

Meeting Minutes

The Association has been active in informing its membership about the PPP program. CAMI largest effort during COVID has been the launch of its Cyber Swat Team to help companies across Maryland that have been breached. The Association received a grant from the Maryland Department of Commerce to market the service.

The Association

Mr. Tiller observed that with COVID he has seen some benefits—e.g., the convenience of doing depositions without traveling. But there are other impacts: what happens with the commercial real estate market and how well will schools adapt to using technology for remote learning?

Mathew Lee, CEO, FasTech.

Addressing the impact of COVID on his operations, Mr. Lee noted that his firm has been moving systems to the cloud to support teleworking.

He has also taken a lead role in connecting Korean/American firms affected by COVID with information. The Korean community and AAPI businesses in general are not keyed into mainstream American news but follow the AAPI media. They are not aware of CAMI, TEDCO, the Tech Council or what the Maryland Chamber offers. His goal is to get them involved in the ecosystem.

In reaction to some of the remarks, Mr. Dykstra commented that it must remain a major objective during COVID to help businesses find liquidity. The CARES Act was very effective. He also observed that COVID could be leveraged to Maryland's advantage. Companies are telling people that they can work from anywhere, and people are beginning to move. Could the State and other groups mount a campaign to move to Maryland?

Ms. Leong-hong noted that there were some common themes across the comments:

There has been focused communication by member organizations about programs available to help, like PPP.

All the member organizations have embarked on workforce development initiatives that have a diversity element.

Given that workforce development is critical to economic development, she asked two questions about collaboration:

The first was whether the members would find it of value to collaborate with the Council's Education and Workforce Development Subcommittee. Ms. Ross, Mr. Tiller, and Mr. Smith offered comments. The alternatives were occasional joint meetings or leveraging members who have a foot in both subcommittees to keep each subcommittee abreast of what the other is doing. The sense of the members was that the latter would be more efficient.

The second was how to get collaboration at a more general level. She observed that there are so many workforce development initiatives, the impact of which are often uncertain. These include internships, externships, apprenticeships, exchanges, and myriad degree and certification programs. Would collaboration produce more focus, coordination, and help identify the best strategies for workforce development? Could collaboration at a more general level be transformational?

Mr. Dykstra added that among these workforce development programs are those that aim to transition individuals from non-technical to technical positions. Catalyte is an example of a firm that provides such a pathway to entry-level tech jobs.

Mr. Stoval concurred that in light of COVID many people want to reposition themselves to get onto a tech pathway. But workforce needs exist beyond the entry level. Workforce-building strategies should include badging and certifications and not simply degrees.

Mr. Difrancisci noted that organizations are trying to develop talent through their own programs. For example, DoD has had a difficult time retaining talent. An internal initiative to address this is the DoD STEM Training Corps that will send employees to 12 or 13 institutions for STEM training. Efforts like these are valuable, but what is needed are solutions that scale.

Mr. Smith agreed that the number of initiatives make it difficult to be aware of them all. But he noted that there are challenges to collaboration. Organizations have different charters. They are all pursuing the same State or federal dollars. Political dynamics can also be a difficult to negotiate. In key cases, it has resulted in offers of help being left on the table.

Ms. Ross concurred with Mr. Smith's remarks and asked if there were common interests that the leading industry associations in the State could coalesce around. An example might be more powerful State messaging around the 'buy Maryland' program to in-state businesses.

