



NWPA JOB CONNECT BOARD MEETING  
Friday, November 9, 2023  
8:30 AM – 11:00 AM

**ATTENDANCE:** Bobbie Jones, Grainne Blanchette, Travis Crytzer, Larry Fannie, Juanice Vega, Brad Tisdale, Andrea MacArthur, Jack Hewitt, Jessica Hansford, TJ Sandell

**ABSENT:** Archie Graham, Will Price, Karen Thomas, Kirk Shimshock, Heather Moles, Jim Decker, Kathryn Schaaf,

**BOARD STAFF:** Lisa Miller, Lisa Stalnaker, Deb O’Neil, Susan Richmond, Emily Cozzens, Nancy Wisgirda

**VISITORS**

Attorney Joseph Keebler, Solicitor  
Vicki Thompson  
Diona Brick, Fiscal Agent  
John Spence  
Christine Grigsby  
Kerrie DeChurch  
Diana Guyaux  
Elizabeth Wilson  
Commissioner Tricia Durbin  
Bob Cardamone, Community Action  
Jennifer Williams, Equus  
Anita McCoy, GECAC  
Nancy Sabol, St. Benedict’s Education Center

Daniel Hornbake  
  
Letty Acosta  
Attorney Stephanie Ferra  
Jeane Blaine  
Deb Lutz  
Commissioner Robert Snyder  
Commissioner Wayne Brosius  
Jeremy Harrison

**WELCOME/ROLL CALL/VISITOR RECOGNITION/PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Bobbie Jones called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m. Roll call was taken. It was noted there was a quorum. Visitors were recognized. It was noted that the meeting was being recorded and a link to the agenda was posted in the chat and also shared on the screen. There was no public comment.

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ITEM**

Vicki Thompson, Senior Advisor for Education and Workforce Strategy at Thomas P. Miller and Associates, gave a presentation on their agency’s most recent NWPA Registered Apprenticeship Ambassador Network grant award. She reported that this round of apprenticeship ambassador network grant funding encompasses an eleven-county region that includes Northwest, West Central and Tri-County local workforce development areas. They are working in collaboration with the Apprenticeship and Training Office. They provide technical assistance, strategic planning, knowledge dissemination, awareness of funding opportunities, and information about how to get local support. She shared the five elements of registered apprenticeships that includes 1) sponsors; 2) on-the-job training; 3) related technical instruction; 4) progression in wages; and 5) credential of completion. She spoke about strategic partnerships, pre-apprenticeship programs for out-of-school and targeted populations, funding support, benefits for jobseekers, and benefits for employers. Anyone wanting more information can contact Vicki about getting on their newsletter mailing list.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

The consent agenda portion of the meeting included the following:

**Meeting minutes of September 8, 2023 and Special Meeting Minutes of July 28, 2023**

**PA CareerLink® Certification**

Susan Richmond reported that the PA CareerLink® certification is done every three years, with the current certification to expire at the end of December. All documents related to the certification process will be submitted to the state no later than 12/29/23. The PA CareerLink® certification includes five components, which were included in the meeting packet for review. This process is completed to ensure that the PA CareerLink® is operating according to state regulations. Susan stated that we have no concerns with service quality at this time.

**Operator Quality Review**

Susan Richmond reported that this review is done every year. There were no issues at this time.

**PA CareerLink® Erie County Certification Checklist**

Susan Richmond reported that this review is done every three years. There were no concerns at this time.

**PA CareerLink® Oil Region Certification Checklist**

Susan Richmond reported that this review is done every three years. There were no concerns at this time.

**Participating Partner Survey**

This survey is done every year to evaluate the Operator by the partner agencies. Elizabeth received a score of 4.3 out of 5. We thank her for all her hard work.

**ADA Walk Thru Erie and Oil Region**

Susan Richmond reported that an ADA walkthrough was conducted at both PA CareerLink® sites, in Erie and Oil City, respectively. Findings included the need to update the Fusion software, a door in the Oil City facility required too much pressure to open, several bathroom signs did not have Braille on them, and a flexible monitor arm needed to be added. All deficiencies were corrected.

**Continuous Improvement Plan**

This plan was submitted to the board at the May meeting; it is included here because it is part of the state monitoring submission.

**Common Measures PY22 Q4**

Lisa Miller reported on the common measures performance results for the PY22 fourth quarter. Our local area met or exceeded all measures for the PY22 fourth quarter report.

**1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Programmatic Monitoring Summary for WIOA and TANF Youth**

Susan Richmond reported that a first quarter onsite monitoring was completed between 9/22/23 and 10/5/23. We monitored adult, dislocated worker, youth and TANF files. Several issues were found with missing documentation and addressed with the Title I staff and a plan for improvement has been implemented, with a corrective action response due back from Title I by October 20. There were also some issues with missing documentation in the TANF program files. The missing items will be corrected and reviewed at the next monitoring. Title I is currently restructuring their TANF Program process to implement opportunities for improvement.

**1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Programmatic Monitoring Summary WIOA Desk Audit**

Susan Richmond reported that a desk audit was conducted for credentials and gains as well. While the gains and credentials exceeded their measures in the fourth quarter, there is still room for improvement with Title

I entering gains and credentials, as well as training services, in a timely manner into CWDS. Some gains were entered late or not at all, but Title I is working on improving this issue and will provide us with a response.

Susan Richmond reported that a desk audit was conducted for post exit follow-up. ~~on credentials and gains.~~ Follow-up is a required service for a year after exit. We pulled 50 Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth files; 25 had complete post-exit follow-up. The remaining 25 had issues. Title I has made appropriate corrections as needed and provided additional training to their staff that included a refresher on case notes and the follow-up process. We will continue to monitor this issue.

### **Administrative Monitoring Summary**

Susan reported on the administrative monitoring summary. This list summarizes everything NWSA Job Connect staff is doing to ensure that all state protocols are being followed, and that there is a checks and balances system in place within our own monitoring procedures. At this point there are no concerns with administrative processes.

### **Business Satisfaction Report PY22 Q4**

Lisa Miller reported that under Business surveys, 2 responses were received. The low response continues to be a concern.

### **Participant Satisfaction Report PY22 Q4**

Participant surveys indicate some dissatisfaction with services provided. Participants receive multiple services from various partners and we cannot identify which of those services that caused dissatisfaction are provided by Title I. Title I has indicated that they will provide more staff training on the areas that were problematic. None of the participants indicated that they wanted to be contacted regarding their dissatisfaction.

Bobbie Jones asked if any member wanted to sever any items from the consent agenda for further discussion. No agenda items were requested to be severed from the consent agenda.

### **MOTION**

It was moved by TJ Sandell and seconded by Larry Fannie to approve the consent agenda as presented. All were in favor. Motion passed and carried.

### **REVIEW OF PREVIOUS ACTION ITEMS**

There were no previous action items to discuss.

### **UPDATES FROM THE CHAIR**

There were no updates at this time.

### **APPROVAL OF FISCAL REPORT**

**Fiscal Report:** Diona Brick referred to the September 2023 fiscal report that was included in the meeting packet.

- WIOA Formula Dollars:
  - Adult and Dislocated Worker expenditures were reviewed. The total Title I Adult and DW allocation for 23-24 is \$2,053,046. At September, we expended \$464,853.54 of this amount or 23%. It is important to remember our 30% training requirement for the current year. We are at 16% excluding additional sources and 16% including additional resources.

- Youth expenditures were reviewed. It is important to monitor the youth percentages to ensure compliance with the spending requirements. The total Youth budget for 23-24 is \$1,357,517. At September, we have expended \$291,071 or 21% of the allocation. Key benchmarks include a requirement to spend at least 75% of the allocation on Out of School Youth and at least 20% must be spent on work experience for youth. We are currently at 100% and 19% respectively.
- Administrative Expenses - (Includes all Program Oversight and Fiscal Agent Costs)
  - Overall, the administrative budget is 20%, which is slightly under budget. All monies are used on the FIFO or first in first out basis so that no funding will be forfeited.
- EARN Program Expenses – On track, we are at 25% of the budget through September.
- Infrastructure Funding Agreements (IFAs) – Each of our IFAs have finished at budget as follows:
  - Erie County comprehensive site = 19.55% of budget
  - Oil Region comprehensive site = 18.14% of budget
  - Mobile Delivery of Service = 26.12% of budget

The Mobile Delivery of Service budget expenditures are slightly increased due to one rental that we pay at the beginning of the year that covers the entire year.

- TANF Youth – The total budget for 23-24 is \$179,709. To date, we have spent 26% of the allocation. Contracts have been awarded and subcontractors are expending funds.
- Grant Updates:
  - Rapid Response (RR): All Rapid Response monies have been spent and all proper closeouts completed.
  - Other Grant Updates: We have NOOs currently for the following:
    - BEP (Business Education Partnership) - \$150,000 - This is a new allocation with an end date of 12/31/2023. To date, \$71,263 has been spent. We have also been awarded another \$150,000 and this has been contracted to providers.
    - Statewide Activities - \$28,000 Website Updates – the website contract will carry into 23-24. All other funding has been closed out to stay in compliance with state regulations. In addition, we received 32,619.76 for PA CareerLink® updates and security. To date, none has been spent.
    - Apprenticeship Expansion-Total award is \$183,333. To date, \$8,062 has been spent.

The single audit has been completed and provided to the PA Department of Labor and Industry with no findings.

## **MOTION**

**It was moved by Brad Tisdale and seconded by Larry Fannie to approve the Fiscal Report as presented. All were in favor. There were no abstentions. Motion passed and carried.**

## **PY 22 TANF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM DATA BREACH**

Lisa Miller reported that there was an incident where Title I sent unprotected data through an unencrypted email to board staff. The state monitor was notified, and the recommendation was made for Equus to notify all affected persons and offer one year of free credit monitoring. Board staff provided focused Personally Identifiable Information (PII) training to Title I staff. Christina Grigsby, Regional Director for Equus, stated that parents of affected youth can be notified of any breach regarding their children in the future but they cannot

notify any third party due to privacy issues. Title I has gone through extensive personally identifiable information training and there has been increased scrutiny on this issue by both the board and Title I.

### **APPROVAL OF TITLE I CONTRACTOR FOR PY 24: EQUUS WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS**

Lisa Miller reported that the current contract for Title I will expire on June 30, 2024. Discussion is needed to determine whether or not to renew the current contract put out an RFP for a new contractor. Lisa Miller noted that if we are to put these programs out for bid, we would need adequate time to release a request for proposals. She further noted that there has been a lot of information discussed in this meeting regarding Title I, as well as in the Workforce Solutions meeting held on October 12, the Fiscal and Monitoring Committee meeting held on October 18, and the Executive Committee meeting held on October 27. The Fiscal and Monitoring Committee voted to recommend continuing to contract with Equus for the next program year, with one abstention. Both Executive and Workforce Committees voted unanimously to continue with Equus for the next program year. Jack Hewitt asked for clarification on the timeline for when the Title I services are required to be competitively bid. Lisa Miller stated that we are required to put out a Request for Proposals for a Title I program services contractor every five years. The purpose of this vote is to give the board the opportunity to announce an RFP earlier.

#### **MOTION**

**It was moved by Travis Crytzer and seconded by Jessica Hansford to approve continuing with the current Title I contractor. All were in favor. Motion passed and carried.**

### **APPROVAL OF OPERATOR CONTRACTOR FOR PY 24: EQUUS WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS**

Lisa Miller reported that the current contract for the Operator will expire on June 30, 2024. Discussion is needed to determine whether or not to renew the current contract or put out an RFP for a new Operator contract. Lisa Miller noted that we must RFP for Operator services every four years, with the last RFP released and awarded in 2021. She further noted that we have had very few minor issues with the operator, who has been very responsive to any needed changes.

#### **MOTION**

**It was moved by Jack Hewitt and seconded by TJ Sandell to approve continuing with the current Operator contractor to the Board. All were in favor. There were no abstentions. Motion passed and carried.**

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **Board Staff Report Highlights**

Lisa Miller reported the following items:

The state Workforce Development Board has been reconfigured to add six new committees. If anyone is interested in serving on any of these committees, Lisa can get information on who to contact.

Pennsylvania is on track for \$1 billion for broadband. Currently Volume II of the Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) Proposal is available for public comment until 11:59 pm November 14, 2023.

St. Benedict Education Center (SBEC) operates the EARN (Employment Advancement & Retention Network) program for Erie, Crawford, Warren, Forest, Clarion and Venango counties. The EARN program serves recipients of TANF funds, with the goal to reduce barriers and assist participants in finding sustainable employment. St. Benedict also serves participants in all six counties who are receiving SNAP benefits. Recent changes to eligibility have occurred due to the Fiscal Responsibility Act (FRA) of 2023. The ACT changes age limits for Able Bodied individuals and provides exemptions to work, particularly for veterans, the homeless and those in foster care.

Grants Update: Statewide Activities Funds Application: \$32,619.76 was awarded to improve safety and usability of the centers that included: panic buttons, replacement and additional security cameras for the centers, chairs for public areas of the centers that are easier to sanitize and transfer off and on for those with mobility limits. The purchase for the cameras has been approved by the state and we are waiting for the status of the chairs. BEP IV: Erie Together planning for fall activities. Northwest Industrial Resource Center (NWIRC) has two (2) cohorts planned for the Uniquely Abled Academy for the CNC training program. The Crawford cohort began with three (3) students and the Erie Cohort with four (4) students. The Warren County School District is still working with students and continues recruitment with local businesses. The grant ends 12/31/2023. QNR was submitted in October. Business Education Partnership Grant (BEP) 2022– \$150,000.00 was awarded to expand activities provided in the previous BEP grant to middle schooler and assist historically underserved population groups in exploring jobs in the skilled union apprenticeship trades and the "learn as you earn" opportunities available. Apprenticeship Building America Grant (ABA): The Northwest PA Chapter of the National Tool and Machining Association (NTMA) and Early Connections continue to work on RAP and Pre-RAP creation and expansion targeted to diverse populations. Quest Grant: submitted a grant application for the QUEST (Quality Jobs, Equity, Strategy, and Training) funding announced by the US Department of Labor. The PA Department of Labor & Industry was not awarded this grant. Opioid 2023 NDWG (Disaster Recovery NDWG to address the Opioid Crisis): Submitted an application to the PA Department of Labor & Industry to work in partnership with residential recovery centers to deliver in location Title I employment services and referrals by qualified career coaches mirroring the services provided at PA CareerLink®. Allegheny College Community-Based Project Grant: submitted a proposal to Allegheny College for a collaborative project between the Local Workforce Board, Community and College/students to create an economic resource guide that identifies the needs associated with workforce barriers.

National Apprenticeship Week is from November 13-19. NAW is a nationwide celebration established by the U.S. Department of Labor where employers, industry associations, labor organizations, community-based organizations, workforce partners, education providers, and government leaders host events to showcase the successes and value of Registered Apprenticeship for re-building our economy, advancing racial and gender equity, building a pipeline to good, quality jobs, and supporting underserved communities.

PA Dept of Labor and Industry: Digital intake is going well. UC connect is going well in the PA CareerLink® offices. Trade funds still available for people who are covered under previous petitions. The Unemployment claimant outreach program is being conducted across the state.

CWTP: Information about the Commonwealth Workforce Transformation Program. For those employers who are doing work through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), the CWTP offers training dollars for those who qualify.

Lisa also welcomed Emily Cozzens as the new Information/Communications Specialist.

Lisa Miller reported that the state has approved our local and regional modified plans.

Lisa Miller stated that donations are being made in honor of George Tanner, a state employee who has passed away.

Lisa Miller also noted that the next meeting will be on January 12, 2024, which is only one week after the January 5, 2024 Executive Committee meeting.

No Executive Session was needed.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION**

It was moved by Grainne Blanchette and seconded by Travis Crytzer to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor. There were no abstentions. Motion passed and carried.

The meeting adjourned at 9:33 am. The next meeting is Friday, January 12, 2024.

Meeting Advertised in The Derrick		
Minutes Submitted	Nancy Wisgirda	11/9/2023
Minutes Approved	NWPA Job Connect Board	1/12/24
Minutes Posted	<a href="https://www.nwpajobconnect.org/wdb/board-meeting-archive">https://www.nwpajobconnect.org/wdb/board-meeting-archive</a>	1/12/24