

Economic and Workforce Development Working Group



Chair: Stacie Gilmore

Members: Deborah “Debbie” Ortega, Albus Brooks, Mary Beth Susman, Robin Kniech

Legislative Staff: Debra Bartleson

Reports to: “BIZ” Committee

This working group will focus on successful strategies for spreading economic recovery to all neighborhoods in Denver through workforce development, hiring goals, and job training programs specifically geared toward middle-skilled jobs and low-income individuals aged 18-65.

11-20-17 Summary

1) Denver International Airport-DEN Update: George Merritt and Seneca Holmes, DEN

George Merritt, DEN, provided an overview of the new jobs website launched earlier this year; explaining that the website is not required, only a tool. DEN collaborates with the Office of Economic development and has dedicated workforce staff on site. Mr. Merritt noted that they modeled the airport’s site from Portland, noting that Portland airport also provides for a \$1000 incentive that is split among the employee and the employer. Councilmember Kniech asked how many of the jobs are Denver positions versus airport positions. Mr. Merritt did not know the percentage but said he would check into it and get back to her. The link for the airport will also connect an individual to the city’s portal for jobs. Susan Liehe, Office of Economic Development (OED), stated that OED posts a job listing every Friday – “Find a Job in Denver”. A concessionaire representative noted that they have been trying to work on a 30-day temporary badge system to assist with getting employees on quicker. But, she noted that this was part of the threat assessment process and wasn’t sure how successful they will be. She added that 25% of concession employees cannot get through the biometrics/requirements at the airport. Seneca Holmes, DEN, noted that city staff has visited Heathrow Academy in London where Ferrovial (contractor) has established the

academy to assist with hiring and getting operators familiar with recruitment and hiring issues, such as badging. He stated that Denver will be modeling that program at the airport.

2) National Western Center (NWC) Update:

Gretchen Hollrah, Mayor's Office - NWC

Gretchen Hollrah, Mayor's Office-NWC, explained the next steps for NWC and how they will operate. She noted that the recruitment and selection process will require a written workforce plan from contractors. She indicated that the contract requirements will require a lot of discussion and includes targeted trainings, how to measure outcomes/goals, and how WorkNow will be integrated with recruitment outreach. She said that they will be conducting Council briefings between Dec. 6th through Dec. 15th; and an RFQ will be released on Dec. 18th. A briefing is scheduled for LUTI Committee on Dec. 5th. Staff will refine the language from feedback received from the briefings.

Susan Liehe, OED, added that it was important that firms be trained at the start so that they are not surprised by the workforce plan or contract requirements. It is not the intent of the city to affect small businesses and contractors. Councilmember Brooks added that this process is a good start for contractors to get people into the workforce at the same time being socially responsible. Debra Bartleson, Council Analyst, noted that a recent follow up discussion with Ken Nim from the San Francisco CityBuild Program, noted that unemployment in that city is also at an all-time low and generally by this time their January academies are full, but that is not the case as of right now. He noted that San Francisco will be discussing a follow up need to re-evaluate their local hire ordinance and goals as the low unemployment figures do impact organizations as they struggle to recruit for skilled labor. Councilmember Kniech said Denver would need to soften its approach and strive for a collective approach.