

**Workforce Development Board
West Central Workforce Investment Area
West Central Electricians Training Center & Zoom Meeting
June 22, 2023**

Minutes

Members present were: Anna Barenfeld, Tammy Barbati, Lisa Campbell, Kristy DeJoy, Larry Fannie, Drew Ginnis, Gary Grant, John Greenwood, Jim Hill, Erin Houston, Sandy Marwick, Joe Miller, Tony Miller, Adam Neff, Frank Telesz, John Thigpen, Howard Thompson, Dominic Vadala

Members absent were: Angela Bolois, Tim Jablon, Helmut Kraus, Susan Lautenbacher, Holly Nogay, Erin Orrico, Gail Steck, Debby Van Kirk, Rod Wilt

Staff present were: Colleen Chamberlain, Gregg Dogan, Dawn Gregory, Nate Hamilla, Eric Karmecy, Dan Kossack, and Rebecca Moder.

The meeting was called to order at 5:01 p.m. Roll was taken, and a quorum was confirmed. The link to the Meeting Agenda posted at www.wcjp.org/workforce-development-board/wdb-meeting-minutes/ was shared in the chat for reference.

A motion to approve the minutes of February 23, 2022, meeting was made by Gary Grant, seconded by Jim Hill and passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

No members of the Public were present.

Gregg Dogan welcomed Drew Ginnis who leads Human Resources and Safety at G.W. Becker to the Workforce Development Board.

MANAGEMENT REPORT

- **Motion to Approve the Finance Report through May 31, 2023** - John Greenwood turned things over to Gregg Dogan who referred to the finance section of the meeting packet. This report reflects expenses accrued to date for Program Year '22 beginning July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023.

The first page lists the grants that West Central currently administers and accrued expenditures through May 31, 2023. Mr. Dogan highlighted the competitive Statewide Activity Funds (Adult OJT/ITA, Internships, Welding, and Conf. Equip.) are on track to be fully expended. WCJP also applied for Rapid Response Funds in the amount of \$100,000 in order to serve the approximately 150 individuals affected by the McKesson closure.

Page two is the WIOA Title 1 Budget Summary showing WIOA Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Worker as well as Rapid Response grants, carryover and breakdown of ITAs, OJTs, and other expenditures through May 31, 2023. As of then, WIOA Adult training funds were budgeted at \$1,420,000 and \$1,265,139 had been obligated/expensed, WIOA Youth was budgeted at \$352,000 and \$325,109 had

been obligated/expensed, WIOA Dislocated Worker was budgeted at \$340,000 and \$60,664 had been obligated/expensed, and Rapid Response funds were budgeted at \$105,572 and \$15,572 had been obligated/expensed. Training Materials expenses would include any items that are required for the participant to attend occupational training.

Mr. Dogan made note of the greatest demand being from WIOA adults and the most funds being utilized in OJTs and ITAs for adult workers. He also noted that other than the individuals from McKesson and some occupations affected by seasonal unemployment, like School Bus Drivers, we are not seeing many Dislocated Workers.

Page three is the PA CareerLink® Financial Summary through May 31, 2023. It includes an itemized breakdown of the expenditures of the PA CareerLink® Lawrence County and the PA CareerLink® Mercer County. The salaries and payroll expenses shown only reflect the Site Administrators, Receptionist and Career Resource Center staff as all other staff are paid by their respective agencies.

Page four is a list of common acronyms used in the West Central Job Partnership workforce.

A motion to approve the Financial Report as presented was made by Howard Thompson and seconded by Gary Grant and passed unanimously.

- **Motion to transfer \$600,000 from PY 22 WIOA Dislocated Worker to Adult** – Mr. Dogan reiterated the lack of current demand from Dislocated Workers and higher demand for WIOA Adult services with the recommendation that the Board is permitted to transfer funding between the two categories in order to meet the needs of the employers and jobseekers. He made the recommendation that the Board consider transferring \$600,000 from the PY 22 WIOA Dislocated Worker to Adult in order to meet the current workforce needs.

A motion to transfer \$600,000 from PY 22 WIOA Dislocated Worker to Adult was made by Larry Fannie and seconded by Gary Grant and passed unanimously.

- **WIOA Performance Goals through Q3 of PY 2022** – Tammy Barbati reviewed the performance handouts included in the meeting packet. As seen from these reports, all of the performance goals were met or exceeded for all of the WIOA funding, including the Measurable Skill Gains for WIOA Youth, which had lagged behind the goal in prior quarters.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Youth Committee – Dawn Gregory reported that the recent highlights of Youth Committee activities:

Paid Work Experiences and Internships – The past two months' placement activity has been at its high point. Since the intake survey opened, a total of 245 individuals completed it indicating their interest in the programs. The survey closed last Friday, June 16th and the staff focused on follow up with individuals who had already begun the process. Currently, 73 Interns (TANF and Statewide Activities funding) have been placed with an additional 16 pending paperwork. A number of the individuals who would not reach the full 300 hours before the June 30th deadline for Statewide Activities Funds were carried over into TANF Internships so that they could receive the full 300 hour experience.

Additionally, 126 Paid Work Experience Youth are expected to be placed this summer through TANF funds.

Internship Day - A professional development experience for participants, hosted in partnership with the Lawrence County Economic Development Corporation and Chamber of Commerce and the Hoyt in Lawrence County and the eCenter at LindenPointe and Penn-Northwest Development Corporation, will take place tomorrow, June 23rd in Mercer County and took place last Friday, June 16th in Lawrence County.

STEAM Camps – In Partnership with the United Way of Mercer County and supported by Statewide Activity funds, in-person, hands-on week-long camps will be taking place this month. At least 165 6th through 12th grade students will participate in one of eight STEAM-focused experiences. The students will be provided with artifacts that align with the Career Education and Work Standards.

Mr. Greenwood inquired if the amount of internship was comparable to the number last summer. Mr. Dogan noted it was, but the March 2023 update of the Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS) system of record where the WIOA Applications are completed had required individuals to come into the PA CareerLink[®] in-person to sign their application, whereas before Case Managers could note an electronic signature was collected, slowed down this process and reduced the number of individuals who could have been funded through the Statewide Activity grant. We did notify the state of the issue and a resolution is in the works. Mr. Greenwood shared with the rest of the Board his experience with Internships and the value that they add to the community, particularly in retaining young people, and encouraged the membership to support these opportunities at their own businesses.

Nominations Committee – Mr. Dogan noted that each year the Nominations Committee puts forth recommendations for the consideration of the full Workforce Development Board. Recommendations for PY 2023 were: John Greenwood, Chair; Kristy DeJoy, Vice Chair; Erin Orrico, Secretary; and Tony Miller, Treasurer.

A motion to accept the recommendations of the Nominations Committee was made by Gary Grant and seconded by John Thigpen and passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

- **WIOA Keystone Edge and West Central Local Area Plan Modifications** – Rebecca Moder noted that we are currently in the 30-day Public Comment Period closing July 15th. The initial submission to the Bureau of Workforce Development Administration’s Policy & Planning Coordination Services (PPCS) was met before the deadline of February 24, 2023 with the follow up communicated back April 28, 2023, which pushed the Public Comment Period out later than initially anticipated, but the state provided conditional approval of the Plans effective July 1, 2023 provided the Board completes the conditions of the approval and votes to approve it at its next full Board meeting on September 7, 2023.
- **Update on EARN Program** – Mr. Dogan made the board aware of updates in regard to the renewal of the EARN Program’s contracts with the Workforce Boards. The contract will be extended for two

more years, meaning guaranteed EARN funding from July 1, 2023, until June 30, 2025. The allocations for PY 2023 were received at the same level as PY 22 in the amount of \$1,830,000.

- **Statewide Activities Project Update** – Mr. Dogan reported that, as reviewed during the Finance Report, the WDA received \$830,000 in competitively-awarded state funding in order to support four projects: Additional Adult OJTs/ITAs, Internships, PA CareerLink® Mercer County Conference Equipment.
- **2023 Governor’s Achievement Award Winners** – Several nominees were present at the last Workforce Board meeting in February to share their stories. Of all the nominees, three were selected as statewide winners in WIOA Youth, WIOA Adult, and Employer categories. Representing our WDA, they were recognized in front of Workforce Partners statewide during the lunch portion of the annual PA Workforce Development Association (PWDA) conference and spoke in appreciation of the services they received through our programs with the help of our staff and how it made a difference to in their lives and work.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy** – Sandy Marwick noted the recent name change of the Grove City Adult Education Center to the Mercer County Adult Education Center to reflect the organizations’ service to the entire county. Ms. Marwick also highlighted a shared report summarizing the 2022-23 Title II attendance, enrollments, enrollment goal and GEDs as of June 22nd. She reminded the Board that they are willing to work with employers to upskill current workers in literacy and digital literacy needs. Current class schedules are also included in the handout, which are provided year-round. A graduation ceremony will also be held for the GED graduates from Mercer and Butler counties for this year as well as the past two at Butler County Community College on August 15th at 7:00 PM.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Greenwood asked if there was any discussion within the Workforce Professional organizations on the anticipated impact of AI and the disruptions it may have on work and the workforce in the future. Ms. Moder shared that in a recent meeting with the Center for Workforce Information and Analysis it was discussed any current thoughts were that it will function as a tool to be utilized versus a total replacement of the majority of occupations. Mr. Karmecy added that some workshops at the Workforce conferences have been included on how AI may be used for customers assessment and follow up. Ms. Moder added that WCJP has applied for an additional round of a Digital Literacy grant and a workshop on AI may be beneficial to include.

- **Special Projects and CareerLink® Operator Update** – Eric Karmecy presented a report on PA CareerLink® Foot Traffic for the New Castle and Sharon Facilities through April 2023. Due to an increase in virtual services, the report is not a full picture of all the people the centers work with on a regular basis. A ten-month summary shows a total of 14,374 visits from 8,376 individuals. The report shows a breakout of the categories individuals who are coming into the center for including workshops, UC, ABE/GED, etc. and number of individuals entering employment (600) verified by case managers. The historical foot traffic numbers show an increase Year-over-Year, but still short of pre-pandemic numbers.

- **WORC Grant**– Eric Karmecy presented a summary of the WORC Grant which concludes on September 30, 2023. We have exceeded all the programmatic goals to date ahead of the grant end and have remaining funds that continue to run cohorts to serve additional individuals. WCJP has also applied for a WORC Round V grant in order to further convene Manufacturers in Lawrence and Mercer Counties in a model like the Mahoning Valley Manufacturers Coalition and continue the sector-focused work.
- **Mercer and Lawrence County Center Updates** – Nate Hamilla asked for feedback from the Board on what additional information and metrics they are interested in hearing about regarding the PA CareerLink® centers. In Mercer County, Mr. Hamilla shared that the Unemployment Rate in Mercer County during the January – March time period had increased slightly from 4.5% to 4.8%. The county’s current workforce is 47,300 population of 111,216. Foot traffic has increased 18% over the past quarter. The PA CareerLink® Mercer County hosted eight hiring events over the past quarter including: FedEx, ESS, Joy Cone, Gateway to a Better Life, Alpine Springs, the ARC of Lawrence County, the ARC of Mercer County, and DON Services with 92 Job Seekers attending these on-site events. In partnership with the Mercer County Career Center, a job fair was held at MCCC on April 5th with 55 exhibitors 170 job-seekers at the event. Another job fair was held in May in Mercer through a partnership with the Mercer Area Chamber of Commerce, Grove City Area Chamber of Commerce and Grove City National Guard Post. While there were 35 employers there, only 10 total job-seekers participated. First National Bank is working to offer a monthly financial literacy workshop at the PA CareerLink® Mercer County. Digital Intake is set to start in July in Mercer County. Frontline Supervisor Training for both counties offered by Mark Wassell and Susan Hileman is taking place at the LindenPointe location. FedEx is now in contact with the PA CareerLink® and we will work with them to fill their openings once they are ready to begin recruitment.

Mr. Dogan thanked everyone who attended this rescheduled meeting in order and invited those who were interested in touring the new facility to do so following the meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled for September 7, 2023 at 5:00 PM at the PA CareerLink® Lawrence County.

Adjournment – A motion to adjourn at 5:55 PM was made by Dominic Vadala, seconded by Jim Hill and passed unanimously.