



ASSOCIATED GOVERNMENTS  
OF NORTHWEST COLORADO

**MINUTES**  
**AGNC EDD BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**  
**February 23, 2022**

**ZOOM:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2510562431> **Password:** 2462

**PHONE:** +1 (669) 900-6833 **Meeting ID:** 251 056 2431 **Password:** 2462

Call to order 9:03

Introductions were made; Jeff Comstock is alternate for Moffat County.

**Approval of Minutes** – Ken Kreie made a motion to approve the November 2021 minutes. Chris Nichols seconded the motion, motion passed.

Northwest Colorado Workforce Update – Carolyn Tucker, Christina Oxley, and Celina Kirnberger provided an update on workforce across the region. They provided a labor market update, current status and then some strategies. Unemployment is down to pre-pandemic levels, but jobs are still unfilled – where are the workers? We are seeing a falling birth rate. Baby boomer retirement bubble is exacerbated by the pandemic. Thirty-eight percent of the region is nearing retirement age. Childcare issues have resulted in a decline of women in the workforce. Women in the workforce is not even close to pre-pandemic levels. Reduction in male participation in the workforce is apparent and participating has been dropping since 2008. The workforce decline we are experiencing is nationwide. Prime-age men are working more part-time positions. Twenty-one million people quit jobs between July and November. Many moved into different jobs resulting in a shift of jobs; 4.5 million workers quit in November. Unemployment rates in the EDD region before pandemic regional unemployment was very low resulting in a labor shortage. Today the unemployment rate is around 5.5 to just under 4.0; it is getting back to normal. Workforce is starting to see an increase in labor force within the region in 2022. Currently we have a talent deficit and fewer people are available for an increasing number of jobs. Health care demand is astronomical and will continue to grow in the region. Accommodation and food service is another area of increase due to the resort economy; government jobs are also growing in the region. Oil and gas is declining, construction is another area of growth. Construction is genuinely concerned about the labor deficit. Celina Kirnberger shared strategies workforce centers are utilizing to address economic conditions and issues businesses are facing. Employers are being encouraged to highlight job benefits beyond typical expectations – flexible hours, stability, etc. To attract workers, employers need to offer wages that will cover living expenses, are predictable, and provide opportunities for employees to build wealth. Attracting and retaining employees requires that employers provide growth opportunities within the company, as well as great working conditions including safe, harassment free and welcoming environments – those that create a sense of belonging. Remote work

opportunities can attract employees. More detailed information is available at <https://cwdc.colorado.gov/job-quality>. WFC have received some grant funding for reskill, upskill and new skill (RUN) opportunities. Funding can help with credentialing employees – although the participants must indicate that they have been impacted by the pandemic. On-the-job training can provide up to 75% of new hire wages for employers through WIOA funds; can help fund paid internships. Apprenticeships have been building over the last several years and are being expanded. Funding is available to assist with funding for apprenticeships and businesses. The centers also provide recruitment assistance through job postings, hiring events and job fairs. If every unemployed person went to work today, we would still have four million unfilled job openings.

EDD Activities: Staff provided an overview of the EDD membership program for consideration by the board. Chairman Samson thinks it would be a good idea to do this and to make EDD efforts and programs more well-known through some marketing of the opportunities. Something like this membership may take off and generate some interest among new businesses and expand the reach of regional economic development efforts and resources. Chris Nichols noted that so many people do not know the benefits available through the organizations and the EDD and indicated he would be interested in seeing more marketing done as members are attracted. Chris Oxley noted that some of the membership levels provided an opportunity for those members to participate on the CEDS committee; she said that workforce would want to participate in the CEDS committee but cannot pay a membership. Staff noted that the CEDS committee is made up of a broad spectrum of members and that not all CEDS committee members would have to be a paying member of the EDD to be included. Lisa Piering made a motion; Chris Nichols seconded motion to establish an AGNC EDD Membership program and to approve the proposed membership levels. Motion passed unanimously.

Tiffany Pehl outlined the genesis of the remote work program and the conversations with workforce and high education. AGNC procured three hundred coupons with Flex Jobs – engaged with CNCC, CMU, and CMC to help with the distribution of the coupon codes. The college career offices are working with AGNC to develop some criteria. A survey has been developed to track data – Flex Jobs sent a press announcement regarding the launch, but we have not seen any media coverage. We are ready to go with the program; twenty coupons have been provided to each of the education entities. We want to provide assistance to companies that may be facing a large lay off. Coupons allow job seeker one year to find a job and Flex Jobs provides some consulting assistance for people that may be new to working from home – they will also provide some resume assistance. The program was conceived to address job needs from those impacted by the pandemic including those who may not be able to find daycare services, who may be underemployed, students that may not want to leave the area but cannot find work as well as workers that may have been displaced and cannot find a job comparable to the one they lost.

Bonnie provided an overview of ERRTF and Coal to Products. The application to EDA for the ARPA “Build Back Better” challenge grant was not selected as a recipient of the grant. One project is moving forward with an EAA – ARPA grant through EDA and six of the projects submitted to EDA were submitted by Representative Dylan Roberts for consideration through the state ERRTF process for potential funding from the \$800 million ARPA funds allocated for

Economic Recovery and Relief. The Coal Innovation study which is looking at the feasibility of coal to products is wrapping up and the final report and playbooks should be available by the next EDD meeting.

**New Business:** *Next meeting will be May 25,2022, at CNCC, 500 Kennedy Dr., Rangely, CO 81648*

Meeting adjourned – 10:01

**Attendance:**

Mike Samson, Garfield County  
Cody Davis, Mesa County Commissioner  
Ken Kreie, Town of Fruita  
John Bristol, Routt County ED Partnership (RCEDP)  
Bill Carlson, Town of Palisade  
Heather Jones, AAoA  
Margie Joy, CHFA  
Erin McCuskey, NWCOSBDC Regional Director  
Carolyn Tucker, CWF  
Keely Ellis, OEDIT  
Matthew Kireker, Senator Bennet’s Office  
Tyler Kelly, Rifle Regional EDC  
Betsy Bair, Community Hospital  
Celina Kirnberger  
Johnny McFarland, City of Grand Junction  
Zoe Wilhelmsen, CDOT  
Ade A, CDOT  
Grady Hazelton, Town of New Castle

Carly Thomson, Rio Blanco County  
Chris Nichols, City of Craig  
Jeff Comstock, Moffat County  
Christina Oxley, Colorado Workforce Commission  
Toni Barrett, AGNC  
Tiffany Pehl, AGNC  
Bonnie Petersen, AGNC  
Ray Beck, Moffat County  
Shannon Scott, Craig Economic Development  
Drew Kramer, Tri-State G&T

Janeth Stancle, Senator Hickenlooper’s Ofc.
Hilary Henry, Senator Bennet’s Ofc.
Jeannie Caldwell, Town of Rangely
Tommy Klein
Kathy Hall, CDOT Commissioner
Shoshana Lew, CDOT Director
Tim Hoover, CDOT