

## Meeting Notes

### Attendees:

#### Work Group Members

Paul Benz, Malou Chavez, Antonio Ginatta, Julia Gorton, Victoria Mena, Monserrat Padilla, Sandra Rodarte, Kristin Kershaw Snapp, Rich Stolz

#### Commerce Staff

Tammy Deets, Marie Splaine, Tracy Schreiber

**Governor's Office:** Alejandro Sanchez, Special Assistant to the Governor

### Objectives

1. Continue to refine scope of work for topics areas for the legislative report due December 2020.
2. Identify actions that can help move the needle in the topic areas.

*Note: Agenda is subject to change depending on events in Washington State.*

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#### Welcome

Roll call, agenda, and housekeeping

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#### Data Sources

Commerce Dashboard when the dashboard is available Tammy will share the link.

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#### Report Outline

Tammy reviewed the draft report outline. It is attached. (see page 3)

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#### 3 Priorities centered on immigrant populations

The group review the 3 priorities focus groups discussions:

- Small business recovery & support (see page 5-6)
- Support to 1099 independent contractors (see page 7-8)
- Re-skilling or Pathways & Pipelines (see page 9-10)

See attached templates for details of outlines.

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#### Next Steps

- Rich will reach out to Dan Maycock and Rich Nafziger to see if they can summarize their proposals/research at the October 8 meeting.
- Rick will reach out to Cheryl Smith or Chris Green to give an update on minority support network that Commerce has contracted for through CARES Act funds and the proposed Commerce's budget at the October 8 meeting.
- Kristin, Eric, Karen and Dan will meet to look at what we have and make sure we are looking at agriculture and the east side. They will also look at things to ensure our Legislative mandate is covered.
- Antonio wants to be on the Independent Contractor Subgroup

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- We need to align our report to the legislative mandate
  - Agriculture issues needs to be highlighted and communicate we didn't want to overlap with other efforts going on at the same time due to COVID.
  - State in report why we prioritized like we did.
  - If there is data you need. Email Tammy with specific needs.
  - Marie will reach out to the groups to finish the templates following. We need more complete info to give to Rick to write the report.
  - Next meeting October 8.
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### Legislative Report

#### Executive Summary

Hold for now. We may or may not need this is if the body of the report stays w/in 5-10 pp

#### Introduction

**Legislative Mandate:** We are required to insert/describe the legislative mandate for the report.

**Broad Context:** Provide national and state information on immigrant workers to provide context for the issues in our report. From a story-telling perspective, this is the opportunity to describe the importance of immigrant workers to the national and state economy. It's also an opportunity to better define who these workers are (start to put a human face on these workers). Rich has provided an initial list of sources we might use in this section of the report.

- A useful overview of economic data related to immigrants in Washington State:  
<https://www.newamericaneconomy.org/locations/washington/>
- An old (but helpful) economic analysis related to immigrants in Washington State:  
[http://oneamerica2.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/Immigrant\\_Contributions.pdf](http://oneamerica2.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/Immigrant_Contributions.pdf)
- One angle on the workforce issue that I know is of interest to the legislators:  
[http://oneamerica2.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/Brain\\_Waste.pdf](http://oneamerica2.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/Brain_Waste.pdf)

**Overarching Issues facing Immigrant workers:** An overview of the overarching issues affecting immigrant workers.

- Data
- Language/Access
- Rights/Benefits
- Immigration Enforcement (tying back to the origin of the KWW Act)

#### 2021 Agenda

**Work plan:** This section describes the 3 major issues the workgroup plans to address in 2021 (w/the caveat the group may address additional issues as needs emerge).

*Recommendation: Organize the 3 major areas of investigation into the four mandates in the RCW.*

- (a) Develop strategies with private sector businesses, labor, and immigrant advocacy organizations to support current and future industries across the state;
- (b) Conduct research on methods to strengthen career pathways for immigrants and create and enhance partnerships with projected growth industries;
- (c) Support business and agriculture leadership, civic groups, government, and immigrant advocacy organizations in a statewide effort to provide predictability and stability to the workforce in the agriculture industry; and

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(d) Recommend approaches to improve Washington's ability to attract and retain immigrant business owners that provide new business and trade opportunities.

The 3 major issues are:

- Re-skilling or Pathways & Pipelines (Workforce development is too general)
- Small Business Recovery & Support
- Independent Contractors

**Note:** Follow the template to develop contents for each of these three areas. They should have at least one visual, which can be data, photo, picture, map, etc.

Appendix A – Summary of Programs/Initiatives Serving Immigrant Workers

Appendix B – Human story from perspective of workforce, small business (Optional)

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### Major Issue 1: Small Business Recovery & Support

**Topic:** Building resiliency in small businesses.

#### Problem Statement

COVID has a wide and deep impact on our economy, particularly on small businesses. (+ data and infographics)

Based on the unemployment data, minority population are disproportionately affected.

#### Why important?

Programs that focus on building resilience offer new pathways to small business success, creating new jobs and revitalizing our economy.

#### 3-5 Key Issues

*(What are the 3-5 key issues?)*

- Long lag time in getting crucial data leaves policy makers in the dark.
- Lack of consistency in public communications from different levels of government.
- COVID has accelerated the transition to a digital economy. The velocity of the change along with the downturn in the economy leave small businesses little to no margin to pivot. Technology and training are crucial in the new era.
  
- Lack of reliable data on ownership ethnicity

#### Key Challenges

- *Language barrier*
- *Access to financing*

#### Data Available

Is there data available we can use to support the issue?

#### What is being done now to move the needle on this topic?

Are there other groups or activities being done to move the needle on the issue?

#### Story we can share in report?

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Hospitality and leisure industry is one of the hardest hit with 35% businesses projected to close permanently.

Julia will provide some stories on small businesses in hospitality industry.

Restaurants are closely tied to the farming economy. (story on potato farmers – Bre)

#### **What is needed/ next steps**

*(What concrete next steps will move the needle on this topic?)*

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### Major Issue 2: Independent Contractors

#### Why important?

*(Describe why this issue is so important to Washington state and our communities.)*

A large and growing percentage of the Washington immigrant workforce are “independent contractors”, and in this context the term really refers to non-traditional workers that most likely use 1099s to verify their employment. Somewhere in between small businesses and part and full time employees, these workers fall into this category because they want the flexibility, because their industry is shifting away from employees, because they don’t have a choice as a result of their immigration status, etc.

#### Problem Statement

Even before the COVID recession, there was significant participation in the immigrant workforce as independent contractors (non-traditional workers, self-employed) due to changing industry dynamics, but Washington State lacks a strategy or regulatory/legal/services framework by which to enable, support or protect these workers.

#### 3-5 Key Issues

*(What are the 3-5 key issues?)*

Shifting to “independent contractor” is an important and viable step to small business ownership for immigrants, particularly those without legal status, but there is little support for individuals seeking self-employment.

Mis-classification of independent contractors, a persistent issue, denies workers in industries dominated by immigrants and refugees a range of employer and state-provided benefits, ranging from paid sick leave to health care.

There is little reliable data – or even an agreed-upon definition – of what an “independent contractor” is, which undercuts opportunities to provide services, design policies for this growing segment of the workforce in Washington State.

#### Key Challenges

*(Describe the key challenges.)*

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### **Opportunities**

*(Describe key opportunities)*

Washington State, perhaps as an extension to the services it provides to small business owners, can ensure greater access to information and support to individuals (including immigrants who are facing language and immigration status challenges) who qualify as independent contractors and/or are self-employed.

Policy proposals are floating – portable benefits, expansion of unemployment insurance to excluded workers, federal stimulus and COVID-relief funding – that can bring some stability to the often precarious economic positions of independent contractors, non-traditional workers and the self-employed.

### **Data Available**

*(Is there data available we can use to support the issue? If yes, please describe how to access.)*

This is a problem, but there is a growing body of research on this topic.

### **What is being done now to move the needle on this topic?**

*(Are there other groups or activities being done to move the needle on the issue?)*

More research to be done

### **Story we can share in report?**

*(Is there a person or group we can highlight to share a story to support the issue. We want to connect the report to the heart ♥ and this is the best way!)*

More research to be done

### **Next steps**

A more robust discussion about this category of worker is necessary, including clarity on terms, in order to ensure that Washington state has an adequate policy and regulatory structure to secure economic stability, upward mobility and workforce attachment for these workers.



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### Major Issue 3: Re-skilling or Pathways & Pipelines

#### Problem Statement

Lack of pathways for immigrant workers. There is a lack of plan for retraining the future workforce beyond what it looks like right now. Automation increases with COVID and jobs will look different in the future. We know specific types of jobs are disappearing and we need to plan for that workforce's future. We will not have enough skilled workers. We need to elevate immigrant workers. Provide ongoing education to give people the opportunities to not just be an employee but own their own business in the future. (We need to insert data for what immigrants bring to the economy and potential for growth - economic impact to WA economy)

#### Why important?

- Help workers not have brain drain
- Help qualified workers come into WA and get them in qualified positions in chosen professions - medical, engineering, etc...
- Attract and retain people

#### 3-5 Key Issues

- How workforce development strategies may or may not be responsive to the immigrant workforce, and what else needs to be in place?
- What pathways -education, apprenticeships, and trainings - exist within these sectors to help immigrant populations? (barriers for hospitality industry can't access federal approved apprenticeship program)
- Transferability of skills (medical, engineering)

#### Key Challenges

- Regulatory constrains – for example: hospitality industry can't access federal approved apprenticeship program - L&I issue
- Limited technical degrees - There are only so many programs and insufficient spots. Ex) Farm manager training - helps works have a career path from worker, manager to owner. Education programs would help with this. We also have an east and west divide. East side lacks programs for jobs like technical that provide high paying jobs
- How to break down systemic racism and cultural stigmas and help immigrants thrive in WA state.
- Better access to services for ELL learners and undocumented - how can state act.

#### Opportunities

*(Describe key opportunities)*

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#### Data Available

*(Is there data available we can use to support the issue? If yes, please describe how to access.)*

#### What is being done now to move the needle on this topic?

*(Are there other groups or activities being done to move the needle on the issue?)*

#### Story we can share in report?

*(Is there a person or group we can highlight to share a story to support the issue. We want to connect the report to the heart ♥ and this is the best way!)*

- Malou: Tukwila businesses (E. African)
- Paul: farm owners
- Karen: ag
- Sandra: South King Cnty businesses
- Cariño: construction
- Muslim business owners in SeaTac?

#### Next Steps

*(What concrete next steps will move the needle on this topic?)*

- We need a grant program similar to the USDA – transition from workers to owners
- Provide holistic approach to workers and farm owners – provide training in running a farm and how to run a business
- Education and outreach on how to follow labor laws
- Community organizations have the trust, can share info and resources
- Financial literacy education needed
- Access to resources must be distributed more equitably around the state