

**WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS COMMITTEE MEETING**  
Partners for Performance, 920 Water St, Ste 32B, Meadville, PA 16335  
Thursday, September 27, 2018  
3:01 pm

**ATTENDANCE**

Brad Tisdale ☎  
Amanda Hetrick ☎  
Frank Staszko ☎  
Tyrone Clark ☎  
Terra Gaines ☎

**STAFF**

Janet Anderson  
Deb O'Neil  
Erin Shaffer  
Ramon Rodriguez

**GUESTS**

Sara Dodeci, ResCare ☎  
Carmine Camillo, ResCare ☎

**ABSENT**

Bill Clark  
Caryl Unseld

**WELCOME/ROLL CALL**

Roll call was conducted. Mr. Tisdale called the meeting to order at 3:01 pm. There was no public comment. It was noted there was no quorum at the start of the meeting. Following the convening of the meeting, Ms. Gaines joined via conference call at 3:15 p.m., resulting in quorum for the meeting.

**APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES – JULY 27, 2018**

The Workforce Solutions Committee minutes for the July 27, 2018 meeting were presented for approval after Ms. Gaines joined the meeting.

**MOTION**

It was **moved** by Ms. Hetrick and **seconded** by Mr. Staszko to approve the July 27, 2018 meeting minutes as presented. All were in favor. **Motion passed and carried.**

**REVIEW OF PREVIOUS ACTION ITEMS**

1. Ms. Anderson will add the accessibility protocol discussion to the next Executive Committee meeting agenda, which is scheduled prior to the August 10 board meeting. (Complete)
2. The Tech After Hours initiative will be added to the agenda to ensure regular updates and follow-up are provided to the committee to find ways the program can be self-sustaining in the future.

Ms. Shaffer noted that the Tech After Hours initiative was inadvertently missed on the meeting agenda for discussion and it will be added to the next meeting agenda.

**\*\*ACTION ITEM\*\***

**Ms. Shaffer will add the Tech After Hours initiative to the next meeting agenda for discussion.**

**ASSESSMENT DISCUSSION – Revised Individual Training Account Policy**

A request was made by staff of the Title I program services contractor, ResCare, for the board to consider flexibility in the Department of Education approved assessments that can be used in the local workforce development area. TABE is currently the preferred assessment of the board but there have been challenges identified in conducting assessments with TABE with some of the targeted populations that we serve, especially English language learners. The local ITA Policy was therefore revised to include language

allowing flexibility in the assessments that can be used for serving these populations, as long as any alternative assessment test used is included on the Department of Education's approved list. The Governance Committee, Fiscal and Monitoring Committee, and Executive Committee have reviewed the revised ITA Policy and have recommended it to the full board for approval. The revised ITA Policy is now presented to this committee for recommendation. It was requested that the committee provide a consensus for moving the revised ITA Policy on to the board, since at this point of the meeting there was lack of quorum.

Ms. Hetrick stated her agreement with the ITA Policy as amended. Mr. Staszko also expressed support for the revisions. The consensus of the group was to recommend the revised policy language to the full board for approval.

### **ELIMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT BARRIERS**

The elimination of employment barriers agenda item was not discussed at this meeting.

#### **Career Pathways Discussion**

A link to the "Success in the New Economy" video was provided in the meeting packet. Mr. Clark asked regarding the context by which this video will be used. It was noted that the video provided an opportunity for expanding our thinking as a "jobseeker" committee and the needs of those clients that we serve. It provides awareness that many opportunities are available to participants that result in successful self-sustaining employment. It was noted that we should use all of our existing mediums to get the information out to the community, as well as post on the local PA CareerLink® website as a repository for all partners to access. Ms. Hetrick noted that the video was used in the Forest Area School District and that it is important that parents also have an opportunity to see the video.

#### **Petrochemical/Plastics Industry**

Information providing a snapshot of the petrochemical/plastics industry was included in the meeting packet. It included a map of the unconventional wells drilled by year in PA from 2004 – 2017, a map of the abandoned wells in PA, an overview of the available careers in the petrochemical industry, training requirements for occupations in the energy sector, and a DCED map that highlights that a NWPA Petrochemical/Plastics IP will likely be our Next Gen IP for the local area. This Next Gen IP, however, has not yet been funded in our local area. Ms. Anderson noted that manufacturers in the local area is also hoping to receive funding, and the manufacturers formerly in the Advanced Diversified Manufacturing IP are now being facilitated by the NW PA Industrial Resource Center. She further noted that our local area can have more than one IP, and that this committee should discuss which industries we should focus on going forward as a workforce group. The committee will need to evaluate where petrochemical/plastics fit in.

Mr. Camillo indicated that he recently attended a press conference that discussed utility job opportunities being highlighted by the Public Utility Commission and that funding will be available for the necessary skills training within these occupations.

#### **\*\*ACTION ITEM\*\***

**The PUC utility occupations and training will be added to the next meeting agenda for discussion.**

## **ENHANCING CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND SATISFACTION**

### **HPO/ETPL Discussion**

The Executive Committee approved providing a more extensive discussion on HPO/ETPL for the workforce development discussion at the October board meeting. Given the decreasing amount of training dollars available, consideration of how best to use those funds has been identified as an important discussion for the board. Currently under local board policy, up to \$5,500 can be awarded to eligible participants. Our policy limits the ability for participants to be trained more than once, even if they did not receive the full \$5,500 in training funds for their selected training. This issue could be revisited by the board to allow participants to move on a career pathway. This workforce development discussion with the board can lay the ground work for future discussion on this issue. Background and research information will need to be provided going forward.

Ms. Dodeci noted that ResCare has seen increased demand for training funding during the months of July and August 2018, resulting in a much higher demand for ITAs to adults in the rural counties as opposed to last year. ResCare currently has \$100,000 remaining in the current budget and is expecting the demand to decrease over the next few months that will help to maximize the funding available for training. Discussions have been held with the fiscal agent and there is the ability to move some of the funding, if needed. Ms. Dodeci also noted that they have been talking with other one-stops nationally, who noted that most of their participants do not walk in requesting an ITA to be processed in the two-week timeframe that has been requested locally. Other one-stops have noted that they expect to spend 1 – 2 months working with participants prior to completing an ITA for training. They reported that this allows for better case management and relationship-building with the participants prior to embarking on training opportunities. They further noted that this helps to better focus on effective training, which has a positive impact on employment retention following training. It was noted that when participants move quickly through the process to training without the time necessary to build relationships and perform adequate case management, participants have been found to be less likely to reach out to the case manager when they encounter problems during training.

It was suggested that this becomes a quantity vs quality decision for the board. Participants may be urged by training providers to push quickly through the enrollment and ITA approval process. It was recommended that locally we need to maintain an appropriate balance, not to hold up training opportunities but to better ensure overall participant success.

Mr. Clark asked if the number of participants who drop out of training could be quantified. Ms. Anderson responded that it might be more practical to provide the percentage of participants that drop out. She noted that if the participant drops out of training, then they have lost their opportunity for the training funding and we often lose contact with them and it negatively impacts our performance. “Informed” customer choice is important to ensuring their success.

Following discussion, Ms. Dodeci agreed to provide the number of participants that are successful completers, the timeframe for participants to enter employment following training, and the number of participants that get employment related to their training. She further noted that last year, 57% of the participants got a job related to their training. However, some participants take an available job unrelated to their training because they need the income as soon as possible following their training.

**\*\*ACTION ITEM\*\***

**Ms. Dodeci will pull data for the number of participants that are successful completers of training, the timeframe for participants to enter employment following training, and the number of participants that get employment related to their training to provide a report at the next meeting of the committee.**

**COORDINATION OF WORKFORCE ACTIVITIES**

The coordination of workforce activities agenda item was not discussed at this meeting.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

**Trade and Economic Transition Dislocated Worker Grant**

The committee was provided information on grant funding opportunities to be made available by Governor Wolf to help workers learn new skills and get in-demand jobs.

A Trade and Economic Transition Dislocated Worker Grant of \$8 million was awarded to the PA Department of Labor and Industry to be used to help individuals who have lost their jobs in the retail and hospitality industries. The grant will fund the full cost of skills training and associated needs, like child care.

In addition, the Bucks County WDB received a \$1.7 million grant for manufacturing and information technology training for Bucks, Montgomery, and Philadelphia counties. Partner4Work in Pittsburgh received a \$7.8 million grant for helping mature workers that have experienced a dislocation in sectors negatively impacted by technology and automation to be trained in occupations in healthcare, transportation and logistics, financial services, and advanced manufacturing.

**Grant Writer/Research Specialist Update**

Mr. Ramon Rodriguez was introduced as the new Grant Writer/Research Specialist at NWPA Job Connect. Ms. Anderson explained that we are looking for grant activities to be more strategic and less reactive going forward. A grant opportunities overview was provided to the committee by Mr. Rodriguez. Included was the intent to apply for a PA Department of Labor and Industry Business Education Partnership Grant working with the Intermediate Units in our local area. Anyone with questions was encouraged to contact Mr. Rodriguez. Ms. Anderson noted the likelihood that funding from the Governor's Trade and Economic Transition Dislocated Worker Grant mentioned above will be made available to local WDBs.

It was reported that since the local board is often the required applicant and fiscal agent for the state's grants, we are requiring that interested parties on the grants submit to us a Letter of Intent to ensure that the grant activity aligns with our Local Plan and avoids duplication of other activities in the local area. This process is expected to assist us in collaborating with these groups in advance of the grant application deadline. The Letter of Intent notification for the Business Education Partnership Grant is expected to go out tomorrow.

**ResCare Update**

Ms. Dodeci noted that ResCare is currently prioritizing the research and implementation of an incumbent worker training program to support local employers in maintaining and upskilling their workforce. First quarter research has been conducted and ResCare will submit a report to Ms. Anderson for distribution. Various national models for incumbent worker training are being researched. An update is expected to the full board at the upcoming WDB meeting.

Additionally, Ms. Dodeci reported that a TANF Youth RFP was released by ResCare in September. A bidder's conference was held requiring participation by any agency planning to submit a proposal. The state has also released new TANF guidelines to become effective October 15, 2018. The most significant changes to the TANF program include the eligible age being changed from ages 5 – 18 to ages 12 – 24 and that more documentation is now required for eligibility, which can create challenges for the TANF subcontractors. The state will determine all program eligibility for TANF participants going forward. To date, she noted that ResCare has received 10 TANF proposals. All proposals will be due no later than October 30.

#### Report for the Executive Committee

The only item for Executive Committee review would be the revised Individual Training Account Policy, which they have already reviewed and recommended to the full board.

The next meeting of the committee has been scheduled for November 20, 2018 at 3:00 P.M.

#### REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS

1. **Ms. Shaffer will add the Tech After Hours initiative to the next meeting agenda for discussion.**
2. **The PUC utility occupations and training will be added to the next meeting agenda for discussion.**
3. **Ms. Dodeci will pull data for the number of participants that are successful completers of training, the timeframe for participants to enter employment following training, and the number of participants that get employment related to their training to provide a report at the next meeting of the committee.**

#### ADJOURNMENT

##### MOTION

**It was moved by Mr. Clark and seconded by Ms. Gaines to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor. Motion passed and carried.**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:04 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Deb O'Neil  
NWPA Job Connect