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**Vermont State Workforce Development Board**

Training and Credentialing Committee - Meeting Minutes

April 3, 2023

9:00 – 10:00 am

**Committee Members in Attendance**: John Young, Alex Beck, Marilyn Cargill, Yasmine Ziesler, Tara Grenier, Tom Cheney, Molly Mahar, Amanda Arnold, Adam Grinold, Jay Ramsey, Mary Anne Sheahan

**Guests in Attendance**: Victoria Biondolillo, Abby Rhim

Victoria Biondolillo called the meeting to order at 9:03 am. She introduced herself as the Executive Director of the State Workforce Development Board. She outlined the new focus of the State Workforce Board on strategic planning. She then asked other meeting attendees to introduce themselves.

Abigail Rhim introduced herself as the Deputy Director of the State Workforce Development Board.

Mary Anne Sheahan introduced herself as the Executive Director of the Vermont Talent Pipeline Management program.

Alex Beck introduced himself as a Workforce and Education Specialist from the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation.

Adam Grinold introduced himself as the Director of the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation.

Marilyn Cargill introduced herself as the Vice President of Marketing, Research, and Financial Aid at the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation.

Jay Ramsey introduced himself as the Interim Director of Workforce Development for the Department of Labor.

Tara Grenier introduced herself as the Chief Licensing Administrator from the Office of Professional Regulation.

Amanda Arnold introduced herself as the Quality Assurance Manager with Higher Ability Vermont.

Tom Cheney introduced himself as the Executive Director of Advance Vermont.

Yasmine Ziesler introduced herself as the Chief Academic Officer with the Vermont State Colleges system.

Molly Mahar introduced herself as the President of the Vermont Ski Areas Association.

John Young introduced himself as the Director of the Vermont Training Program.

Victoria Biondolillo then oriented the Committee around the focus of their work. She highlighted employers moving away from “the only credential of value being a four-year bachelor’s degree.” Thus, alternative forms of training and credentials are becoming more important. The Committee should continuously be monitoring modern forms of credentialing.

She then introduced the “one-pager” for the Training and Credentialing Committee. She emphasized the fluid nature of the one-pager’s contents and the Committee’s ability to revise and edit whatever they wish.

Mary Anne Sheahan asked if the old findings of the former Training and Credentialing Committee were taken into account in creating the one-pager.

Victoria Biondolillo said the one-pager was based off the old committee’s work.

She then highlighted the different parts of the one-pager. She also said the Committee and the Workforce Board would review the one-pager annually to see if any changes need to be made. Furthermore, every three years, the Committee and Workforce Board will review the one-pager to see if the strategic goals are being met (i.e., are still realistic/ practical).

She first highlighted the situation: creating a credential of value is essential to the workforce; credentialing does not necessarily need to be in the form of a four-year degree. The Committee has not met for some time, but it will now begin to meet and make recommendations for the SWDB (State Workforce Development Board) again.

She then highlighted the solution: the TCC (Training and Credentialing Committee) will officially define the term “credential of value.” It will also create mechanisms for the recognition, use, and visibility of credentials of value. In other words, the TCC will focus on promoting credentials. The floor was then opened for questions.

Adam Grinold asked if everyone is aware of the changes to the eligible trainer list. He asked if the TCC would be focusing on the changes at some point.

Victoria Biondolillo responded that the TCC could review the former process for being added to the eligible trainer list and the changes made to it. The Committee would then vote on whatever the new process is to make sure the changes are in alignment with the new process.

Mary Anne Sheahan said the old Committee spent a lot of time on a definition for “credential of value.” She asked if the TCC could start from that definition for creating the new definition.

Victoria Biondolillo said the TCC could start with that definition and re-word it.

Jay Ramsey asked if the TCC could focus on how WIOA affects their work in the next meeting (to ensure the Committee is “grounded in WIOA”).

Victoria Biondolillo said that would make a lot of sense.

John Young said he would like the TCC to think about adding a list of links they could provide with information on eligible training.

Victoria Biondolillo said that was good feedback.

Tom Cheney agreed with John Young. Also, he proposed that the TCC look at other states’ definitions of a “credential of value” in working on their own definition. He then highlighted the absence of a representative from the AOE (Agency of Education) at the meeting. He asked how the TCC would ensure their definitions aligned with those of the AOE and other programs.

Victoria Biondolillo said the TCC can make sure they are looping someone in from AOE and other agencies.

Jay Ramsey said the AOE has a Career Pathways Coordinator now. He suggested she might be a helpful resource for the TCC.

Victoria Biondolillo said the SWDB has a Career Pathways Committee. She said the CPC and TCC should work together moving forward.

Alex Beck asked if there is a way to ease the process of CTE centers becoming eligible training providers.

Victoria Biondolillo said there are federal requirements for designating eligible training providers that the SWDB could not wave. However, the TCC should be focused on making the process as transparent as possible.

Jay Ramsey said the federal government has too many requirements for eligible training providers. He said he has a sent a letter to Senator Sanders saying the way the eligible training requirements are structured in WIOA does not work for a small state like Vermont. Congress is currently considering revisions to WIOA.

Victoria Biondolillo agreed there are too many regulations under WIOA. However, she also said that the TCC’s definition for “credential of value” can be different than WIOA’s.

John Young said the TCC should focus on both the WIOA steps for credentialing and have their own definition of “credential of value” which pertains more to training providers in Vermont.

Adam Grinold asked if there should be two lists because of the difficulties surrounding WIOA.

Jay Ramsey said the TCC should be focused on what the credentials employers say are necessary and important are.

Victoria Biondolillo said that makes sense, but obviously the TCC must still focus on their WIOA obligations. She also said WIOA is a necessary part of the workforce system, but she does not want the obsession with perfection of WIOA to get in the way of achieving the goals of the TCC. However, she re-emphasized the importance of following WIOA.

She then outlined the milestones in the one-pager:

* The TCC will meet quarterly.
* By August of 2023, the TCC will review findings of the Training and Credentialing Work Group.
* By December of 2023, the TCC will collaborate with VDOL to outline the new eligible training provider and credential of value approval process.
* By January of 2024, the TCC will continuously review and approve eligible training providers and credentials of value.
* By March of 2024, the TCC will work with VDOL and other relevant agencies to amplify eligible training providers and credentials of value to the public.
* By January of 2025, the TCC will receive and review continuous updates on the percentage of Vermonters who hold a credential of value. This will inform future promotional strategies.

She then opened the floor for further discussion.

Marilyn Cargill asked how feedback should be given.

Victoria Biondolillo said it is up to the person giving feedback (they can either give it directly to her and Abigail Rhim or send it to the whole group). She also said it is important to have people focus specifically on their “piece of the pie.”

John Young asked if there are two lists, should one be more employer-focused and the other more job-seeker-focused.

Victoria Biondolillo said she thinks that’s a good idea. She also highlighted the importance of making information easy to access for people interfacing with the system.

Alex Beck said the TCC should consider who is paying for the training programs.

Victoria Biondolillo agreed. She also said that she and Abigail Rhim can discuss who the “stakeholders” referred to in the one-pager actually are (i.e., compile a list of stakeholders and what is important to them).

John Young said the TCC should identify what important information is missing, not just focus on the information they have (and can provide to employers and job-seekers).

Victoria Biondolillo said if a nexus is created between the CPC and the TCC, they can work together to acquire more information and prioritize the most pressing issues.

She then thanked the meting attendees for their feedback and told them she and Abigail Rhim will send them the one-pager.

Victoria Biondolillo adjourned the meeting at 9:48

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Respectfully submitted by Nicholas Kebo