



**MEETING OF THE
TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION**

DATE

JUNE 24, 2021

1 THURSDAY, JUNE 24, 2021

2 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Good afternoon. The work
3 session is called to order. Let's tackle this in the order
4 they're listed in the agenda. Just so we can stay on target
5 here. This first is Board Innovation Funds, Discussion, and
6 Consideration, Possible Action Regarding Program Year 2021-2022
7 Innovation Funds. This is coming out of a conversation that we
8 had on May 4th in a work session. We talked about suspending
9 cash awards for this year's annual conference. And then ask
10 staff to look into what an Innovation Fund one-time process
11 might look like. As I recall the conversation, we were really
12 focused on that fact that the Board Awards do two things. One,
13 it gives a lot of recognition for Boards. I think we've put
14 into place some great ways at this next annual meeting to get
15 that kind of recognition. The other thing we were concerned
16 about, as I recall, was the fact that Boards use the cash award
17 that's often associated with an award to do innovative things.
18 And so we wanted to take that same amount of money make it
19 available for Innovation Funds. And come up with this one-time
20 process for this year coming off of the pandemic response. So,
21 staff, I know, provided some background material. We can talk
22 through it. I don't know if staff has anything they want to say
23 as a prelude to our discussion. We can do this either way. I
24 just don't know what everybody's preference is here.

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1 COURTNEY ARBOUR: For the record, Courtney
2 Arbour, Workforce Division Director. And, Chairman, I'm happy
3 to do this however you would like. I'm happy to share some
4 thoughts that staff had put together on some of the potential
5 uses of the funds. Or, I'll just be here as a resource. We've
6 been having discussions as a resource with the offices for the
7 last couple weeks. So, if you'd like to start and just point
8 questions to me as a resource, I'm happy to do that too.

9 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: I think probably we can
10 let you be that resource. And move through this pretty quickly.
11 You know, my interest here is making some funds available to
12 Boards. I'd hope that it could be a competitive process where
13 Boards would apply for an award. We would setup some criteria
14 to drive that competition. Staff could use that criteria to
15 make a selection. In my mind, I think we have about a million
16 dollars here--in my mind, we would do four \$250,000 awards.
17 That's how I was thinking about it. But, obviously, you know, I
18 want a discussion here among the Commissioners. And for us to
19 reach some sort of consensus on how we might want this to
20 proceed. So, that's sort of the basic framework of what I'm
21 looking at. I've had a couple of discussions, sort of high-
22 level discussions. My understanding is that this particular
23 concept could work. There will be other concepts. And
24 definitely I'd love to hear about those now?

25

1 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I'd like to hear what
2 Commissioner Demerson has to say before I say my remarks, if
3 that's okay?

4 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: I guess you'd do
5 that as the second--the Commissioner with the longest tenure. I
6 think staff's brought a few recommendations forward. I've seen
7 items such as, like, \$100,000 per member. Chairman's bringing
8 up \$250,000. That limits it to four Boards, I guess in that
9 regard. I think the discussion paper that we have in taking
10 Innovation opportunities amongst the Boards in lieu of giving
11 out funds. One question, I guess to Courtney, and you may not
12 know this right now. But, in terms of awards that we've given
13 out to Boards in a setting of the annual conference, how many do
14 we give for that ceremony? Is that ten, 15, with the monies
15 that we've allocated in the past?

16 COURTNEY ARBOUR: Commissioner, I believe
17 Joel is in the room.

18 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Okay.

19 COURTNEY ARBOUR: And he can probably tell
20 you much quicker than I the typical number that are awarded.
21 It's around this dollar amount each year. And 12 to 15 is a
22 good ballpark. But, I see Joel there now.

23 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Okay.

24

25

1 JOEL MULLINS: Hi. For the record, Joel
2 Mullins, with Workforce Development. Commissioner, are you
3 asking for a dollar amount, or the number of the awards?

4 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Number. Number.
5 Uh-huh, the number.

6 JOEL MULLINS: And the number of Board
7 winners?

8 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Mm-hmm.

9 JOEL MULLINS: Because, we've got employer
10 winners as well?

11 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Board winners.

12 JOEL MULLINS: The Board winners, I can get
13 a count of a more specific number. It'll take me a couple of
14 minutes to count them up. But, just with performance incentive
15 awards alone, there's 16 winners each year.

16 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Sixteen. Okay.

17 JOEL MULLINS: When you add in, you know,
18 the Youth Inspiration Award, which had three winners. I mean,
19 I'm ball-parking that it's, you know, 30 maybe total Board
20 winners that go out each year.

21 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Okay. And the
22 dollar amounts been about the million dollars or so?

23 JOEL MULLINS: That has fluctuated a lot
24 over the years.

25 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Okay.

1 JOEL MULLINS: You know, a decade ago, it
2 was probably three times that amount. So, it's kind of
3 fluctuated. It's gone down and up. But, over the past several
4 years that's probably pretty close to accurate. Yes.

5 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Okay. So, my
6 comment along with that, basically staff's laid out good
7 information, good briefing that we received in terms of some
8 direction. In terms of what we may want to do as Commissioners.
9 I think \$100,000 that we looked at, that makes sense to me;
10 \$250,000 I'd like to hear your further comments on that, Mr.
11 Chairman, in regards to how that would work. At the end of the
12 day, though, making sure that we have a reviewing and scoring
13 process that's put in place. So, that we're in a position to
14 award these things and really have that back. Is where I would
15 want us to go.

16 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: So, I do appreciate
17 the work that, Courtney and Joel, that you all have paid in
18 visits that you have given to the offices. And I understood
19 when I saw the discussion paper--or, I should say the briefing
20 paper that it was for ten awards at \$100,000 apiece; which I
21 thought, wow. That's kind of a lot of little amount for a lot
22 of work. So, I do appreciate the emphasis on the outcomes or
23 measurable goals for these applications based on request to Fund
24 Innovative projects. However, ten awards told me one million
25 seems too small of an amount for Boards to expand their staff

1 time and resources applying for and administering the grant.
2 Not to mention, TWC staff time in administering this grant. It
3 may be better to move these funds into next year's Board Awards.
4 This would also give time to better assess Innovative projects.
5 It is difficult to define innovation. As what was innovative
6 for a pandemic may not be now since we are--Texas' economy is
7 reopening and the unemployment rate continues to improve. It
8 might be best to give staff additional time to survey the Boards
9 to determine what factors they would like to consider for this
10 type of award. Those are my comments.

11 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: So, just, I'm gonna put it
12 in my own words to make sure I understand. You would just be in
13 favor of just pushing all of this to the next 2022 Board--

14 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Yes, sir.

15 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: --year? Okay.

16 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Only because it's
17 such a small amount.

18 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Sure.

19 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: The million dollars
20 just seems like a lot of work on staff's time, our time, to
21 create something. And I was just thinking--my recommendation
22 would be to just rollover the million dollars for 2022.

23 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: I'm assuming, if we
24 don't roll it over I think--because it's always good to
25 recognize. I think in 2021 that will be the only opportunity

1 that we have to recognize these Boards through some kind of
2 action. And even if it's a smaller amount, I think something
3 may be better than nothing. In this particular case. And if we
4 started out the discussion paper was a million dollars. I guess
5 that net \$100,000 each. Even if that's lower it puts you in a
6 position where you're recognizing even more Boards. Then that
7 could be something that we could look at as well. But, I do
8 want to hear your concepts on the \$250,000 for four Boards in
9 particular to see what's there.

10 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Absolutely. I feel like
11 for Boards to really show us some innovative ideas that they've
12 perhaps discovered over the last 18 months or so, that it would
13 take a larger amount than \$100,000 for us to really realize
14 something that could be, not just innovative, but scalable to
15 other Boards across the State. My interest in doing four
16 \$250,000 awards is, I think, \$250,000 is probably the right
17 amount for an Innovation Award of this type. And I'm kind of
18 binding myself to the million dollars that would have been set
19 aside for this. That's how we got to four.

20 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Mm-hmm.

21 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: The \$250,000, when I look
22 through sort of some things Boards started, some things Boards
23 abandoned, some good work that they did. Things they didn't
24 have enough money to push across the finish line. You know, I
25 see the potential for a good idea to really have the components

1 added to that that might have been missing during Covid. And
2 really giving TWC staff an opportunity to apply whatever sort of
3 parameters or criteria that we put on the award. And really be
4 able to select an award. And I just--I was looking for a dollar
5 amount that I thought would actually be functional at getting,
6 "A", an idea stood up and running; and, "B", give us a chance of
7 making that replicable across the State to other Boards, other
8 areas of the State. Perhaps, even other non-TWC related
9 entities.

10 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: So, my question to
11 you, Joel, is would we have enough time to do this? And the
12 other thing is how do you score innovation? How do you score
13 innovation? If all of our Boards are going to be recognized
14 anyway during the conference, I'm just curious?

15 JOEL MULLINS: I'm gonna have to defer to
16 Courtney on that one. I think she was about to jump in.

17 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Okay.

18 COURTNEY ARBOUR: Commissioner, if it's
19 okay, I'll help with that one. We have been doing a lot of work
20 with legal and procurement on the idea of scoring innovation.
21 And you're right. It's a tricky topic. But, if the Commission
22 can provide some clarity to staff on the types of innovations
23 that you are looking to fund, or the outcome that you'd like to
24 see; we can create scoring criteria on those items. For
25 instance, if the Commission is most interested in expanding the

1 number of people served through the system. Or, expanding the
2 service area and providing new services. Or, if the Commission
3 is interested in something geared toward employer engagement
4 with a goal of engaging more employers. Which, I know all of
5 those are great ideas. But, the point is if there is a specific
6 end goal in mind for this innovation. Then staff, if you all
7 agree, can create some scoring criteria on the applications that
8 a Board would submit. And scored against each other basically,
9 or score against that criteria, if they are going to reach that
10 ultimate outcome. Chairman also used the term, I believe he
11 said scalability is something that can be scored.
12 Sustainability is something that can be scored, Commissioner.
13 But, really in order to score innovation, you need a measure, an
14 outcome, or some goal you're going toward. And then you can
15 measure against their stated ability to do that.

16 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I'm okay with that.
17 So, my first part of my question was would we have enough time
18 between now and the conference to do this?

19 COURTNEY ARBOUR: We can if we use an
20 application based process. We can publish an application with
21 scoring criteria and the Boards could apply. Commissioner, I
22 believe that we would be able to make decisions by the time that
23 the conference is here. We may not have fully executed the
24 grant award. And they will not have begun the new work. But,

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1 we could complete the application process by the time that
2 conference comes around.

3 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Other questions?

4 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: I think the
5 approach, yeah. Looking at something, innovation, or doing
6 something for the Boards. I think the fact that we're
7 discussing it is a good thing. I think we need to do something.
8 The Innovation Awards, I was sitting up here playing with this.
9 If you were going \$200,000 per board and you've got four that
10 you're giving. And another \$200,000, I'm thinking of how do I
11 even divide that up to do something else. But, I hadn't come up
12 with anything with that. I definitely would like us to--it's
13 simpler if you're dealing with four or five Boards if you go
14 with \$250,000, or \$200,000, and you're coming up with something
15 that's innovative. My thoughts go back to what I initially
16 said. Basically, we have to have a review process, a scoring
17 process. I thought the staff was going to bring those things.
18 But, they're putting it on us to really come up with what's
19 innovation mean?

20 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Yeah.

21 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: And that's fine. We
22 just have to define it. To Courtney's point, we have to be real
23 specific in regards to what we want. And if we're able to do
24 that, then that gives them direction in regards to developing
25 the application or scoring application. And then everything

1 fine. But, I'm okay with, if it's \$200,000, \$250,000. It's an
2 Innovation Award. We're trying to do something that's different
3 because of the pandemic. And I think we're recognizing, so if
4 it's ten at \$100,000 or so. Or, the amount that comes out
5 there. Or, the \$250,000, or \$200,000. I'm okay either way. I
6 just think we definitely need to make sure that we're solid on
7 what that review process will be. That gives staff the ability
8 to go back to develop an application, etc., to make it work.

9 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: So, again, I
10 appreciate the comments. My first motion again where my
11 thoughts were to rollover the million dollars to next year.
12 But, it does sound like there's some agreement that we would
13 have some type of award at the conference. So, I would be open
14 to surveying the Boards, Chairman and Commissioner. And maybe
15 asking staff to bring back a discussion paper particularly on
16 this item?

17 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: I would agree with you. I
18 would ask you if you would be willing to put some parameters on
19 that discussion paper. I think what I would like to see if for
20 staff to outline for us what specific items would we need to put
21 in place to effectively select innovation. And then the other
22 thing I would suggest, I'm willing to move from \$250,000 awards
23 to five \$200,000 awards. Would you be willing to set that now,
24 and then let staff sort of understand what a \$200,000 award is
25 and develop criteria accordingly?

1 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: That's a lot. I
2 don't know if we've ever awarded a Board \$500,000, Joel, have
3 we?

4 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Well, it would be five
5 \$200,000.

6 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Oh, five \$200,000.
7 Okay. I'd be okay with that.

8 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: And then, I think we're
9 understanding there seems to be consensus that it would be a
10 competitive award. Which is why we're asking staff to develop
11 the criteria for us.

12 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Mm-hmm. Yeah. I
13 mean, they're in the business of doing that.

14 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Absolutely.

15 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: And then of course,
16 meeting with the Boards, those conversations that you have with
17 them. We certainly don't have conversations with all 28 Boards.
18 Especially, to talk about awards. And so, again, surveying the
19 Boards and bringing back a discussion paper specifically on the
20 comments that you've heard from the three Commissioners. So, I
21 appreciate the comments.

22 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Yeah. So, I think
23 we pretty much know we want to do Innovation Awards. And so,
24 you know, the definition of innovation and what that means. And
25 basically building something around that is where we want to

1 hit. I think the items that, Chairman, you may have shared with
2 Courtney, sustainability, those kind of things are important.
3 And so having those things in there. I mean, you can score in
4 that regard. Partnerships are important, community support.
5 All those kind of things are things that I think gives the staff
6 an opportunity to score an application based on some of those
7 things.

8 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: And, Chairman, it
9 certainly makes more sense for us to use a larger amount if
10 we're going to be awarding. So, I appreciate it. Rather than
11 what we were handed over and that was ten awards at \$100,000
12 apiece.

13 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: And I appreciate Staff's
14 starting point. But, you know, certainly, obviously, I agree
15 with a little bit larger dollar amount, fewer selections based
16 on some criteria. Courtney, we can technically stop here and
17 let you guys prepare that discussion paper. And bring it back
18 for action at a later date. We actually don't need to take
19 action other than to say that we have unanimous consent for you
20 to work on that paper and bring it back for a vote.

21 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Yep.

22 COURTNEY ARBOUR: And, Chairman, may I just
23 clarify that the survey to Boards is to determine their
24 priorities for these innovations? Or, would the Commissioners

25

1 like to set us off in a direction of an outcome for the
2 innovations you'd like us to work toward?

3 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I think a
4 combination.

5 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: I think, we don't
6 probably--this is me speaking. We don't need to probably, like,
7 define what an innovative project is. We need to define some
8 criteria that would capture an innovative project. 'Cause I'm
9 thinking to myself, there may have been things that Boards
10 attempted during the pandemic that they thought were a really
11 good idea. But, for whatever reason, it couldn't get
12 implemented. But, it's still a good idea. And as we move kind
13 of out of the flexibilities that we had in terms of solving
14 problems quickly using some disaster powers and we get back into
15 a more deliberative process, which is appropriate. You know, I
16 don't want Boards to abandon good ideas that they thought of.
17 Or, you know, in the midst of the pandemic and the Boards
18 response to that. They may have thought, man, I wish that I had
19 thought to do this other thing. And you know what, that's still
20 a very viable thing. We should bring that forward now. I would
21 like for this to be an opportunity to surface those kinds of
22 ideas. So, I'm reluctant to have, unless we just have to. I'm
23 reluctant to have this Commission say, these five things
24 constitute an innovative topic area. I'd much rather, us, spend
25 our time voting from a broad policy perspective, these are the

1 elements of innovation. And so whatever project contains these
2 elements, we'd be willing to consider for an award. I think the
3 actual, sort of, work here is, is getting a functional set of
4 criteria that our TWC Staff can use to confidently and
5 comfortably make a decision. And say these five awards, each
6 \$200,000. These are truly the most innovative ideas that we
7 saw. And we want to see these things implemented. So, what
8 we've got to get to here, pretty quickly, is something that you
9 can with confidence say, this will identify the most innovative
10 ideas out there. And with regard to talking to the Boards on
11 their--I never ever think that's a bad idea. I talk to Boards
12 often. I think you're gonna get a whole lot of ideas. I would
13 suspect, without knowing, and I don't want to cast any kind of
14 negative light on it. It's not my intention. You know, I think
15 if I were a Board Executive Director, I'd talk to you about the
16 thing I want to do because it's the best. And every idea I have
17 really should be implemented now. Which is exactly how I would
18 be if I was the executive director, or CEO of a Board. But,
19 look for the common threads. Look for the things that they say
20 are innovative. And however you approach that communication
21 with those Boards. If you send an email and say, all right. If
22 we were gonna--what criteria would you want to see in an
23 innovation grant proposal, request for proposals. And you get
24 back however many responses you get from that. That, I think,
25 complies with the spirit of what we've agreed to here today. If

1 you want to have 28 phone calls that also, I think, complies
2 with the spirit of that. Me, I'd send the email. Somebody
3 should really probably try to put their answer in writing. But,
4 it's just an idea of, we don't want to put out--and I agree with
5 Commissioner Alvarez here. We don't want to put out a set of
6 criteria that's just unachievable and a Board looks at that and
7 say, I can never get there and so I'm not going to apply.
8 Because I don't think I can ever get there. And so if
9 something's just going to be completely impossible for a Board,
10 I would like to know that before we set off on this particular
11 project. And I think you can accomplish that with an email. I
12 don't want to speak for everybody here.

13 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I agree.

14 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: That's just my thoughts,
15 you know.

16 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Yeah. As Courtney
17 asked about the survey, I was thinking not a survey but a
18 conversation--

19 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Exactly.

20 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: --and communication.

21 So, Mr. Chairman, with what we've heard, are we in agreement
22 with the five awardees at \$200,000 apiece? And then staff,
23 they're in a position at least to know that that's the framework
24 that they'll be operating from. That they're going to create a
25 program potentially that's an Innovation Award that's going to

1 be \$200,000 per Board opportunity. And the 200 divided a million
2 is fine.

3 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: I agree to that framework.

4 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Okay. Sure.

5 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: And again I like the
6 idea of, you know, discussing this with the Boards. And seeing
7 if how they can, you know, maybe they'll come up with a scalable
8 approach to all this.

9 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Yeah. Scalable and
10 sustainable. All those.

11 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: And bringing it back
12 as a discussion paper.

13 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Yeah.

14 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I'd be okay with
15 that, Chairman.

16 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Okay.

17 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Glad you brought that
18 up.

19 CHRIS NELSON: Chairman, Commissioners? For
20 the record, Chris Nelson, Chief Financial Officer. I'd like to
21 kind of clarify on what I think to your comment, Commissioner
22 Demerson, and what Courtney was trying to say. I think one of
23 the things that staff were looking at in discussions leading up
24 to this was are there certain desired outcomes? Like, the way I
25 always view it is you don't innovate for the sake of innovation.

1 You innovate because you want some desired outcome, or improved
2 outcome. So, if one of the things you would like to see in that
3 pool is, say improved employer services. Or, you know,
4 improvement on hard to reach clients--served clients, or
5 something like that. Staff can find ways to evaluate that and
6 define. And come up with a scoring mechanism that says, this is
7 how we will value innovation. We're not asking for the
8 Commission to kind of give us that guidance. I think staff can
9 figure that out. What they're looking for is if there's certain
10 outputs that you want to make sure that--so that when a
11 discussion paper is brought back you go, well, you're giving
12 awards for outputs that I don't think are the highest priority.
13 I think that's one of the things that staff was hoping to
14 clarify.

15 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: When I look at this, I
16 really think about sort of what's our kind of core mission? We
17 have many missions. But, our core mission is to ensure that
18 employers can hire the staff they need. And to ensure that
19 Texans can get the job that they're looking for. So, to me, the
20 outputs are anything kind of related--if it's employer services,
21 in terms of helping employers hire the staff their looking for.
22 If we're really thinking about individual Texans, it's the
23 ability to get Texans either that new job, or that better job.
24 And so these would define innovation. It just goes to the core
25 of our mission.

1 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Yeah, Chris. And I
2 think it has to deal with what we were experiencing during the
3 pandemic too. I mean, it's not just something that--I mean, I
4 understand what your point is. But, specifically, the million
5 dollars would be for something that was innovative. Something
6 that they felt like they could be proud of during that time of
7 the pandemic. Who knows, we may be using those things in other
8 natural disasters, or something we may experience. But, I
9 didn't think it was going to be something that was long-term.

10 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: For me, it goes back
11 to I talked about economic prosperity. Also, partnerships.
12 That's important for me from that standpoint. And then any
13 leveraging opportunities, I think, Courtney. Those are things
14 that I--you know, you're getting outcome if you taking \$100,000
15 or \$200,000 and someone says, we're able to leverage that with a
16 private sector employer. And now our \$200,000 is \$400,000.
17 And/or those kind of things. I think that's very innovative and
18 that' engagement of the community. Partnerships and things like
19 that. That's important to me.

20 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Yeah. Kind of, like,
21 how did you maintain employment during the pandemic? You know,
22 little things like that. I think there was reference earlier at
23 one discussion about what Borderplex did with--I think you were
24 talking about hotspots, or having access to internet. You know,

25

1 just so many creative things. So, it was really just focusing
2 on what happened during the pandemic period.

3 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: And if I could, you know,
4 if you use the Borderplex example. It's not so much that they
5 had a mobile hotspot during the pandemic. It's that they saw a
6 need to do something with that post-pandemic to affect more of
7 the same effect. We want more people to get jobs. Which means
8 more employers will hire people. So, it's not really, to me,
9 like what they accomplished during the pandemic. The things
10 that they did that were good, were good. It's our ability to
11 expand that into today's world that we see. And how we can use
12 that to continue to increase, not just the number, not just the
13 quantity of the people, but the quality of how we do that. The
14 efficiency--

15 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I agree.

16 CHAIRMAN DANIEL:--the speed with which we
17 get it done.

18 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I agree. Okay.

19 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: It sounds like five
20 at \$200,000. At least, that's the framework for Innovation
21 Awards.

22 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: That's the framework.

23 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: So, Chairman, if I'm
24 correct, there's no motion needed on this? We're asking staff
25 to come back with the discussion paper on what we laid out?

1 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: That's correct.

2 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Yes.

3 CHRIS NELSON: Okay. Staff will work on
4 that.

5 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: That's correct.

6 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Thank you, Chris.

7 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: And I'm not hearing any
8 disagreement. So, let's let staff do that. And then we can
9 work that through. We have a process for that here. So, it
10 yields itself well to that process.

11 CHRIS NELSON: Well, that sure made it a lot
12 easier, Chairman, than using ten \$100,000. So, that was better.
13 I like that idea.

14 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: I'm glad to hear that.

15 CHRIS NELSON: Like it.

16 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Lot of good reasons--

17 CHRIS NELSON: Mm-hmm.

18 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: --to do what we just did.

19 Let's move onto Number 2. Discussion, Consideration, and
20 Possible Action Regarding Program Year 2021-2022 Innovation
21 Funds for Adult Education and Literacy Grantees.

22 MAHALIA BALDINI: Hi. Good afternoon,
23 Commissioners. For the record, Mahalia Baldini, with Adult
24 Education and Literacy. Much as what Courtney led in, you'll
25 see similar results. This is really in response to the May 4th

1 meeting as well. Been listening to Commissioners comments.
2 You'll notice that the amount for the Adult Education and
3 Literacy Awards is much smaller, \$300,000. That was what was in
4 the original amount for the Performance Quality Improvement
5 Awards that were up for discussion May 4. And that is what
6 we're really here to talk about today.

7 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Let me address this
8 question to the Commissioners first, and then if you want to
9 pick up and run with it I'm certainly for that. Everything we
10 just said about the Innovation Awards, I could easily apply here
11 to the AEL Awards. Obviously, the dollar amounts different. WE
12 have a different universe of eligible applicants. You know, I
13 would say probably in my opinion, two \$150,000 awards, or three
14 \$100,000 awards might be appropriate here. Everything else that
15 we just heard in terms of developing criteria, I would be
16 comfortable doing the same thing again here. Certainly, we're
17 not gonna stop debate just 'cause that's what I feel about it.

18 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Mm-hmm.

19 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: I'd like to hear your
20 thoughts on it. But, I'm sort of seeing what we've got here and
21 understanding. I think we could come up with a very--as my kids
22 would say, it's the same but different. A very similar program
23 that really helps drive some innovation in the AEL space. There
24 were things that happened during the pandemic for and to AEL
25 providers that caused a lot of innovation. Again, we don't need

1 to focus on what they did do. We're really trying to focus on
2 what they can do as a result of their experience. So, I
3 actually had some other comments. But, I honestly think I could
4 be real comfortable just doing the same thing here again. But,
5 I--you know, definitely want to hear from you guys. And see
6 kind of where you are on this as well.

7 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Well, I certainly
8 appreciate the comments that were made for the previous agenda
9 item. And I'm actually thinking--had a couple of thoughts. And
10 I appreciate the work that you've put in this, Mahalia, and also
11 yesterday's advisory committee. Thank you for allowing us all
12 to be a part of that. Really, what I'd like to see because of
13 the dollar amount was for the \$300,000 remainder in the reserve
14 balance budget year for 2021 AEL Program, 2020-2021. The reason
15 for that is I'd like for the funding to stay at 3.7 million.
16 And that we don't carve any of that out. In other words, we'd
17 be rolling it over. And really we have--next week, we're gonna
18 be having a work session to discuss how we will resume regarding
19 Statewide initiatives. And I figured that we could use and
20 discuss the \$300,000 at next week's Commission meeting if that
21 was okay? Just because this was such a small amount.

22 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Let me make sure I'm
23 understanding. You're wanting to not do anything with the
24 \$300,000 right now?

25

1 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Yeah. And just talk
2 about it next week when we talk about the State Budget.

3 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: And that's because
4 the money's coming out?

5 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Well, it's because
6 it's just such a small amount.

7 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Are we going to be
8 talking about it in regards--

9 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Next week.

10 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Next week, but are
11 we going to be talking about it in regards to awards that we're
12 giving at the annual conference next week?

13 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I was thinking more
14 of just the budget, overall budget.

15 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: So, if we do the
16 overall budget, that means we're not carving out \$300,000 for
17 awards, innovation awards for the AEL group during the annual
18 conference?

19 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: That's correct.

20 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Yeah. That's good
21 you had that thought. I'd love for us to--just like we're doing
22 for the Boards to allocate funding for the AEL opportunities as
23 well.

24 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Yeah. 'Cause next
25 week it's just statewide initiatives. And I'll I'm saying is

1 just not do anything this year. And just add--keep the \$300,000
2 and just keep it at 3.7 for next week's statewide initiatives
3 that we're going to be discussing.

4 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: I'm not in agreement
5 with that. I'd love for us to do anything we can to recognize
6 similar as much as possible as we've done in the past. And this
7 is a small amount, \$300,000. If we were to go 100,000, 100,000,
8 100,000 utilizing the same concepts that we just discussed, I
9 think we're bringing recognition. And doing something in that
10 stead. Short of that, we're not doing anything at the annual
11 conference for those under AEL; unless we do something special
12 next week with the statewide discussions.

13 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: I think we actually have
14 an opportunity here to kind of maximize our options. So, if we
15 could get staff started on what I've suggested. You seem to--
16 Commissioner Demerson, you seem to not disagree with three
17 \$100,000 awards using the \$300,000. Let staff come forward with
18 a proposal on that. But, in no way, in my opinion, does that
19 preclude us from having Commissioner Alvarez's discussion next
20 week. We might generate a better idea for the money in terms of
21 statewide initiatives. I don't think this--because of what
22 we're dealing with here, this is actually what, like, the
23 Commission's supposed to do. We're supposed to allocate
24 resources across programs. I want all the ideas on the table to
25 do that. Commissioner Alvarez, if you have no objection, we can

1 let staff proceed on that. We've made no commitment here today-
2 -

3 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Mm-hmm.

4 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: --other than to review
5 their paper. We can take this up next week when we talk about
6 statewide balances. I do think that's an appropriate
7 discussion.

8 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Yeah.

9 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Commissioner Demerson, it
10 allows us to continue to consider an innovation fund for this
11 year. But, again, you know, we might strike upon brilliance
12 next week and think of a statewide initiative that we haven't
13 thought of before that is innovation. So, I think it maximizes
14 our options to do that. And if there's no disagreement to that
15 I think that's a good way for us to proceed.

16 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I would be okay with
17 that.

18 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: I'm definitely okay
19 with that.

20 MAHALIA BALDINI: Great. Thank you,
21 Commissioners.

22 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Thank you.

23 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Okay.

24

25

1 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: 2022 Workforce Awards,
2 Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action Regarding
3 Workforce Awards for 2022 and Subsequent Years.

4 COURTNEY ARBOUR: Good afternoon. For the
5 record, Courtney Arbour, Workforce Division. Similar to the
6 last item, Commissioners, staff have been a resource to each of
7 the offices with some ideas for awards for 2022 and beyond. And
8 I am happy to summarize some of the staff ideas on this. Or,
9 take thoughts from you, Commissioners, on what you'd like to see
10 pursued.

11 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Let's see what the
12 conversation here is, Courtney? We may call you back into this
13 conversation. If we can find some agreement early on, we're
14 gonna go with that. So, let's see where we are? Commissioner
15 Alvarez?

16 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: So, I do have a
17 couple of things that I'd like to see. On the Apprenticeship
18 Award, I would like to have an award for Apprenticeship
19 expansion consisting of two measures within one award. Fifty
20 percent for support of registered apprenticeship programs.
21 Denominator is the number of supported registered apprenticeship
22 programs. Numerator is the increase in supported wraps over
23 prior year. Fifty percent for support of new apprentices. The
24 denominator is the number of new apprentices training in prior
25 year. The numerator is the increase in number of new

1 apprentices training in current year over the last. I know
2 something was sent to us last night at 6:00 and it's pretty much
3 in the same thing that was shared with us last night.

4 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: So, from where I sit, I'm
5 looking at this. Just some ideas that staff was throwing out
6 informally here. Service to Employer Award, Service to Job-
7 seeker Awards, Adult Education and Literacy Awards,
8 Apprenticeship Awards, Childcare Awards were kind of advanced as
9 ideas for consideration with regard to a financial award being
10 associated with that. As I understand it, staff's concept is
11 that these would be awarded as a first, second, and third place
12 award in each of the categories that I read; is that right?

13 COURTNEY ARBOUR: That's correct,
14 Commissioner.

15 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Yeah. And then there was
16 a list. I don't know, official or unofficial, but there was a
17 list of nonmonetary awards. I'll be real honest with you, given
18 the first, second, third construct and the way these are laid
19 out. Or, at least the way the information was given to me in
20 terms of denominators and numerators, there's nothing in the
21 staff's notes on this that I would be opposed to. And if we
22 wanted to ask staff to bring this set of notes forward as a
23 discussion paper, I would have no objection to that.

24 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Chairman, I would.
25 But, I do have some other comments that I'd like to make--

1 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Of course.

2 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: --regarding some of
3 the other.

4 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Absolutely.

5 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Regarding, Childcare
6 Award, and again this is something I'd like to see as stated by
7 the Chairman. Things that we'd like to see and I think that's
8 what we were tasked to do.

9 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Yep.

10 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: As I stated at the
11 performance targets work session last week, I would like staff
12 to look at a Board award for a wage-gain measure for parent's
13 receiving subsidized care. I would like to see these parents
14 enrolled in short-term training. And placed into meaningful
15 employment. I think there needs to be a more robust connection
16 between childcare services and job training and placement. This
17 would be especially important for parents who are also choice
18 participants or WOA eligible. We need to do more to get these
19 parents out of poverty. We need to make sure that we are not
20 just placing these parents in low wage jobs. Otherwise, the
21 families never cycle off of subsidized care. This makes room
22 for the system for new families that may need assistance. I
23 would propose using year one of the award 2022 to increase focus
24 on short-term training and employment attachment for Childcare
25 parents. And in year two would like wage gains to be part of

1 the award. Staff can bring back methodology. And then of
2 course, I had a question regarding the Service Awards, of
3 course, and the nonmonetary awards. I would like staff to come
4 back with a discussion paper, as you just recommended, Chairman,
5 with recommendations in place for consideration at the
6 Commission meeting as an Agenda Item. Include a breakout of
7 recommended monetary amounts for each award if applicable. And
8 comparison of recommended criteria for 2019 Workforce Awards.
9 This discussion paper should also be posted in accordance with
10 the Open Meetings Law. Let's not reinvent the wheel when staff
11 has given thoughtful consideration to these awards. And create
12 the framework of workable. Unless there is a white paper from
13 staff or my fellow Commission offices for consideration, today
14 again, I would like to defer the discussion on the remainder of
15 the awards until such time staff can bring forth the discussion
16 paper. And said discussion paper is posted as Commission
17 materials for discussions.

18 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: So, Commissioner
19 Alvarez, in the first Childcare parents and the wage gains. Are
20 you talking about awards for those particular areas?

21 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: The thing I just
22 mentioned?

23 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Yeah. The first
24 one. Yeah.

25

1 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Yeah. A Childcare
2 Award. And remember it's kind of going back to the discussion
3 we had last week at the Work Session. Where we wanted parents
4 of those that were in childcare to be in meaningful careers or
5 training. And not just in jobs.

6 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Okay

7 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: So, this is based on
8 the discussion we had last week.

9 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Okay. So, you're
10 trying to get that integrated into, I guess the--

11 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: An award.

12 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Okay. Chairman, I
13 don't have too much to say outside what's been offered here. I
14 think the Service to Employer Awards from my perspective and the
15 nonmonetary awards that are listed here, is enough for us to
16 look into 2022 and move forward. One area, Voc-Rehab area. I
17 kind of brought that up to the staff. To make sure that we're
18 recognizing those with disabilities in some form or fashion. If
19 that's not being considered on this paper, I'd want staff to
20 make that that's--you know, the pros and cons of it. And if
21 there's some reason why it's not listed then we'll hear from
22 that. But, if there isn't a reason then making sure that we're
23 recognizing either employers or Boards that are working in the
24 space of those with disabilities.

25 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Chairman?

1 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: I think where we are is if
2 there's consensus, I think we're ready to ask staff to bring
3 forward a discussion paper. Staff, I would ask you to capture
4 the conversation that we've been having leading up to this
5 meeting. I think that your concepts that you've discussed with
6 us are ready to be brought forward into a more formal setting.
7 Commissioner Alvarez had a couple of additions that haven't come
8 up before. And I think, Mr. Trobman, it's appropriate for
9 Commissioner Alvarez to work directly with staff to make sure
10 those get worded correctly in the discussion paper. And I would
11 encourage everyone to do that. And then, Commissioner Demerson,
12 just offered the addition of something having to do with
13 Vocational Rehabilitation and those programs. And I just want
14 to make sure we do actually consider that and understand how
15 that fits in. Hearing no objection, we would just ask staff to
16 bring that forward for action at the next available, or when
17 they're ready really.

18 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I agree with that,
19 Chairman.

20 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Is there objection?

21 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: No objection.

22 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: No objection. All right.
23 The last Item on our Agenda for this Work Session is we had
24 talked--I probably even made forth as well. We had talked about
25 actually all Commissioners kind of spoke about some different

1 frameworks for the annual conference. And where we ended up,
2 I'm pretty sure I asked for staff to give us kind of a different
3 look. If there's a way to kind of use kind of the hiatus that
4 we were kind of into as a result of the pandemic, to make any
5 sort of improvements on that meeting for content, etc., etc.,
6 etc. So, Tom, I think that's where we are.

7 TOM MCCARTY: Good afternoon, Commissioners.
8 Tom McCarty, External Relations. You know, so based off the
9 discussions from the previous Work Session. A proposed meeting
10 agenda would shorten the length. Or, the proposed meeting
11 agenda compared to the last meeting agenda we had in 2019. In
12 summary, we would shorten the length of the large meetings to
13 just one hour on average. And then this adjustment would also
14 allow for additional group of breakout sessions compared to the
15 previous years. And then we would also, for those large
16 meetings, we would have a--propose a Commissioner would open up
17 one of the large meeting side of the floor. Each of you would
18 pick one of the large meetings that could be opened up and
19 discuss. And then we would also during those--so, those four
20 meetings would be on a Wednesday, two on Thursday, and then
21 there's one on Friday. The other option--or the other thing
22 that we would also be able to accomplish with this proposal is
23 the Commissioner Supersessions would occur Wednesday afternoon,
24 Thursday morning, and conclude on Thursday afternoon. The
25 Thursday large meeting would be at noon. And would be open to

1 all attendees. Where in the past, they were opened up to a
2 limited number of folks. And then staff proposes that for each
3 of the large meetings that there are five to six videos
4 submitted by the Boards that highlight their innovations that
5 adopted over the past year. While also working with--including
6 their employers. What they did with their employers that were
7 innovative as well. The same videos would be shown in each of
8 the breakout rooms before the start of each session. And any
9 other times that we can identify throughout the big meeting.
10 This would also provide more visibility for the Boards,
11 highlighting their work. The connection with employers compared
12 to previous year's agendas. And that would be just for this
13 year.

14 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Any questions or comments?
15 Commissioner Alvarez wants to know what's on the menu on the
16 buffet.

17 TOM MCCARTY: It'll either be fish or
18 chicken.

19 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: (inaudible) yes. Yeah.
20 Listen, I appreciate your creativity here, flexibility. I like
21 this. This accommodates this amended recognition. I can only
22 speak for myself, but I don't think I'm get any disagreement. I
23 really want to focus on recognition this year. There's not
24 going to be any cash awards. If we can slap a video on the
25 screen that talks about success that someone in our system had

1 and it makes sense for that session, I hope we'll do that.
2 Because I just think we've got a lot of opportunities here to
3 really recognize. Commissioner Demerson?

4 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: No comments. Tom,
5 kind of walk me through this real quick.

6 TOM MCCARTY: Yes, sir.

7 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: We'll go through it.
8 So, we're envisioning the opening ceremony about 1:00 to 2:00
9 and then it says Board Employer Recognitions at that point. So,
10 that's kind of the recognition ceremonies?

11 TOM MCCARTY: Yes, sir. Those will be the
12 videos that we'd be playing. The videos will be innovations
13 that the Boards have accomplished during that time period.
14 You'll notice that what you're looking at, I believe, has a 6/12
15 to it.

16 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Uh-huh.

17 TOM MCCARTY: It would be for that
18 particular time slot, we'd show six videos that would include
19 both the Board and their employer piece to it. If we did 12
20 videos, that would be a Board only and then a separate video
21 that would be employers--employer-related.

22 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Okay. And then we'd
23 do the Supersession and the same thing, 5:15 to 6:00, Board
24 Employer Recognitions again. Just another opportunity to
25 recognize.

1 TOM MCCARTY: Yes, sir.

2 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Okay.

3 TOM MCCARTY: And we would do that again
4 through all four of those large meeting events. And then we
5 would also show them during the breakouts as well.

6 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Okay. And then on
7 Thursday, that Recognition Lunch. Is that--and then TWC
8 Recognition, what is that (inaudible)?

9 TOM MCCARTY: So, that would be an
10 opportunity to identify the innovations that TWC has had that we
11 could highlight during that time period as well.

12 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Okay.

13 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: But, that wouldn't be all
14 we did during the luncheon.

15 TOM MCCARTY: No, sir.

16 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: There will be other
17 recognition during the luncheon?

18 TOM MCCARTY: Yes, sir. We would have other
19 recognition during the lunch as well.

20 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: And this would be a chance
21 for--if I understand your, sort of, outline here. This would be
22 a chance for Boards to--any employers they brought with them, or
23 elected officials they brought with them. It'd be a little more
24 relaxed atmosphere at the luncheon. Give them a chance to
25 visit. And also as much as I hate to volunteer myself or

1 anybody else for this, it'd give us a chance to meet some
2 notables from our local areas that have come to the meetings.
3 So, we can express our thanks to them.

4 TOM MCCARTY: Yes, sir. It would. It would
5 be kind of more of a networking--

6 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Yeah.

7 TOM MCCARTY: --more casual networking focus
8 to it.

9 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Got it. Okay. That's it.

10 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Okay. So, here I think we
11 probably don't need to take any action here. I think those are
12 new concepts, I'm comfortable with them. Mr. Alvarez is
13 comfortable with them.

14 TOM MCCARTY: Okay.

15 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Commissioner Demerson is
16 comfortable with them. Actually, I think our policy
17 requirements are all met by this. So, at this point it's
18 operational and I would encourage you to pursue.

19 TOM MCCARTY: Okay. We will do that. Thank
20 you, commissioners.

21 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All right. Anything else
22 that needs to come before the Work Session.

23 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Chairman, I just want
24 to take this opportunity. Thank you for putting this Work
25 Session. It was smooth. I think there was some good discussion

1 from the Dias. I think there was some clarification on the
2 first Agenda Item that you brought up. So, I appreciate the
3 remarks from the Commission. Certainly, good ones.

4 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: I'm glad we were
5 able to accommodate Commissioner Alvarez's food choices. So, we
6 got that set.

7 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: He said fish. I
8 don't like fish.

9 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Listen, thank you both.
10 And to all the staff that have worked on this. Listen, you
11 know, we've not done Work Sessions like this. I've observed
12 other agencies have some success with using Work Sessions to
13 identify, kind of broad 50,000 foot issues. I think we're using
14 our Work Sessions effectively to do that. I understand it's an
15 additional meeting. I'm not looking for additional meetings
16 either. I understand schedules are challenging. So, is mine.
17 I appreciate your willingness to come together and talk.
18 Commissioner Alvarez, you were talking a week or two ago about
19 having been complimented by one of our Board Executive Directors
20 on this Commissions willingness to work together even when we
21 don't agree.

22 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: That's correct.

23 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: And this Work Sessions are
24 very much an example of that. Although, we had a lot of
25 agreement today. So, I can't really talk--

1 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Yeah.

2 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: --about the not agreeing
3 part. But, we're not always going to agree. We all really are
4 trying to get something different done. But at the end of the
5 day, we're all trying to help the same people--

6 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: That's correct.

7 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: --in life. Gentleman, I
8 just appreciate your willingness to come together, talk about
9 big ideas. Get those big ideas put on paper and help get staff
10 in a position where they can succeed at that. 'Cause that's the
11 success we're looking for. So, thank you very much.

12 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I think it's because
13 Chris Nelson is in charge. I don't know? Maybe, it's just real
14 smooth. I don't know, Chris. I don't know.

15 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Well, before we--

16 CHRIS NELSON: I won't say that. But, I
17 appreciate the sentiment.

18 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Before we adjourn. Chris,
19 we'll get to the report. You asked for five minutes. Let's see
20 if Commissioner Demerson has any comments. And then we'll let
21 Chris give his report.

22 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: No comments at all.

23 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Nope. Chris, go ahead
24 with your report. Thank you, Chris.

25 CHRIS NELSON: I have no report.

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CHAIRMAN DANIEL: We do need a motion to
adjourn the Work--

COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Chairman, I move that
we adjourn. Have a good day, everyone.

COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Second that motion.

CHAIRMAN DANIEL: It's been moved and
seconded. The Work Session is adjourned. Thank you.