

**Workforce Innovation Board of Ramsey County**  
**Youth Committee Meeting**  
July 16, 2020, 2:30-4:00pm

**Members Present**

Tom Aasheim  
Karen Gerdin  
Jennifer Germain  
Gaye Adams Massey  
Camila Mercado Michelli  
Paul Nikstad

**Members Absent**

Breanna Galuska-EA  
Larry Gilbertson  
Hyon Kim  
Robert Morse  
Sheri Riemers

**Staff/Guests Present**

Ling Becker, Workforce Solutions  
Lisa Guetzkow, Workforce Solutions

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**Call to Order**

Chair Paul Nikstad called the meeting to order at 2:33 pm. Everyone in attendance introduced themselves.

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**Approve May Youth Committee Minutes**

**Motion (Aasheim/Germain) to approve the May 21, 2020 Youth Committee minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously by roll call.**

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**CARES Act Youth Funding**

Becker provided unemployment claims and rate data during the pandemic. Most impacted populations are the young, the less educated and communities of color. The unemployment rate in Ramsey County went from being lower than the state and metro area in January to being higher in May. Ramsey County received \$96M in Cares funding. The \$15M designated for workforce assistance will be spent on increasing employment resources (Career Labs, TechPaks and virtual training) and funding community workforce services. Seven Career Labs will open in August at city and county public libraries. People can reserve times to use computers and get staff support for job search and career planning. Once fully operational, there will be 1,000 reservation spots per week. CARES funding is also being used to fund the creation of TechPaks through a partnership with Tech Dump and Literacy Minnesota. Starting in August, people can enroll to receive a refurbished laptop, hot spot and a digital literacy navigator.

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**Updates**

*Youth Unemployment:* Becker explained that there is a push to change an old state law prohibiting high school students from receiving unemployment benefits.

*Youth Program Waivers:* Guetzkow reported that DEED granted several temporary waivers needed to continue providing services given the current circumstances.

*Outreach to Schools Year End Report:* A written update was sent with the pre-reading. There were some issues with data collection. The report will be discussed more at the next meeting.

*Summer Youth Employment Program:* A modified program was run this summer with staggered start dates for youth in June, July and August. Currently, 34 youth have been placed in on-site work experiences with nine employers. They are also completing self-guided training modules. LRNG, an online platform with youth focused learning modules, will be launching this month. Youth can also participate in industry specific mentoring sessions with BIPOC mentors who are available to support youth of color. The first session was on the automotive industry. Overall, WFS is expecting to serve about half the number of youth served in a typical summer.

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**WIOA Youth Dashboard**

Guetzkow reviewed the data provided on the dashboard. There was some discussion about the challenges of delineating data by race and ethnicity. Highlights included information about the transition to virtual services and the distribution of hand sanitizer and masks to youth.

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**Committee Dashboard Review**

The dashboard was reviewed. Nikstad noted that a youth-oriented communications plan still needs to be created. Michelli reported on the Youth Voices virtual event coordinated by Youth Works! where 8-10 youth were able to

talk about their needs and experiences during the pandemic. A concern expressed by some youth is not feeling safe in their work environments due to lack of safety equipment and protocols.

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### **Committee Member Updates**

*Finishing Trades:* Multiple ideas for training are being considered while waiting for the governor's direction.

*YWCA:* The fitness center has been opened at 25% capacity and some youth are working there. YWCA is following strict safety guidelines but providing a safe workplace for staff and the community is challenging due to masks not being mandated.

*CLUES:* A virtual IT program is being offered. Becker suggested these trainings be added to the Job Connect training dashboard.

*Saint Paul ABE:* Classes are still being held online. While waiting for more direction from the governor, they are preparing for multiple options for the fall.

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### **Other**

Becker mentioned the August and September WIB meetings where committee members have been invited to participate.

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### **Adjourn**

Upon completion of the agenda, the meeting was adjourned at 4:02 pm.

**Next Meeting:** September 17, 2:30-4:00, Job Corps – Building 1, 1480 N. Snelling Ave., St. Paul or virtually