



County of Mercer Workforce Development Board

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Virgen Velez
Acting Director

Brian M. Hughes
County Executive

Keith Secrest
Chairperson

WDB General Board Meeting ♦ Chairperson: Keith Secrest

October 31, 2023 ♦ 12:00 pm (Zoom) ♦ Meeting Minutes

Attending:

Members: Keith Secrest (Kinetics Industries), Mary Gay Abbott-Young (Rescue Mission of Trenton), Anthony Carabelli (Mercer County Office of Economic Development), Matt Carey (MCTS/MCSSSD), Kathy Fiery (Health Care Association of NJ), Katherine Kish (Einstein's Alley), Lesley Jack (NJ DVRS), Lillian Mauro (SBDC@TCNJ), Scott Needham (Princeton Air), Dawn Paquette (NJM Insurance Group), Angela Parrinello (PSE&G), Deborah Preston (MCCC), Melissa Tenzer (Dress for Success), Peter Tindall (Homasote), Latoya Wilson (WCR Consultancy)

Guests: Gonzalo Perez (MCCC), Carmen Gates (African American Chamber of Commerce),

Staff: Virgen Velez, Iliana Ivanov

Welcome & Introductions

Keith Secrest opened the meeting and welcomed the group. Introductions were made.

Approval of July 25, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Anthony Carabelli made the motion to approve, Latoya Wilson seconded the motion. There was no opposition and the motion to approve the minutes was approved.

Mercer County Technical School Update

Strategic plan that was developed last year is on track with its objectives for this school year.

- In addition to Dave Nash, another CIE Coordinator, with extensive experience was hired
- Under the direction of Ryan Haimer, the Adult Evening program has expanded from 100 clients to 320 students
 - Cosmetology program is long standing program that has great reviews; program has expanded to include barbering, beard trimming led by a 1st time ever male instructor, which has led male students to apply; predominantly 98% female class in prior years
 - CDL licensing is a program being explored
- A Job Fair will be held
- Nursing program continues to face challenges. There's a pre-nursing program for grades 11&12, but very difficult finding and retaining instructors
- 12th graders at MCTS enter the community-based instruction phase to learn on the job; paid and unpaid opportunities
- All students (Adult & Youth) are assisted in finding work upon high school diploma/program completion

Mercer County Community College Update – Dr. Perez

Career Technical Institute (CTI @ JKC Trenton)

- Culinary programs will be offered; partnering with restaurants and deli's to provide them with a trained workforce in downtown Trenton
- Office Management certification will be expanded

Division of Lifelong Learning

- Pathway offers a myriad of certifications; many are in health care (EKG, Phlebotomy, Pharmacy Tech)
- Advanced Manufacturing and health care will be highlighted during OS Training orientations through MCCC's presence

Coalition with Middlesex Community College and Raritan Valley College

- Goal is to recruit and train students to work in "Clean Room technology" – cellular, molecular biology
 - Pharmaceutical companies are going to temp agencies for laborers and training them, but they rather employ ready trained individuals
 - College can customize training based on the company's own protocols; short-term training can vary from 6 - 12 months to attain a credential; a lot of growth potential in this career pathway
 - Funding for developing curricula and hire faculty are available via NJ Pathways

Executive/Oversight Committee Report

The last meeting was held on October 27th.

There are many changes expected. Member recruitment is on hold due to upcoming County elections and new administration.

Committee Reports

Advanced Manufacturing – Scott Needham

The last meeting was held on September 11, 2023

- Meeting was not well attended; membership still a challenge
- Princeton Air was very happy with their SYEP employee
- Enrollment at MCCC/WW is up 11% over last year
- Michael Hanna is no longer with the College and is now teaching at NYU
- NJMEP hosted a manufacturing event on October 6th at I-Play America which drew in over 1,000 attendees (legislators, exhibitors, employers) making it a great networking opportunity
- The Committee is in the process of reviewing its '23 goals and making tweaks as needed; it will serve as a "living document" to guide efforts
- Jim Harris (NJDOLWD) is facilitating the NJ Industry Partnership Advanced Manufacturing group

Disabilities Issues

The last meeting held on December August 10th. In Scott Elliot's absence, please review minutes in emailed packet.

Health Care – Kathy Fiery

The last meeting was held on September 27, 2023

- Seeking additional members to join, specifically representation from hospitals
- Good representation on committee from long-term care facilities
- MCCC is having difficulty in finding instructors for their CNA classes which are in demand
- KinderSmile has sponsored tuition (\$2100) for 10 students to enter the dental assistant program; books and supplies are not included, but the OS may be able to assist with these costs via WIOA funding
- Some of the Committee goals include:
 - Training for incumbent workers to advance their skills for upward job mobility
 - Providing middle school students with the vast career opportunities within the health care industry

Literacy – Virgen Velez

*A Literacy Chair is still needed

- The OS is going to work to strengthen the partnership between the Workforce Learning Link and the MCCC Consortium
- Early Mercer Reads initiative will be discussed in upcoming meetings

Youth Investment Council – Latoya Wilson

The last meeting was held on October 10, 2023

- Committee is also in need of members
- Isles is providing services for Out of School youth through June 30, 2024 (contract extension)
 - 13 received their high school equivalency
- A new RFP will be available next Spring; the committee will explore what services should be provided internally and which should be included in the RFP
- Youth orientations are provided via Zoom on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month
- Five SYEP youth have transitioned into the YCC internship component
- Performance Measures – exceeded both Youth employment retention measures and the Youth credential measure; need to improve the skill gains upgrade measure, but exploring if it may have been a data entry error
- The SYEP was very successful; 130 youth began the program and over 100 completed; work experience at various worksites and work readiness self-driven instruction via SkillUp were components of the program
- It was suggested exploring how AI is impacting employers' hiring

MCCC – Dr. Preston

- DOLWD is providing funding to offer film and video pathway certificate programs
- Exploring how to bring additional non-credit, as well as credit programs to the Trenton campus; will speak to the community to determine needs

*****Requires Board Vote (All pertinent information was emailed)**

*****MOU/IFA (Memorandum of Understanding/Infrastructure Funding Agreement)**

- Agreement between the WDB and all OS partners that will be in effect 1/1/2024 through 12/31/2027
 - Read emailed document for specific responsibilities, funding distribution, etc.
 - The County of Mercer will serve as the fiscal agent
 - The WDB serves as the strategic leader
 - The Partners provide access to services and work in collaboration to best serve shared common customers
- A draft of the MOU will be sent to all partners for review and input during future meeting
 - The Board has to authorize the Executive Committee to approve the plan for submission to the State

Matt Carey made a motion to have the Board grant authorization to the Executive Committee to approve and submit the MOU to the State. Anthony Carabelli seconded motion. The motion carried with no opposition.

*****Cost Allocation PLAN (CAP)**

- Demonstrates how funds are allocated to various grants (WIOA – Adult/Dislocated/Youth, Workforce Learning Link and under WFNJ – TANF/GA)
- Costs including staffing, fringes, health benefits, occupancy, office supplies, etc. have to be allocated based on a formula
 - Direct Allocation pool – staff serves a targeted population (i.e. youth)
 - Cost pool – staff serves a variety of populations including Adults, DW, TANF, GA, etc. (i.e. Front desk staff)
 - Administrative Cost pool – individuals that do not provide direct services to customers (fiscal, contracting)

Quarterly reviews will be conducted to determine any changes of staff allocations to make necessary adjustments.

Katherine Kish made a motion to have the Board grant authorization to the Executive Committee to approve and submit the Cost Allocation plan to the State. Melissa Tenzer seconded the motion. The motion carried with no opposition.

Expenditure Summary PY 2022 & 2023 – 1st Quarter

Shared screen of emailed data and gave highlights.

- Only expenditures for PY 23 so far has been the SYEP. Carry-in funds from PY 22 are being used for programming

PY 2019, 2020, 2021 DOL Audits

- Comprehensive audit was performed - It was determined that the WIOA funds were overdrawn in PY 19 by \$234,000; and in PY 20 by \$203,000 - Primary cause was due to indirect costs requested that the State did not accept. The County returned overdrawn funds stated above; and the audits are now closed
- There were no major issues with the PY 21 audit. A preliminary exit interview was held last week, with a report to follow within the next couple of weeks.
- A Fiscal Financial Officer was hired last year and we anticipate no problems moving forward
- The County is moving into a new accounting system, which will only help in ensuring our audits are clear in the future

*****PY 2023 Budget**

- There are carry-in funds available from PY 22 that have to be spent prior to PY 23 funds
- TANF, GA and case management funding amounts was decreased, but no major impact on programs due to the extension of the use of available PY 22 funds to 9/30/23
- Two percent of funding is required to be set aside for Professional Development activities
- Work-Based Learning (WBL) includes OJT, incumbent worker training, Transitional Employment

Scott Needham made a motion to have the Board grant authorization to the Executive Committee to approve and submit the PY 2023 Budget to the State. Dawn Paquette seconded the motion. The motion carried with no opposition.

PY 22 Common Measures Performance

There have been no updates from the last report.

- In Adult and in Dislocated Worker, we exceeded 3 and did not meet 1
- Youth measures were highlighted in the YIC committee report
- Common measures Employment in Quarter 2 (6 months after exit) and Employment in Quarter 4 (1 year after exit) were exceeded' these were also exceeded under Wagner Peyser (Employment Service)

All training programs are required to provide an industry recognized credential.

One Stop Operator Report – Carmen Gates

- Monthly Partner meetings continue to be held, with the focus on improving communication, referral process, customer satisfaction, etc.
 - The last meeting was held on October 17th
 - Job readiness will be scheduled regularly once a month

One Stop Updates – Virgen Velez

Review report for information on the following areas:

- Customer Flow
- Jobseeker Services
- Business Services
- Training Services/Youth Services “SYEP”
- WorkFirst NJ Services
- 2023 Fall Job Fair
 - 91 employers registered and 80 actually attended
 - Approximately 350 job seekers attended
 - The next job fair will be held in May 2024
 - Targeted orientations (health care, advanced manufacturing) will also be scheduled

Announcements

Keith told members to expect much correspondence as it relates to the new WDB / OS transition.

Dr. Preston will be the keynote speaker at the “Breaking the Glass Ceiling” Dress for Success event.

Melissa Tenzer has been appointed by the WDB Chair as the Community Representative to the Executive Committee. She will serve until the end of current term - June 30, 2024.

Katherine Kish emailed information for an upcoming seminar on “Immigrants in the Health Care Field” on December 5th via Zoom.

PSEG is working on hiring entry-level talent that might not necessarily have prior experience. Pre-Readiness Energy Program will provide individuals with three months of experience that a lot of union-based positions require. Program will tentatively begin in January 2024.

Meeting Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Katherine Kish; seconded by Anthony Carabelli.

The meeting adjourned at 1:10 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: January 30, 2024 (12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.)