

**GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL
EDUCATION**

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

Videoconference Host:

Governor's Council
550 W. 7th Avenue, Suite 1230
Anchorage, Alaska

Meeting Date

Tuesday, August 2, 2022
12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Attendees:

Nona Safra, Chair
Jena Crafton
Lyle Downing
Ken Hamrick
Charlene Taufest

Guests:

Anna Attla
Susan Garner
Erick Gurley
Isaac Diboue
Dave Berube

Staff:

Patrick Reinhart
Jamie Kokoszka
Lanny Mommsen
Rich Saville

CALL TO ORDER – 12:00 p.m.
ROLL CALL – Quorum established

WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

Nona Safra welcomed attendees and said she was glad to have the committee up and running again. She shared her background, which includes a seat on the Governor's Council as the Alaska Commission on Aging representative. She is also a member of the Alaska Work Matters Task Force. Nona noted that she has a background in human resources, which could benefit the Employment Committee. She looks forward to input from committee members and partners and having a collaborative environment to move the work forward for employment for people with disabilities.

Patrick Reinhart reported that the Executive Committee has a meeting scheduled with the Commissioner of Health and Social Services, the Assistant Attorney General, and several high-level people in the Administration on Community Living regarding the Council's compliance issues. The meeting is a result of a discussion that Jena Crafton, Heidi Lieb-Williams, and Patrick had with Senators Murkowski and Sullivan over a week ago in Washington, D.C. The Council shared with the delegation the issues between ACL and the Council, and the senators took steps to advocate for the Council.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS

No conflicts of interest were declared.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA and MINUTES

Jena Crafton **MOVED** to approve the meeting agenda as written, **SECONDED** by Ken Hamrick. Hearing no objection, the motion **PASSED**.

Charlene Tautfest **MOVED** to approve the January 19, 2022 meeting minutes as presented, **SECONDED** by Ken Hamrick. Hearing no objection, the motion **PASSED**.

REPORTS

Chair Report

Nona Safra reported that she met with Patrick Reinhart and Jamie Kokoszka to talk about the chair's role.

GCDSE Staff

Patrick Reinhart reported that the Council committees haven't met for some time and are attempting to get back on a regular meeting schedule.

Jamie Kokoszka reported that she, Lanny Mommsen, self-advocates, and SDS are presenting an "I Have Rights" webinar scheduled for August 30th, 2022 at 11:00 a.m. Jamie reported that the "I Have Dreams" webinar will take place in September. She shared the flyers for the events with committee members.

BUSINESS

Member Introduction

Nona Safra opened the floor for member introductions. Each member shared a brief introduction along with their Council affiliation.

Review Council Five-Year Plan Objectives and Activities

Patrick Reinhart recommended that since the work plan is new to the committee, the committee members and partners review the document and address changes. Jamie Kokoszka noted that the Microenterprises Mini-Grant and other Trust employment activities were added to the work plan, and timelines were adjusted to reflect a realistic goal.

Goal 3: Employment

- People with developmental disabilities will have access to supports, services, programs, and training necessary for successful transitions to adulthood, meaningful work experiences, integrated and competitive employment, as well as career development across the lifespan.

Objective 1: Employment First Implementation

- People will have information, training, tools, and programs on telework, the State as a Model Employer (SAME), employment rights, and universally designed work environments to increase the percentage of people with developmental disabilities with meaningful, integrated, competitive employment in typical work settings.
- Activities:
 1. Work with partners to participate in at least one employment activity annually, such as job fairs, transition fairs, conferences, and/or statewide stakeholder meetings or trainings. GCDSE and partner agencies will host at least one activity. Review sign-in sheets/participant lists for attendance count; surveys will measure self-reported increase in knowledge and location in Alaska to gauge reach.
 2. Collaborate with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority to support the Council's five-year plan through the management and implementation of the Beneficiary Employment Engagement (BEE) plan activities to ensure beneficiaries have greater access to employment, related support services, and accurate resources and information on how paid employment impacts Social Security and other benefits. Complete plan

- activities and submit an MHTAAR report to AMHTA twice per year. GCDSE will provide a report to AMHTA twice a year with activity progress.
3. Microenterprise Grant Review. Support employment for Alaska's DD population by serving on the Microenterprise Grant Committee. Participate in the Microenterprise Grant review and discussion with Alaska WIPA project director through the UAA, CHD. Review Microenterprise Grant applications, and provide input and recommendations on applications no less than four times per year. The number of meetings and applications reviewed by the GCDSE staff and approved by the committee.

Objective 2: Traditional Transition

- Transition-aged youth (14-22) with developmental disabilities will have increased information, education services, training, and tools that are regionally, culturally, and linguistically relevant to them to increase the number of young adults in rural communities with skills for meaningful, place-based adulthood.
- Targeted Disparity: In collaboration with people with developmental disabilities, their families, and stakeholders, the unequal availability of education resources for regionally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate transitions to adulthood in the Southwest region of rural Alaska will be decreased through capacity building by curriculum development, outreach, and training.
- Activities:
 1. Support and promote the curriculum that is regionally, culturally, and linguistically relevant for rural transition in the state. GovDelivery and social media metrics.
 2. Provide at least one opportunity for stakeholder input on education for transitions to adulthood in rural Alaska. The Council will provide one opportunity per year for stakeholder input on systems change for choice and independence. Minutes recorded from public testimony will be reviewed for subject matter of input, location of participants recorded to ensure statewide reach, and review sign-in sheets/participant lists for attendance count.

Review Committee Description and Mission Statement

Nona Safra shared the committee description as follows:

To help individuals with disabilities of all types gain meaningful, competitive, and integrated employment in their field and community of choice across the lifespan. Meaningful employment to them encompasses transportation, education, environment, and housing across Alaska.

Nona Safra recommended removing "to them" from the statement. Hearing no objection, the language will be removed.

Nona Safra shared the committee's mission statement as follows:

To bring awareness for the state and society to realize that employing an individual with disabilities is not a barrier preventing individuals contributing to the economy.

Patrick Reinhart recommended rewording the mission statement. After a brief discussion, the committee drafted the following statement for consideration:

To promote and enhance meaningful and sustainable employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

Nona Safra referred the mission statement draft to staff. The staff will look across Council committee statements for consistency and language.

Review and Discuss Alaska Work Matters Task Force Report Draft

Patrick Reinhart reported that the Alaska Work Matters Task Force has finished their work and produced a report and executive summary. Patrick shared the report and executive summary with the committee. He highlighted the following recommendations from the executive summary as follows:

Recommendations in Section 1: The State of Alaska as a Model Employer for people with disabilities:

- Set utilization goals for state hiring.
- Increase awareness and utilization of the existing Provisional Hire program.
- Establish a centralized accommodation fund for state positions.
- Increase state employment for people with the most significant disabilities through support for personal care services.
- Ensure that all State of Alaska online platforms are fully accessible.
- Educate executive and legislative staff about disability employment trends and data on employment outcomes.

Recommendations in Section 2: Building the Capacity of the Private Sector

- Build on the existing Business Engagement Services Teams (BEST) to increase collaboration between private sector employers in order to increase diversity and inclusion.
- Continue planning and implementing job fairs (including virtual and reverse job fairs) to connect employers and job seekers with disabilities.
- Increase the number of students with disabilities served by the Alaska Vocational Technical Education Center (AVTEC).
- Increase the number of people with disabilities involved in apprenticeships and internships.
- Support disability-owned and disabled veteran-owned businesses through procurement and contracting systems.
- Reduce hiring barriers for job seekers with justice system involvement.

Recommendations in Section 3: Employment Services and Supports

- Strengthen state support for Employment First.
- Strengthen implementation of the state Medicaid plan and waivers to better support employment services and outcomes.
- Expand the use of the Individual Placement and Supports (IPS) model for people with mental health conditions or substance use disorders.
- Improve transportation policies to require options that are reliable and accessible for individuals with disabilities.
- Support rural traditional skill development such as subsistence and self-employment.

Recommendations for Section 4: Preparing for Work and Transition

- Expand and improve existing School-to-Work transition resources for school personnel. Strengthen the At-Risk Youth Initiative.

Recommendations for Section 5: Stay at Work, Return to Work

- Improve stay-at-home and return-to-work policies and programs for individuals who become ill or injured on the job.
- Support and encourage teleworking where possible and desirable.
- Invest in post-COVID health and safety planning.
- Support and expand the Senior Employment Initiative.

Patrick Reinhart noted that the report will be distributed widely in the next few weeks.

"Working Towards Independence" Conference Discussion

Patrick Reinhart reported that the Statewide Independent Living Council and the Independent Living Centers are hosting an Independent Living Conference scheduled for September 21 – 23, 2022 at the Egan Center in Anchorage. The SILC added an employment thread to the conference, and the Council in partnership with DVR plans to present the Alaska Work Matters Task Force report. Patrick shared the draft agenda with the committee and noted that if Council members were interested in attending the conference, they can contact Council staff for more details.

Group Discussion and Announcements

No discussion was brought to the floor, and no announcements were made.

DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next Employment Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 8, 2022, from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m. There will be no meeting in October, and November's meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 10, 2022 from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m.

GOOD OF THE ORDER AND ADJOURNMENT

Jena Crafton **MOVED** to adjourn, **SECONDED** by Anna Attla. Hearing no objection, the motion **PASSED**, and the meeting adjourned at 1:17 p.m.