



**Legislative Committee
Draft October 27, 2021 Meeting Summary**

Committee members participating: Poncho Guevara (lead), Dennis Cima and Steve Levy
NOVA staff: Kris Stadelman and Eileen Stanly

I. Welcome and Review of Agenda

The Committee chair welcomed participants and reviewed the agenda.

**II. Review Federal Legislative and Political Landscape:
Planning for the Coming Year**

Guest Chris Andresen, Washington, D.C. lobbyist for the California Workforce Association, provided an update on the federal legislative and political landscape.

Negotiations for the Build Back Better reconciliation bill are continuing, with a resolution unlikely soon. This bill is also tied to the \$1.2 trillion dollar infrastructure bill which will not go forward until the conciliation bill is finalized. The \$90 billion earmarked for workforce development in the House version of the reconciliation bill has been taken out of the Senate version, with approximately \$15-\$20 billion remaining. Other provisions in the House version have also been taken out in the Senate version that include the free community college component, expansion of Medicare to include dental and vision, and expansion of family leave. The total funding for the reconciliation bill has been reduced from \$3.5 trillion to \$1.5-\$1.75 trillion. The question is how this reduced funding will be divided among priorities. For example, the Civilian Climate Corp. is projected to receive approximately \$25 billion in Senate version. The concern is that many legislators don't understand workforce development and were not in office when the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) passed into law. Workforce development funding could be prioritized for AmeriCorp versus WIOA. Some WIOA funding will be included in the final reconciliation bill, but it will be inadequate to meet workforce development needs. Negotiations are likely to continue into November/December before final decisions are made. Going forward, it will be important to continue to support the reconciliation bill despite its shortcomings. The California delegation has been a strong supporter of workforce development during the Senate negotiations, and it will be important to thank them.

There is concern that in the future the federal workforce development program will move toward a smaller program for poor people or not be funded at all. In response, it should be positioned as an economic program with social benefits, instead of a social program with economic benefits. The current program is also supporting middle and higher skilled workers. By moving workers up into higher level positions, it frees up positions at the lower levels for those lesser skilled workers seeking to gain entrée into the job market. Business partnerships and other stakeholder partnerships should also be highlighted in discussions when workforce development and WIOA are described. WIOA has never been fully funded and it is now up for reauthorization. We are approaching a transformational period. It is an encouraging sign that the Senate HELP Committee staff has been reaching out to the local workforce development community for input on WIOA reauthorization. Currently, they are

considering making digital literacy mandatory and implementing performance indicators for business services.

The Virginia gubernatorial election is expected to be a bellwether for the electorate's continued support of the President and Democratic party. The state has been under Democratic leadership for several years and based on the outcome of the election, it could move to Republican control or become a swing state. This may be an indicator of how the midterm elections will go.

III. Review 2021 State Legislative Session: Planning for the Coming Year

A year-end tracking chart of state legislation was distributed and reviewed. AB 593 (Carrillo) was passed in 2019 that would permit local workforce development boards access to information from the State through the unemployment insurance code for research and evaluation. This is particularly valuable in tracking customer outcomes for those program that are not funded by WIOA. With NOVAworks receiving more funding from other sources such as San Mateo County, this access will be especially important. Unfortunately, the State initially opposed this bill and has presented challenges in its implementation. A recommendation was made to explore opportunities to measure outcomes for childcare in supporting women in the workplace. With funding from the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), some local governments are exploring pairing guaranteed income with skill building and subsidies for childcare for working families, and subsidizing wages for childcare workers.

IV. Future Strategies for Impacting Workforce Development

The workforce development community is entering a period of great change and we will have the freedom to re-envision and redesign how work will be done in the future to assist job seekers. Workers are questioning their careers and exploring new and different opportunities. They will need career exploration and navigation assistance and training. When the new NOVAworks director starts, it will be important to introduce her to the consortium jurisdictions, NOVAworks state and federal legislative representatives, and State administrators.

V. Wrap-up/Next Steps

The next Legislative Committee meeting will be scheduled after the January Board retreat.