



NOVA Workforce Board Executive Committee
December 16, 2020 Meeting
Minutes

Executive Committee members present: D. Cima, V. Dang, R. Foust, P. Guevara, K. Harasz, J. Morrill, and A. Switky

NOVA staff: K. Stadelman and E. Stanly

Meeting was held remotely via videoconference call.

1. **Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order at 12:05 p.m.

2. **Action Items:**

a. Approval of October 21, 2020 Meeting Minutes: It was moved by A. Switky, seconded by D. Cima and carried by voice vote approval of the October 21, 2020 meeting minutes as submitted.

3. **Discussion Items:**

a. Update NOVA Operations During Pandemic Restrictions: NOVA staff continues to work remotely and delivering services to customers virtually. Customer enrollments have declined to under 20 customers per week which are significantly below what the organization usually serves. This can be attributed to a variety of factors that include: many counties have moved into the purple tier COVID-19 shelter-in-place order that may be serving as a disincentive for employers to hire new workers and for job seekers to return to work; and the holiday season may have prompted customers to take a break from job hunting. It is anticipated that business will pick up in early 2021 when the surge subsides, and the vaccine becomes more widely available.

b. State NDWG Grant to Serve Airport Workers: The U.S. Department of Labor has announced there will be a delay in awarding the NDWG grant to serve airport workers due to other priorities brought on by the transition in the Administration but is expecting to award grants in January. In the meantime, the City of Los Angeles has asked for and been granted a \$1 million advance from the State to serve this industry. NOVA will consider asking for an advance if the award is delayed for several months. Congressional leadership will be contacted to obtain an update on the status of this grant award. Given the enormous need, it is anticipated that the State will eventually be awarded this funding and NOVA will receive the funding it requested in the State's application.

c. Update San Mateo County Grant Project: San Mateo County awarded NOVA a grant to deliver a work experience program for up to 30 job seekers who had lost their jobs or experienced reduced hours due to the economic impacts from COVID-19. The project was a partnership with the Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center who was expected to provide the business sites that was later expanded to SAMCEDA and community-based organizations. The project experienced a great deal of challenges finding worksites because employers weren't hiring due to the shelter-in-place orders and identifying job seekers who were comfortable working in potentially high-risk environments. For those customers enrolled in the project, the County expanded the requirements for the program to allow funding to be used for support services, such as for a car payment, so the customer could work. The second part of this grant entailed developing a feasibility plan

to determine the best time for launching a workforce development program in 2021 given the current climate. San Mateo County is currently engaged in an economic study in collaboration with a UC Santa Cruz professor/researcher and the Bay Area Council Economic Institute, collecting data on demographics and employment clusters. This information coupled with the on-the-ground intelligence that is being aggregated from employers and job seekers through NOVA's feasibility study will provide a good projection of where the community will be economically in the future and the direction NOVA needs to go to effectively serve San Mateo County residents and employers. An analogy used was hockey and projecting where the puck is going to be in order for the skater to score.

Currently the community understandably appears to be more focused on rescue than recovery during the COVID-19 crisis. There have been several initiatives launched in San Mateo County, as well as in Santa Clara County since the pandemic began where some accomplishments have been achieved while others have stalled. For example, the Bridge to Recovery initiative, funded by Santa Clara County and spearheaded by Catholic Charities, recently lost a key staff person on this project and has needed to pause its efforts. Initiatives are taking different approaches during this crisis with some interested in doing big things but have become too unfocused, while others are just trying to tackle one issue at a time.

It's possible that the recovery won't begin until late spring/early summer. In the meantime, there is concern that the low-income worker will become more marginalized and that the economy will become more bifurcated with the gap between the haves and have-nots widening. Convening a group of retired CEOs may be of value in developing a plan for repairing the economy for workers. Students are also at risk. The Rework the Bay is targeting this issue plaguing the lower-skilled workforce through a proposed Worker Bill of Rights and a scorecard for employers on the health and safety of their workforce. Destination Home recently released a study titled, "Home Not Found" and is infusing supportive resources into the homeless issue to mitigate the issues facing individuals at risk for homelessness.

d. Review Draft Agenda for January 27, 2021 Abbreviated Board Retreat:

The program for the retreat agenda was discussed. For the guest speaker, a recommendation was made to select someone who can discuss the issues facing low-income workers in Silicon Valley and what it will take to stabilize someone economically and socially. Board Vice Chair Poncho Guevara has agreed to speak at this meeting on these topics.

e. Board member K. Harasz announced she was retiring from the Housing Authority in January and will be resigning from the Board effective January 20, 2021. Members thanked her for her contributions to the Board's work and the community.

4. **Information Items:**

a. The next Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for February 17, 2021 at 12 Noon.

b. The 2021 Executive Committee Meeting schedule was included in the meeting packet.

5. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.