

**Vermont State Workforce Development Board**

Relocation and Recruitment Committee - Meeting Minutes

July 7, 2023

11:00 am – 12:00 pm

**Committee Members in Attendance**: Jen Stromsten, Peter Edelmann, Patricia Moulton, Alex Beck, John Burnham

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

Introductions/Board Updates

Tori Biondolillo began by reminding the group that she will be leaving her position on Thursday, July 27th. The SWDB will have a virtual meeting on Thursday, July 20th to discuss the transition.

Abby Rhim reviewed today’s meeting agenda.

Strategic Plan Milestone: Guiding Principles of Network

Tori Biondolillo asked the group what they would like, in an ideal world, Vermont’s relocation and recruitment system to look like. This is a more general system, not specific to New Americans which will be later discussed.

Patricia Moulton shared that the current system is fragmented, geographically based and underfunded.

Jen Stromsten noted how personal the system can be when it works.

Tori Biondolillo asked what the general perception is regarding welcoming folks to Vermont.

Alex Beck highlighted the misunderstanding of what newcomers are bringing to Vermont communities.

Patricia Moulton highlighted that much of the negative mentality around newcomers is motivated by fear.

Tori Biondolillo highlighted that we want to stress that we don’t just want people to relocate for the sake of relocating. We want folks to relocate because they will improve our communities. She then asked what the ideal relocation system would look like.

Patricia Moulton stressed a personalized system that not only focuses on the entire state but a welcome to a specific region or neighborhood.

Alex Beck stressed an understanding throughout agencies and departments of the relocation process and resources.

Jen Stromsten added the idea of getting to a point where the system works well enough that she gets connected with folks that would fit her region and occupational needs. That takes consistent funding and coordination.

Patricia Moulton noted getting connect with employers doing their own outreach.

Peter Edelmann stressed any help the system can provide, like housing, transportation, education, etc., that can help make Vermont more attractive should be prioritized.

Tori Biondolillo asked if any states have strong models to compare.

Alex Beck suggested the Welcoming America group that identifies areas that are more welcoming to immigrants. They might be more specific to that population, rather than relocation in general, but something to reference.

Jen Stromsten stressed that if we want to attract ambitious, hardworking people, we need to give them traction early on.

Tori Biondolillo summarized that she will synthesize what everyone has said into some key points and principles to vote on at the next meeting.

Strategic Plan Milestone: New American Support Network RFP

Tori Biondolillo shared that she has drafted an RFP for the New American Support Network RFP. It is the hope that the RFP will be posted by late July, early August. By September, the group will review bids for the vendor. The SWDB was allocated $200,000.00 to do this work. She asked the group if there was anything missing for the scope of work.

Alex Beck highlighted that the phrase “New American” might benefit from being switched to “New Vermonter” to be more inclusive.

Peter Edelmann stressed the need for identifying and celebrating success stories in Vermont, including what went into those success stories in order to become a yardstick for others to look at as a reference.

Jen Stromsten highlighted the need for goal setting. The RFP must state what we are trying to get done and how it will be measured.

Patricia Moulton added the need for the vendor to also look at retention rates.

Tori Biondolillo summarized the need to quantify goals. At the end of this vendor’s work, what does success look like? This needs to be explained in the RFP as an expectation.

Next Steps

Tori Biondolillo summarized that the RFP will be circulated once it is finalized. After the RFP is posted, the group will need to go into executive session for bids to be reviewed. Additionally, a document highlighting goals of the relocation and recruitment system will be circulated for feedback. Abby Rhim will then schedule another committee meeting.

Meeting adjourned.

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Respectfully submitted by Abby Rhim.

*Abby Rhim, Deputy Director, Vermont State Workforce Development Board*