



NOVA Workforce Board Retreat January 23, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Present: Tom Baity, Julian Chu, Carl Cimino, Ladan Dalla Betta, Lionel de Maine, Rosanne Foust, Chris Galy, Hilary Goodkind, Brenda Guidry-Brown, Elaine Hamilton, Katherine Harasz, Jim Hill, Bruce Knopf, Linda Labit, Steve Levy, Maria Lucero, Anita Manwani, Judy Miner, Jennifer Morrill, Stacey Porter, and Andy Switky

Absent: Sinéad Borgersen, Van Dang, Ben Field, Poncho Guevara, James Ruigomez, and Judy Sugiyama

Also Present: special guest Dr. Chris Benner; NOVA staff: Kris Stadelman, Jennifer Cheyer, Debbie Gamble, Luther Jackson, Jeanette Langdell, Cindy Stahl, Eileen Stanly and Lisa Wepfer; and guest Amelia Klawon from Moves the Needle

1. Call to Order: Welcome, Framing the Morning and Expectations

The retreat was called to order at 8:40 a.m. Board Co-chairs Chris Galy and Jennifer Morrill welcomed participants to the annual Board Retreat and provided an overview of what members can expect over the course of the day's activities. The focus of this year's retreat is to explore innovative ideas for promoting access to skill-building opportunities for low-skilled, low-income adults in order to increase their income.

2. Public Announcements

Board Co-chair C. Galy asked if there were any public announcements. No public announcements given.

3. Approval of the Agenda

Board Co-chair C. Galy called for a motion to approve the agenda. The motion was moved by L. de Maine, seconded by C. Cimino and passed by voice vote.

4. Approval of Modification to NOVA Strategic Local Workforce Development Plan

NOVA staff provided an overview of NOVA's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Local Plan modification. WIOA requires local workforce development boards to submit a comprehensive four-year strategic plan to the California Workforce Development Board. The Local Plan must support the State Plan goals in addition to meeting WIOA requirements. NOVA's current Strategic Local Plan covers program years 2017–2020. Under WIOA, a biennial update of the Local Plan is required to ensure plans remain current. The Regional Plan for the Bay-Peninsula region that includes NOVA will also be required to be modified, which is expected to be agendaized for Board approval at the March Board meeting. The State Board requires that local boards focus on the following priorities in their Local and Regional Plan modifications (the last bullet will be included in the Regional Plan modification):

- Partnerships with county human service CalFresh programs.

- Partnerships with Local Child Support Agencies to provide workforce services to non-custodial parents.
- Partnerships with programs that serve individuals with disabilities, including strategies to implement Competitive Integrated Employment.
- Services for English language learners, the foreign born, and refugees.
- Aligning, coordinating, and integrating reentry and workforce services to the formerly incarcerated and other justice-involved individuals.

NOVA met with many of the new partners and included their input in the Local and Regional Plan modifications. As a result of this modification process, NOVA hopes to engage these partners in future collaborations and already many have joined the NOVA stakeholders group. Nearly 200 required partners and stakeholders were invited to attend two public convenings to obtain input from the community on the draft plans, with a draft of the Local Plan modification later posted on the website for comment. It was moved by R. Foust, seconded by C. Cimino and passed by voice vote to approve the WIOA Local Plan modification for NOVA.

5. Introduction of Board Members

Facilitator Board member H. Goodkind asked Board members to introduce themselves. An icebreaker exercise was then introduced. Members were asked to complete an index card with answers to the following three questions: What is the best gift that you ever purchased for yourself?, What was your childhood nickname?, and All time favorite movie or television villain? that were then collected and read with members asked to guess the person's identity. New Board member Stacey Porter was recognized, as this was her first Board meeting.

6. Looking Back at 2018 and Board Accomplishments; Looking Ahead to 2019

Director Kris Stadelman presented on the past year's accomplishments and expectations for 2019. To view her slide presentation, please click here:

https://novaworks.org/documents/2020q1/WB-Retreat_KStadelman_2019_v2.pdf

The director also introduced NOVA staff to the Board and their responsibilities and contributions to the organization.

7. Economic Landscape in California

Board member Steve Levy presented on the economic landscape for California. To view his slide presentation, please click here:

[https://novaworks.org/documents/2020q1/SteveLevyNOVA%20Retreat%202019%20\(1\).pdf](https://novaworks.org/documents/2020q1/SteveLevyNOVA%20Retreat%202019%20(1).pdf)

8. Panel of NOVA Career Advisors

NOVA career advisors, Lisa Gonzales, Grace Hays and Sharadon Smith, shared their customers' experiences with their job search and the challenges they face overcoming barriers to employment. These individuals are low-income/low-skilled and are often the hardest to serve. NOVA manager Luther Jackson moderated the discussion. Highlights of the panel presentation included:

- Even in a good economy, NOVA continues to see a high demand from customers that have been laid off due to the innovation-driven economy, but at the same time, employers

are hiring. While mature workers and the long-term unemployed may need new skills to be competitive, they are also benefiting from this hiring surge.

- Still there are many customers who are challenged to find work because of the barriers they face that include: English as a Second Language, mental health issues, the formerly incarcerated, the long-term unemployed with obsolete skills, no formal degrees and/or certifications, limited access to transportation, childcare needs, housing instability, and social dysfunction. Similar to Maslow's Hierarchy of Need, in situations where a customer can't get his/her basic needs met, he will have difficulties finding work. There is also a psychological impact for those unemployed in a robust economy. In order to respond to these diverse challenges, career advisors have to meet each person where they are and often serve as an "ambassador of hope".
- Training that will lead to a better job is not always feasible for these customers because many trainings are yearlong and these customers need a job now due to financial constraints. Financial security needs to be considered in making referrals for training.
- Solutions to address the challenges facing low-income customers are varied and require creativity. For example, customers without a college degree pursuing jobs that require a degree often utilize networking because they will have trouble getting past the initial screening. Training opportunities that are short-term and/or offer opportunities for a stipend/paid internships are explored for those who are financially insecure. Examples of customers that achieved success include a mature worker who had difficulties continuing to work in the construction industry because of his age and transitioned into the culinary arts given his interests in organic gardening and by leveraging his volunteer work. Through supportive networks at her training school and with family, another customer was placed in a paid internship that led to permanent full-time job.
- Wish list (if there were no limits): in-house wraparound services with access to mental health services (on-site therapist) and transportation services; less limitations for training providers on the ETPL; more apprenticeships especially in tech for upskilling and to gain income while in training; more receptive employers to hire individuals with barriers to employment and a way to continue to coach customers after they are hired to help them balance the challenges in their life (customers with barriers may need more time to adjust); call-in services; basic computer skills training; more on-the-job training because NOVA pays part of the employee's wage mitigating the risk to employers.

During the discussion several comments/recommendations were made as follows:

- Approach employers about utilizing hours from their under-utilized Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) for mental health resources; utilize training slots that are not used.
- Through the NOVA's stakeholders group, wraparound services are being explored.
- Employers may be more willing to take a risk with employees with barriers if NOVA offered an insurance policy and/or phone or text-based help. Show a video to an employer of a customer displaying dysfunctional barriers and then what the customer is capable of offering the employer that outweighs the risks.
- The County has a wraparound service facility. NOVA should explore opportunities to tap into this resource that could include placing staff there or having a phone connection.
- The nonprofit sector should also be explored for potential jobs for these customers.

9. Special Guest Speaker: Dr. Chris Benner, Dorothy E. Everett Chair in Global Information and Social Entrepreneurship and Professor of Environmental Studies and Sociology at UC Santa Cruz

Dr. Benner presented on his report, "Still Walking the Lifelong Tightrope: Technology, Insecurity and the Future of Work" and the widening inequity gap, the importance of building strong and diverse networks and a proposed tech dividend that could be modeled after the Alaska Permanent Fund created from benefits derived from the oil industry. Link to report:

<http://www.everettprogram.org/still-walking-lifelong-tightrope-technology-insecurity-future-work/>. To view Dr. Benner's slide presentation, please click here: https://novaworks.org/documents/2020q1/Benner_NOVA_Economy&Equity.pdf

10. Afternoon Breakout Group Session

NOVA Director K. Stadelman introduced the afternoon breakout group session. Several Board members, K. Harasz, L. de Maine and B. Guidry-Brown, were asked to share the challenges facing the customers their organizations serve. Members were asked to break into their assigned small groups and design a pilot program that provides access to skill-building opportunities for low-skilled, low-income adults in order to increase their income. As part of their discussions, they were asked to answer the following questions: Who is the target group? What are the intervention strategies? What are the desired outcomes? and What would you expect to be the rough estimate of cost/time to launch pilot?

Following the small group discussions, each group reported out, with highlights that included:

Group #1: chaired by Co-chair J. Morrill: The target population includes those employed needing to skill-up in order to advance that may include janitors (facilities), the mature worker, those with an education gap (lack of base credential), and those out of the workforce for more than a year. The first pilot would entail charting a career path for janitors with small incremental advances through on-the-job certifications, specifically, moving from cleaning to maintenance crew to repair. The pilot would include a skills certification checklist of what is needed to move up into a higher position that demonstrates progression on the job, assistance to help individuals build a portfolio, reaching out to employers/industry organizations regarding their certification requirements, skills curriculum with industry-recognized certification, selling companies on vendors that include this curriculum, employer evaluation of task mastery, facilitators on-site to roam floor and help with language/soft skills, a "buddy system" where workers are paired with those with more skills/revolving mentorships, and a feedback loop or sit-down with worker and employer to promote action learning. The pilot is expected to take two years from conceptualization through beta testing to final launch. A model for this pilot can be found at the San Francisco Airport that brought its cleaning services in-house and now do their own training.

Group #2: chaired by Board member K. Harasz: The target population is low-income youth, ages 18-24, who lack a formal education. Year Up, which has more employers than participants, will be the model for this pilot, specifically, supportive apprenticeships. The cost for Year Up is \$30,000 per person that is supported by donations and entails 6 months of skill building followed by a 6-month internship. Foothill College provides credits for this skill building training toward an AA degree. On average, participants make \$24/hour upon graduation. The pilot, named "Moving Up", would expand upon the 6-month skill-building programs offered, increase the per capita cost as needed to include stipends during training and support services, go beyond the small office support that currently exists, look at medium-sized companies where there is staff to

deliver OJT, include other age groups, add peer and alumni support, increase donations and ask employers to subscribe to the program, and emphasize to employers that they will be given technical assistance to help support their trainees during the 6-month internship. Additional support/resources/referrals for this program that may be needed by participants include housing assistance, childcare subsidies, health and dental care (may qualify under the Affordable Care Act for subsidies), transportation (VTA bus passes), and food assistance (SparkPoint and SNAP).

Group #3: chaired by Co-chair C. Galy: The target population is low-income, low-skilled adults with a priority, during the first cohort, for those who are low risk and have a higher probability for success. The desired outcome is increased income. A staffing agency will help build the pilot and serve as a channel for other companies participating. The pilot will be built around existing labor shortage that is in alignment with employment growth opportunities, develop skills that serve multiple companies/multiple industries, utilize existing career paths/skill ladders, jobs have a realistic opportunity for entry, and target companies who are inclined toward formal/informal apprenticeships/on-the-job training. Initially, the program will be able to accommodate those with barriers that include: childcare/eldercare needs, homelessness, lack of social skills, mature workers, time for job preparation/ready to start is short, appearance/clothing, and insufficient resume writing, networking and computer skills, among others. Once the first cohort is completed and resources are secured, the program will be able to serve participants who present greater risk with barriers such as: drug/alcohol abuse, mental health issues, transportation issues, immigration issues and the formerly incarcerated, among others. The program is expected to cost \$50,000/person and require \$500,000 in support.

Group #4: chaired by Board member L. de Maine: The target population is adults, ages 18-40, with literacy/language barriers. The pilot program will include: employment skills inventory; industry-specific Toastmasters; add literacy to trade apprenticeships; IBest model that adds language mentor to automotive program/bilingual instruction; financial support that includes funding for training and a stipend so participants can afford to participate; access to online learning tools; partnerships with manufacturing for language tools/exams; direct interaction to build language skills/peer coaching; and wraparound support that includes creating awareness, exploring how undocumented individuals can access services, partnering with existing agencies and programs that can provide wraparound services, retention/motivation support, and a resource navigator. The desired outcomes for this pilot include employment, confidence in ability to target/communicate with identified industry, improved earnings, access to more responsible roles and responsibilities and access to lifelong learning. The timeline for this program is accelerated and consistent learning needed to get into the system.

11. Wrap-up, Evaluation and Adjournment

NOVA Director K. Stadelman and facilitator H. Goodkind wrapped up the afternoon discussion. Participants were thanked for attending and reminded to complete their evaluation forms.

12. Meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.