



MEETING NOTES

Region 47 Action Council Meeting

Location: Zoom

Date & Time: March 14, 2023, 10:15am-11:15am

Council Members present: Kimberly Crump, Rachael DeSpain, Maggie Fern, Anji Garza, Lois Meisenheimer, Kris Noble, Lisa Lilja, Monica Wolfley

Council Members absent: Liz Buckwalter, Andrea Cossey, Aaqil Khan, Diane Lynn Ott, Diana Merdian, Krista Peterson, Beth Smaka, Lauren Stafford

10:15am Welcome and Recap of Workforce Discussion (10 minutes)

Notes: Recap on the previous meeting discussing key points on the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) workforce which include low compensation, a need for benefits, limited respect from the community, passion for the work, overworked, complicated qualifications process, and resources needed to provide quality services for children.

10:25am Continuing Workforce Conversation (25 minutes)

Notes: To wrap up the workforce topic members were asked about the impact of the workforce on programming and the current workforce landscape for supporting services such as home visiting, therapy, social services, and healthcare. It was discussed:

- Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) cannot connect families to available programs when programs have long waitlists.
- Rural communities have always had shortages of Human Services employees due to low pay and other factors. This becomes a barrier to providing in-home services in rural areas.
- Great outreach to gain more referrals to programs that offer services but with workforce shortages, it diminishes the impact of those services.
 - High turnover in staff reduces the quality of those services, especially when there is a lot of training involved.
- The workforce needs more people that represent the community including Spanish speakers.
- There is also a need for resources and educators that have special education training.



10:50am Workforce Action Steps Discussion (20 minutes)

Notes: Members discussed current work that is happening in the Region to address the workforce shortages. Members shared:

- A task force was created by the Chamber of Commerce to gather businesses and employers to address child care shortages.
 - Through their work they recognized small action steps that can be done to support ECEC. Advocacy is important to finding solutions and connecting with community members within the Region who can offer supports that are needed to implement action steps.
- The Regional Office of Education has great success with its referral system, IRIS, and through this system, they want to expand its uses to reach the business community. They have several grants that support K-12, especially students who want to pursue ECEC in higher education.
- Some families have said they need different child care options especially when they work second or third shift, but centers and homes can't offer different hours.
- Support from the State is needed to see the necessary changes such as updated facilities, an increase in pay for staff without charging families more, and continued support from grants.
 - There is a policy change needed to change the eligibility of programs for families, especially in programs like Early Head Start, Head Start, and the Child Care Assistance Program.

11:10am Questions and Wrap Up (5 minutes)

Notes: Members wrapped up discussion on Workforce and will discuss Focus Group updates in the next meeting.

Follow-up/Next Steps: We will have an in-person meeting on April 20th from 9:00am to 11:00am to do a data walk of the regional scan to give feedback, ask questions and give recommendations.

Next Meeting:

Date: April 11th, 2023

Time: 10:15am-11:15am