, but it is a long-term solution.
- Healthcare: MHA completed a workforce shortage survey for healthcare and can be shared widely.

III. Committee Goal Setting

- a. Goals:
 - i. Identify 3-4 Actionable Goals for recommendation to SWIB
 - 1. Licensing reciprocity opportunities and issues.
 - 2. Red Tape Task Force Recommendations or Review
 - 3. Business licensing made easier.
 - a. Can Department of Revenue present to the committee
 - b. Call with Department of Commerce
 - i. Accelerate Montana Update – Full SWIB
 - 4. Data Pulling on licensing demographics
 - 5. Wages and cost of living
 - ii. Goal horizon: 12 months or less.
 - iii. Scope: Partnering industry, labor and education systems.

IV. Open Discussion

- a. Placeholder for any discussion points committee members would like to contribute
 - i. Discuss at Education, Training, and Upskill Committee.
 - 1. Education information data sharing

2. How can we better support on-the-job training?
3. Appropriations by CTSOs to OPI?

- V. **Next Committee Meeting Date:** Will await Director Scott Osterman's availability to learn more about Department of Commerce's initiatives and how they align with the SWIB.
- VI. **Adjournment:** This meeting adjourned promptly at 1:00pm.

DRAFT