



NOVA Workforce Board
July 28, 2021 Study Session Meeting Minutes

PRESENT: T. Baity, R. Brunson, C. Cimino, R. Foust, L. Labit, N. Leonor, A. Manwani, J. Miner, J. Morrill, and A. Switky

ABSENT: M. Alvarado, D. Bini, S. Borgersen, V. Dang, L. Dalla Betta, C. Galy, H. Goodkind, P. Guevara, B. Guidry-Brown, E. Hamilton, S. Levy, L. Parris, S. Porter, and J. Ruigomez,

ALSO PRESENT: NOVA staff K. Stadelman, J. Cheyer, L. Jackson, C. Stahl, and E. Stanly; and guests N. Chhay and A. Ha of EDD LMID

Meeting was held remotely via videoconference call.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chairperson A. Switky called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m.

2. PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS

New Board member N. Leonor from the California Employment Development Department was introduced. This was followed by introductions from Board members present.

3. STUDY SESSION

Over the past several years, the Board has hosted a study session at the July meeting as an opportunity for members to discuss a topic of interest in greater depth, which is not always possible during regular Board meetings.

a. Update on NOVAworks Reopening to In-Person Services

The NOVAworks Job Center offices reopened to in-person services by appointment on July 12. To date, the in-person requests for services have been limited as most customers are preferring to continue to use the virtual services available. However, the demand for services overall, as compared to before the pandemic, has declined significantly. This is expected to change as more current and prospective customers learn of the in-person options, safety concerns over the pandemic subsidy, and students return to school freeing up parents, in particular women, to return to the workforce.

b. The discussion topic for this meeting:

What existing trends accelerated during the pandemic?

What trends emerged that we did not anticipate?

What changes are permanent and will affect the labor force?

What should we do differently as a result?

In response to the first three questions, comments included:

- There are many trends that emerged or accelerated during the pandemic that are expected to continue, long after the pandemic ends. The trend of working remotely is expected to continue, with reduction in company real estate and shared workspace more commonplace. Startup companies are hiring workers located in other parts of the state/country, with headquarters located elsewhere. Job seekers looking for work will need to adapt to online interviewing. However, in

other countries where physical space for remote work may be limited, workers are eager to return to the office. The hybrid model of purchasing products online and picking them up at the store is likely to become permanent. The necessity of using technology during the pandemic has resulted in older baby boomers, who may have been resistant in the past, to utilize this mode of communication that will likely become permanent. Remote meetings have resulted in better attendance and offer the flexibility to invite guest speakers from other parts of the country and globe.

- The way education is delivered has changed. And disparities among disadvantaged students emerged during the pandemic. While initially there may have been some reluctance to deliver curriculum remotely, educators embraced the technology and adult education and training is expected to continue to be offered remotely, as well as in-person using a hybrid model. Both faculty and students prefer the remote format as an option. In some situations, enrollment increased during the pandemic because of easier access to online education, especially for those located in distant communities. There has been an increased need for mental health services, but access to these services through telehealth has been difficult due to availability and privacy. Internet connectivity was made available in the school parking lot to ensure equal access to all services. Childcare and senior care will continue to be an issue. Protocols will be instituted, such as required vaccinations, to ensure everyone's safety when schools reopen in the fall to in-person classes.
- Employers want workers to return to the office but will likely offer a hybrid schedule. Some will require masks and vaccinations, which will depend on county public health orders. Google just announced it will delay returning to the office due to the surge, but when workers return, vaccinations will be required. This may become a trend with employers.
- There is more reflection on the whole person in terms of housing, childcare, and food insecurities. There is increased awareness about the needs of disadvantaged workers and their families, undernourished students, and the poor treatment that essential workers have endured. It is a tale of two valleys. No one wants to go back to the way things were before the pandemic. The question is: What can people do with this newfound awareness about those in the community who are struggling to survive?
- Infrastructure is being redefined in different ways that was not anticipated. There was already recognition that the country's infrastructure is crumbling and in need of repair. However, discussions about infrastructure today go beyond roads, bridges, and water and include childcare, medical care, housing, education, and broadband technology.
- Essential workers, who can, are delaying returning to their old jobs. The concern is that employers will replace these now difficult-to-fill jobs with technology that will permanently eliminate these jobs.
- The popularity of telehealth in the health care sector has accelerated during the pandemic which is expected to continue. However, there is concern that the emotional element of delivering health care may be lost. At NOVAworks, this emotional disconnect is also a concern for some customers utilizing the ProMatch networking program. Some are comfortable with Zoom, while others see it as a barrier. New strategies are being utilized to better engage these customers. Staff working in organizations that directly serve customers on a face-to-face basis will also need to adjust and redefine job satisfaction in a different way.

In response to the last question: What should we do differently as a result?, members discussed this in small groups, with a summary of the report-outs as follows:

- The pandemic has resulted in significant changes in our day-to-day lives, both personally and professionally. These changes will continue, and it is difficult to predict what the future will look like. As such, it will be important to exercise agility and flexibility in responding to these changes, specifically, to try something new and, if it doesn't work, try something else. Training for resilience will be key. It will also be important to engage in regional partnerships with anchor institutions to gain insights from others about trends, best practices, and different experiences.
- Digital skills training for customers and staff will be important and should be offered in-person for those who will benefit most from this, as well as virtually with access to high-speed internet. Consumers will need to be offered options, remote vs. in-person, that works best for them. Individuals may bring multiple needs that will require serving the whole person with wrap-around services. Apprenticeships and mentorships will continue to offer invaluable skill development and paid work experience. Reaching out to customers where they are will be important.

c. Reflections on Board vision, mission and purpose statement

Due to insufficient time remaining in the meeting, this discussion item will be postponed for another time.

4. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.