



SPOKANE WORKFORCE COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL MEETING
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 8, 2021 – 7:34 - 9:31 AM
Zoom

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Dan Evans	Kelley Charvet	Rebecca Cook	Mary Crago - DSHS	Robert Duron
Tina Morrison	Lori Hunley	Machelle Johnson	Wade Larson	Luis Licea
Nancy Nelson	Diane Quincy	Staci Taylor	Derek Tyree	Christina Vigil-Gross
Jennie Weber	Joel White	Diana Wilhite	Ron Valencia (designee for Commissioner Kerns)	

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Alisha Benson	Dr. Christine Johnson	Commissioner Josh Kerns	Vicki Leifer	Dr. David May
Ben Small	Mayor Nadine Woodward			

OTHERS PRESENT:

Michaela Brown – Greater Spokane Progress	Devina Cunningham – Talent Solutions Team	John Dickson – Spokane County	Cami Eakins – Career Path Services	Amanda Fisher – Labor & Industries
Sarah Flambouras – WorkSource	Jen Morris – Spokane Resource Center	Terrance Nixon – Next Generation Zone	Jamie Pierce - WorkSource	Kurtis Robinson – Greater Spokane Progress
Lora Senf – WorkSource	Lori Veitenheimer - WorkSource	Stacey Wells – Next Generation Zone	Kevin Williams – WorkSource	

STAFF PRESENT:

Mandy Adamson – Program Manager	Kate Behrmann – Communications Assistant	Jessica Clayton – Program & Development Director	Jeanette Facer – Finance Director	Andrea Hixson – Program & Operations Manager
Dawn Karber – Chief Operations Officer	Mark Mattke – Chief Executive Officer	Mike McBride – Business & Industry Analyst	Tim Robison – Program & Compliance Specialist	

Chair Kelley Charvet called the meeting to order at 7:34 a.m. with a quorum of members present and conducted introductions of members and guests.

Meeting the Mission

Mark Mattke, SWC Chief Executive Officer

Mark introduced Andrea Hixson who spoke to a successful partnership between Second Harvest and WorkSource Spokane. She showed a customer success story video featuring Janeth – an English as a Second Language (ESL) customer of WorkSource Spokane who found work as a receptionist at Second Harvest. Video can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LOw6XKcFfOU>

Review of Minutes

Review of June 9, 2021 meeting minutes.

Action: Motion and second to approve the June 9, 2021 meeting minutes. Approved unanimously.

Regional Economic Update

Mike McBride, Business & Industry Analyst

Mike provided an update on labor market conditions in the Spokane area, with a particular focus on women and people of color in the workforce.

Spokane's Labor Market:

- Total civilian labor force: 259,174
- Total employment: 246,712
- Total unemployed: 12,462

County Unemployment Rates

- Spokane County's unemployment rate is back to pre-pandemic levels. Some rural counties in Washington have lower unemployment rates than typical years.
- U3 unemployment levels continue to be impacted by who is considered unemployed and who is in the labor force.

Female Workforce Participation

- 863,000 women dropped out of the workforce in September 2020, compared to 168,000 men. Spokane follows the national trend of women leaving the workforce at high rates. The timing (September being when the most women dropped out of workforce) highlights central role of childcare in the labor force.
- Female labor force has still not recovered. There 1.5 million less women in the workforce than in previous years.
- Single mother of minor demographic in labor force participation has dropped significantly, which is cause for concern in both Spokane and nationally.

Unemployment claims by type:

- Week ending July 31, 2021
 - Regular Continued Claims: 3,488
 - Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) Continued Claims: 4,919
 - Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) Continued Claims: 5,582

- There are 13,989 total continued unemployment claims in Spokane County currently. About 40% are considered long-term unemployed.
- PEUC claims are gradually declining, but that may be due to people exhausting their funds rather than returning to work. PUA claims are declining. Regular continued claims are steady.

Who Are the Currently Unemployed?

- Gender
 - 6,930 Females
 - 7,210 Males
 - 17 Nonbinary
 - PUA continued claims are 53% female. Males account for 53% of Regular and PECU continued claims.
- Age
 - Largest unemployed group is also the largest age group in our area: 35-44
 - PEUC and PUA claims are skewed toward older populations. Most PEUC claims are by people 55 and older.
 - There is a higher concentration of long-term unemployed people in older age groups.
 - We are trying to reach older demographics with our work to encourage them to come back to work.
 - Age 24 and younger had been overrepresented previously, but now they have very low claim numbers.
- Race
 - African American, American Indian, Pacific Islander and Two or More Races are over-represented on unemployment compared to overall employed workforce representation.
 - There is also overrepresentation in communities with heavier economic barriers (particularly among communities of color).
 - Jobs where people of color are typically overrepresented (restaurants, hospitality, etc.) were the first to be lost during the pandemic and are slow to return, causing disproportionate effects on BIPOC communities.
- Education
 - Unemployment is heavily skewed for people with lower levels of education. Over 40% of current unemployment claimants have a high school or less educational attainment.
 - Jobs that require only a high school diploma have not come back at the same rate as other positions.
 - Education and re-skilling are key to bringing people back to work.
 - Mike will send out data for the education levels of people currently employed in Spokane County to be compared with the numbers of people unemployed.

Occupations in Demand

Mike McBride, Business & Industry Analyst

The Occupations in Demand List is an annual publication that helps to direct worker retraining investments into targeted occupations. ESD produces the preliminary list with analytical models, but the local workforce board has full control on the final classifications.

An occupation can be listed as “in-demand,” “balanced,” or “not in-demand.”

COVID-19 economic impacts and unemployment data has skewed the list to contain far too many “not in-demand” classifications. Currently, there are 65 “in-demand” industries, 99 “balanced” and 280 “not in-demand” of the 444 total occupations given a preliminary OID rating in Spokane County.

TAB 1

We are seeking board and workforce partner feedback for suggested classification changes. Occupation groups have been put into specific tabs related to the industry of the occupation. We are asking our board members to go through the tab that closest relates to your industry or what you hire for. Is it accurate of what you have seen in your organization? Please put in comments on the far-right side of the document and include what occupation you are mentioning along with what category the occupation should be under (in-demand, not in-demand or balanced). The document will be emailed out after the meeting. Please submit all feedback within the next two weeks. WDC changes will be sent to ESD for publication in September, however the list is fully controlled by the WDC. We are able to make changes immediately, so let us know if you see something that has changed over the next few months.

Question: Are we able to track people who live in Spokane but work for organizations outside the city or state? How can we keep our eye on that trend?

Answer: This is a very difficult statistic to track. Information likely will not be available until tax season, when people must file in different locations from where their employer is listed, or until census results are available. We are keeping our eye on this and will give an update when we have information to share.

Board Business

Kelley Charvet - Chair

Nomination to appoint Rebecca Cook to the Services and Oversight Committee.

Action: Motion and second to approve Rebecca Cook to the Services and Oversight Committee. Approved unanimously.

Racial Equity – Improving our Workforce System.

Kurtis Robinson, Greater Spokane Progress

Michaela Brown, Greater Spokane Progress

Mark introduced Michaela and Kurtis. We had a quick recap on the homework and what we covered in our last session. Michaela offered a land acknowledgment, then the meeting broke into breakout rooms to answer the following questions:

- How racially diverse was your neighborhood growing up? What message(s) did you get about race from living there?
- When was the first time you had a teacher of a different race? How often did this occur?
- When/how did you first realize that different races were treated differently in society? Who helped you make sense of that difference in treatment, and how?
- When did you first work in a community that was racially different from the one you grew up in?

When the breakout rooms were finished, we discussed the video Race the Power of an Illusion Video 3, followed by an in-depth discussion of education and the importance of diverse role-models in the educational sphere, particularly in childhood/adolescence.

Next, we discussed how Spokane was impacted by laws, rules and regulations that were put in place to keep communities of color from establishing themselves in Spokane and surrounding areas, as well as how the effects of those rules can still be felt today.

A video discussing Spokane's racial history was shown that can be viewed here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3T9_6icDhwQ&t=334s

TAB 1

Redlining was discussed in detail, and maps of Spokane were shown that displayed where redlining, a now-illegal practice, had been utilized to discriminate against people of color.

Breakout rooms were used once again, and the following questions were posed to each:

- What is the SWC “why” for integrating equity, specifically intersectional racial equity into all aspects of its work?
- What values underlie it?
- Why do we prioritize equity and specifically race equity?
- What is your personal why for doing equity work, specifically intersectional racial equity work?
- Why do you do this work?
- Has it changed since the first session?

In the interest of time, we will not be reviewing action items reviewed by the committee in the last two months. Let Kelley or other board members know if any questions arise.

The next board meeting will be the annual board retreat on October 13, 2021, planned for in-person at the Convention Center, where we will continue our focused discussion on racial equity issues and develop a board equity statement.

Meeting adjourned at 9:31 AM.