



County of Mercer Workforce Development Board

Mailing Address: 640 South Broad Street, PO Box 8068, Trenton NJ 08650-0068

Administrative Offices Location: 26 Yard Avenue, Trenton NJ 08609

Phone: 609 989-6824 ▪ Email: wdb@mercercounty.org



Christian Estevez
WDB Director

Dan Benson
County Executive

Keith Secrest
Chairperson

WDB Quarterly Committee ♦ Chairperson: Keith Secrest

April 29, 2025 12:00 p.m. ♦ Zoom Meeting Minutes

In Attendance

Keith Secrest, Chair (Kinetics Industries); **Scott Needham, Vice Chair** (Princeton Air); **Scott Elliot** (Disabilities Chair); **Melissa Tenzer** (CEO Dress for Success); **Latoya Wilson** (YIC); **Anthony Carabelli** (Economic Development); **Eddie Roberts** (MCOTES); **Susan Rauscher** (MCOTES); **Pete Tindall** (Homasote); **Carlos Hendricks** (Community Member); **Terrell McCain** (NJDOL); **David Nash** (MCTS); **George Gent** (MCTS); **Katherine Kish** (Einstein's Alley); **Pat Schump** (WIOA Program Monitor); **Umesh Naik** (NJDOL); **Ravi Patni** (New Member); **Iliana Ivanov** (NJDOL)

WDB Staff: Christian Estevez, Shanele Gooch, Jamelette Negron, Frank Stillitano, Chiara Tramo

Welcome & Introductions

Keith welcomed the group

Motion to accept the minutes made by Carlos Hendricks, seconded by Melissa Tenzer, motion approved

MCTS

SkillsUSA: Student organization where students get to compete in their career area of study

- 114 different contests
- White collar, blue collar entrepreneurial, public speaking, etc.
- Many students did very well
- Gold medals in barbering, hair braiding, interactive video game design
- Silver medals in carpentry and architectural drafting and technical drawing
- 2 students ran for state office for the first time in district history

Received the grant for a new AI program

- Creating content, finding staff and unlocking opportunity

Adult

- Graduation coming up for adult evening school
- HVAC, welding, electrical, carpentry

JROTC program will be up and running next year

Economic Development

- Population increased since 2019
- Spike during the 5-year period within our jobs; increased by 1.5%
- Just under 25% of Mercer County residents possess a bachelor's degree; roughly 6% hold an associate's degree
- Unemployment rate peaked during Covid (8%) we are now at 5%
- Above average on all in-demand skills
- Two grant programs
 - o Giving out the first two grants for signage and façade

- Business Builder Rebate Program is an eligible cost; submit a paid invoice and they are reimbursed
- Through the American Rescue Plan funding (\$1 million) in ARPA money
- Possible breakdown on certificate programs

Disabilities

- Summer internships for individuals with disabilities where we hope to offer more support and connections for them
- Need more consistent participation from someone regarding transportation

YIC

Youth Career Connections updates

- Set to run July 7th to August 29th
- Making sure there is enough employers, add any additional employers
- New Jersey Pathway is having their conference June 4th in Atlantic City if anyone wants to attend

Advanced Manufacturing

Spoke on safety programs and getting people enrolled in them

Healthcare

- Healthcare was able to add 4 new instructors at Mercer County Community College
- CAN program to start in April; 2 classes over the summer
- A lot of progress on some of their support programs

Literacy

- Early Mercer Reads Program
- Trying to get more readers
- Plan earlier for next year

WDB Issues/Updates

Annual Report PY 22 and PY 23

- Reports are on the WDB website if you would like to access them
- Included success stories for youths and veterans, customer flow, occupational training services, job fairs from PY 22 and PY 23

ADA compliant computer station was added + JAW software

ITA updates were discussed as there are 10 contracts in place that include: CDL, education, IT, and medical training

- Expansion of adding more schools is in progress with 4 contracts on the way and scouting for more schools
- Customers are not limited to what schools we have contracts with, they can ask for certain training and we can provide them with a contract to said school

USDOL

- Completed all of the program findings for USDOL
- 2 remaining fiscal findings
 - Updating our Mercer County WDB budget management policies and procedures
 - Need to reconcile information reported in the standard financial report
- **Board voting required for the new budget management policies and procedure**
 - Carlos Hendricks makes motion

- Scott Elliot seconds the motion
- All in favor, motion carries unanimously
- Budget
 - Estimated increase in WIOA funding (\$900,000.00 increase)
 - Still waiting to hear from Workfirst New Jersey in terms of funding for PY 25
 - Quarterly report
 - PY 24 is going smoothly
 - PY 25 is starting to be mapped out

Performance Measures

- Agenda for next meeting will reflect quarter 2 data instead of quarter 3 due to delays in FutureWorks
- An overview was provided of the performance measures indicating the increase in the number of participants captured although metrics may not reflect the same growth
- Ongoing issues with measurable skills gains not being fully captured in the system as well
- Numbers seem to be lagging due to the system not populating in time for meetings

One Stop Operator

Summer Youth Work Experience Program

- Received around 450 applicants, 45 worksites
- Main goal is to finalize all worksites by May first
- Hope to send some youth applicants into YCC program as well for additional work
- Sessions will be provided for youths on TCNJ campus regarding college enrollment

A contract with TCNJ was made to partner with them to offer mentorship

- Most specifically mentor in their facilities department (carpentry, electric, plumbing, etc.)
- Students will have the opportunity to further their training with apprenticeships and have those from TCNJ sponsor them
- They will be doing things like creating samples for the shop and for marketing

The job fair will be held on May 7th from 2:30 to 5pm at the CURE Arena

- 311 registrants so far for the job fair
- 57 employers confirmed with the goals of adding more employers and reaching at least 70

Increase in orientation participation

Regarding college enrollment,

Committee Reports

- Executive meeting last week discussed
 - Mostly housekeeping items
 - Big topic was membership going forward as Kathy Fiery of Healthcare retired
 - Healthcare committee is open for a new chairperson

Membership

- New committee member appointed by Dan Benson: **Ravi Patni**
 - He works as an auditor for Pfizer and volunteers as a land use development board representing the mayor of Robbinsville
 - He owns a restaurant in Robbinsville as well
 - Wants to help create opportunities to open up/help more businesses

Meeting adjourned

Next meeting: **July 29, 2025** at 12:00pm-1:30pm