



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



Virgen Velez
Acting Director

Brian M. Hughes
County Executive

Keith Secrest
Chairperson

WDB General Board Meeting ♦ Chairperson: Keith Secrest **July 26, 2022 ♦ 12:00 – 2:00 pm (Zoom) ♦ Meeting Minutes**

Attending:

Keith Secrest (Kinetics), **Anthony Carabelli** (Mercer County Office of Economic Development), **Mary Gay Abbott Young** (Rescue Mission), **Marygrace Billek** (Mercer County Human Services), **Kathy Fiery** (Health Care Association of NJ), **Iliana Ivanov** (NJ DOL Business Services), **Leslie Jack** (NJ DVRS), **Katherine Kish** (Einstein's Alley), **Connie Mercer** (Homefront), **Amanda Modale** (NJ DOL), **Scott Needham** (Princeton Air), **Melissa Tenzer** (Dress for Success), **Latoya Wilson** ()

Staff: Virgen Velez, John Raines, Maribel Duarte

Welcome

Keith Secrest opened the meeting and welcomed the group.

Approval of April 26, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Katherine Kish made a motion to approve; Melissa Tenzer seconded the motion. The motion carried and the minutes were approved.

Executive/Oversight Committee Report

There are many changes coming; policies will have to be reviewed, for clarification as well as creating any we do not currently have in order to be in compliance with DOL.

- A special meeting will be held to work on this and present to NJ DOL by September 30th
- Information on open items will be sent to Board Members

New Member Recruitment

An ad-hoc committee was formed with Melissa Tenzer as the lead. Scott Needham and Anthony Carabelli volunteered to assist.

- This committee will disband and reconvene as needed
- The 1st meeting will be held in August

One Stop Operator RFP

The last contract with the African American Chamber of Commerce ended on June 30, 2022.

- The RFP has been released and the deadline for submission is August 2nd; funding is \$30,000 for a nine-month period
- The Executive Committee serves as *the Review and Evaluation* committee; the recommended vendor, based on group ranking, will be submitted to the Administration and the County Board of Commissioners for approval
- Services will begin October 1st for a 9-month period, with the option of a 1-year extension
- Criteria for the One Stop Operator are federally mandated

PY 22 (7/1/22-6/30/23) Budget

Detailed report was sent to Board Members

- WIOA funds [Adult/Youth/Dislocated Worker] have a 2-year expenditure period
- TANF/GA/Case Management funds have a 1-year obligation period and 18 months to disburse
- This year's total funding allocation was increased by \$150k-\$200k
- Professional Development spending (equal to 1% of WIOA funding) is a new requirement by NJDOL
- Carry-in funds from PY 21 must be spent by 6/30/23 & must be spent prior to spending PY 22 funds
- Contracted services can be used to fund incumbent (current) worker training (up to 20%)
 - A survey of how much other local areas are allocating will be completed for the Board to consider in making determination for allocations
 - The Chair asked Economic Development to provide some insight at next meeting, as to what he would like to recommend as it relates to the recruitment and retention of businesses in Mercer County
- Transitional employment is fairly new; similar to an internship, but for adults; especially used to serve adults with barriers (i.e. criminal background) – full-time internship is at *no cost* to employers and no obligation to hire
- Clarification provided for public assistance program funding - *TANF* is Temporary Aid for Needy Families and *GA* /*SNAP* is General Assistance for individuals. Funding is not interchangeable.
- Funding between Adult and Dislocated Worker can be transferred between funds each other
- GA enrollment has been very limited because participation was voluntary; effective 7/1/22, the State has reinstated the mandatory participation. This should result in increases number of customers served.
 - Services will be delivered remotely, in-person, or in a hybrid format
 - Vendors were asked (via the RFP) to develop a laptop loaner program

The Chair called for a motion to approve the budget. Current vendors and RFP applicants were asked to abstain. Scott Needham made the motion to approve the PY 2022 budget as presented. Kathy Fiery seconded the motion. The motion carried with one (1) abstention by Connie Mercer (HomeFront, current provider & applicant).

Required WDB Policies

Most of the mandated policies are in place. What is needed are formal policies approval by the Board.

- No voting will occur today
- Information with descriptions on each policy was sent to members
- The majority of the policies are already mandated by the NJ and federal DOL regulations

- On September 30th, the State will review the status of our policies. In preparation, the Executive Committee will determine how best to present for voting – a special meeting may be scheduled

Work Ethic/Soft Skills WDB Resolution

We are awaiting feedback from MCCC and MCTS; delayed due to internal staff changes.

A prior suggestion to include “respect” is being incorporated.

The definition of “soft skills” is being finalized to be presented for approval at the next Board meeting in October.

Committee Reports

Advanced Manufacturing Committee – Scott Needham -The last meeting was held on May 9th; the July meeting was cancelled with the next meeting scheduled for September 12th.

- TCHS program went very well
- MCTS is offering new classes – blueprint reading, drafting, OSHA 10 and metal classification
- There were a few summer grants for high school students; one allowed for the distribution of chrome books

Healthcare – Kathy Fiery - The last meeting was held on July 20th

- The primary issue discussed was the lack of instructors for CNA training; the required training course is not offered with the frequency needed., Mercer County has a high number of interested individuals for the CNA course, but not enough instructors, while other counties have the instructors, but no individuals to fill the classroom
- There is a new training scheduled for August by the NJ Department of Health; the class filled up quickly however we do not know if any potential instructors are County resident s making it difficult to plan CNA training.
- Lisa Williams, of Maplewood Assisted Living is a new member of the committee
- The requirement of vaccinations, and subsequently booster shots has negatively impacted the availability of potential workers in the healthcare industry

Disabilities Committee – The last meeting was held on August 11th.

- Please refer to committee minutes
- October will now be referred to as Disabilities *Employment Awareness Month*
- The committee is working towards offering a virtual forum for employers with the goal of demystifying aspects of hiring individuals with disabilities and showcase the benefits

Literacy – The last meeting was held on August 3rd.

- Please refer to committee minutes
- The Early Mercer Reads (EMR) event was very successful; two local authors read during the live event
- There were 24 video submissions and 114 views made during the month of June

- Next year's event is planned to kick-off with the virtual platform, followed by possibly having Volunteer Readers visit the childcare centers, as was tradition (and very much requested); video recording would also be made available throughout the month of June

Youth Investment Council – The last meeting was held on August 9th.

- The Summer Youth Employment Program commenced on July 6th with 123 youth and 52 worksite locations
- Youth earn \$15/hour for 25 hours weekly (includes 3 hours of virtual job readiness weekly workshops)
- The program will run until August 26th
- At least six Board members are directly involved in some capacity (worksite or workshop presenter)
- Some employers that requested youth were not able to participate because youth did not want to get vaccinated as was required to work in their company - this presented some matching challenges
- Hosting a Career Carnival was suggested, which would have employers offer students insight into various careers/positions

The Chair commented that moving forward, board member participation in various events will be looked at to ensure the Board is as active as it can be.

WDB & One Stop Updates

As of July, the DOL reverted back to a hybrid work schedule. The County intends to remain full-time/in-person.

An in-person job fair was held in May; 75 employers and 250 jobseekers were in attendance.

A career fair to introduce the public to the various program offerings is tentatively scheduled for the end of August, and another in January

- MCCC, MCTS, the Trades and some of the private schools will be invited to highlight career opportunities
- The goal is to increase training enrollment
- An "internship" may be offered upon program completion to those who may lack sufficient work history
- Currently, CDL training is the most requested

Performance Measures

- We only exceeded 5 out of 18 measures; we met none and did not meet 9 – mostly related to employment
 - Individuals are either not working or not staying long enough to be captured in our count
 - The reported period includes customers who exited during the pandemic period

It was suggested that we should try to identify the obstacles individuals may be having to (re)entering the workforce or training to try to address them. Information is key to our effectiveness.

We continue to host many virtual recruitments, but registered applicants do not follow through to attend; many attend due to program mandates; employers are beginning to realize that flexibility and benefits are highly attractive to potential workers along with wages.

- Reports are in packet.
- Contact Virgen for more information or clarification on any items. Also feel free to request other information to be shared during meetings.

New Business/Issues/Announcements

Staff changes at the One Stop

- The Deputy Director – Programs) is no longer with the One Stop/WDB
- Contracts Specialist is no longer with the One Stop/WDB
- Jamelette Negron is now the new Administrative Assistant who will be working with the WDB

Adjournment

Katherine Kish made the motion to adjourn, and Melissa Tenzer seconded the motion. The motion passed, and the meeting was adjourned at 1:22 p.m.

Upcoming PY 2022 Meeting Dates: 4th Tuesday on Quarterly basis ♦ 12:00 – 1:30

October 25, 2022

January 24, 2023

April 25, 2023