



Mississippi Valley Workforce Development Board

Quarterly Board Meeting Minutes August 21, 2023

The meeting of the Mississippi Valley Workforce Development Board (MVWDB) was held on Monday, August 21, 2023, at 1:00 p.m. in-person at IowaWORKS in Davenport with a Zoom conferencing option.

CALL TO ORDER

Duke called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.

ATTENDEES

Board Members Present: Dennis Duke, Kirby Phillips, Matthew Nicol, Joyce Stimpson, Lori Bassow, Heather Halbrook, Ryan Drew, Cory Bergfeld, Jacob Nye, Cynthia Whalen, Andy Sokolovich, Amy McCabe, Martha Bell, Regina Matheson, Carol Reynolds, Nick Flogel, Mandy Parchert, Caitlin Bliesener

Board Members Absent: Kimberly Jaber (excused)

CEO Present: Jim Irwin, Danny Chick, Don Schwenker, and Shawn Maine

Staff: Miranda Swafford, Executive Director, Andrea Taylor, Strategic Partnership Specialist, and Mandy Tripp, Compliance Officer, Tyler Lanz, Communications Assistant

Contractor Staff: Cherisa Price-Wells, Regional Project Director, Kendra Schaapveld, Project Director, Tabytha Siegfried, Quality Assurance, Taylor Longstreth, Operations Supervisor, Shannon Weaver, Operations Supervisor, Nick Clayton, One-Stop Operator, Cheryl Tipsword, Project Accountant

Guest: Tim Snyder, Operations Manager, Lindsay Perla, Transfr

QUORUM

A quorum was established for the board to conduct business.

CONSENT AGENDA

The consent agenda included approval of the agenda, previous meeting minutes, Kimberly Jaber's excused absence, the quarterly newsletter, and the financial report summary. Matheson made a motion to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Nicol, and the motion carried.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Duke summarized the report advising the policies that have been updated and approved, as well as the Admin and Program budgets and the PY23 deliverables for the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs. Duke advised the board staff has restructured and added one staff member. Duke reports the board has been awarded the North Scott Rotary grant for the Davenport youth space. All members of the social media team have received training and everyone now has access to Hootsuite platform in order to continue moving forward with the social media strategy.

***PY23 PROGRAM BUDGETS**

Schaapveld provided an overview of the PY23 Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth program budgets. Schaapveld discussed that budgets are tight, as the program did not carry over as much funding as it has in previous years. Schaapveld advised that merit increases will be given in January rather than in July, one staff member will be split between the Adult and the Youth program in order to avoid a layoff, and the program will be reducing its investment in Virtual Reality from 20 headsets to 4 headsets. There was a discussion on the procedure for reviewing and approving program budgets. Parchert made a motion to approve the PY23 program budgets, seconded by Matheson, and the motion carried.

***PY23 ONE STOP OPERATOR BUDGET**

Clayton presented the budget, advising the primary expenses are salary and travel. Drew made a motion to approve the PY23 One Stop Operator budget, seconded by Flogel, and the motion carried.

***IN-DEMAND INDUSTRIES AND POLICY**

Tripp presented the in-demand industries and policy. The industries were identified based on projected job growth, self-sufficiency wages, turnover rates, and entry level wages. These in-demand industries will help to determine which occupations are eligible for WIOA Title I training assistance, though exemptions can be requested through the Executive Director with appropriate documentation. These in-demand industries will be reviewed annually. Tripp advised that some occupational codes were highlighted which had a projected growth of less than 3% in the next three years, but the subcommittee felt they warranted keeping in our local area. Religious Workers, which includes clergy, religious education, and other religious workers, was highlighted as the subcommittee was unsure whether it should be included or not. Schaapveld advised that current policy states WIOA Title I funding cannot sponsor on-job training or work experience with political or religious activities and after additional discussion, it was determined that it would not be included. There was a discussion whether Certified Nurse Aides should be included since it is a pre-requisite for most other healthcare professions and a common starting point for career pathways in the healthcare industry. Reynolds made a motion to approve the policy provided that Religious Workers be removed from the list and Certified Nurse Aides be added. The motion was seconded by Phillips and the motion carried.

***OUTREACH EXPENSE POLICY**

The board had previously requested additional information about the Buy American Act related to the Outreach Expense Policy. Swafford provided additional insight, advising the act primarily applies to federal contracts in the procurement of items over \$10,000 so it wouldn't be a requirement for the board, however a clause was added to the policy stipulating that the Buy American Act would be followed when applicable and all attempts should be made to buy American, except when the price and delivery time are deemed unreasonable. Sokolovich made a motion to approve the Outreach Expense policy, seconded by Parchert, and the motion carried.

***WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY**

Tripp advised that this is a required policy which outlines the reporting and investigation process for violations and protections afforded to individuals who report in good faith. Swafford advised that the policy is not a WIOA requirement, but it is required by the board's status as a 501(c)3

organization. Drew made a motion to approve the policy, seconded by Reynolds, and the motion carried.

TITLE I ANNUAL REVIEW

Schaapveld presented the Title I annual report. Schaapveld discussed that Rapid Response services were offered to several businesses throughout the local area, but that not all companies wanted services. Schaapveld reported that enrollment goals for Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs were met. There are 68 active cases and 113 follow-up cases for Adult, 96 active and 64 follow-up for Dislocated Worker, and 106 active and 68 follow-up for Youth. Occupational Skills Training and Work-Based Learning goals were met. Schaapveld discussed that the National Dislocated Worker Grant On-Job-Training goal was not met, largely since it was a COVID-specific grant. Schaapveld presented the Credentials and Measurable Skills Gains that were achieved, with the most progress coming from Youth Measurable Skills Gains as they are able to retake their basic skills test every 90 days and youth are able to earn incentives for improvements. Schaapveld discussed the 14 Youth Elements, some of which are not available and some of which have to be referred out. One Youth success story was highlighted and one Adult success story was highlighted.

VIRTUAL REALITY YEAR IN REVIEW

Perla gave an overview of Transfr's services and discussed that virtual reality offers opportunities for Career Exploration and more in-depth training in the Virtual Training Facility. Perla reported that 366 individuals used Career Exploration and 13 individuals were enrolled into the Virtual Training Facility. Perla presented the most frequently completed Career Exploration simulations and the most frequently completed modules in the Virtual Training Facility. Swafford discussed that PY22 was the first year that the virtual reality headsets were used and the subscription was renewed in June, so they will continue to have 20 headsets until July 1, 2024 when the number of headsets will be reduced. Swafford reports they are seeking additional funding options.

JOB QUALITY ACADEMY UPDATE

Taylor presented the goals and outcomes of the Job Quality Academy and what progress has been made so far. The core team members and extended team members have been identified and are working to develop an action plan to develop a local framework for high-quality job principles. Taylor advised that next steps will be to engage local employers, workers, and job seekers in a pilot survey to gather feedback on job quality. Data from the surveys can be used in the development of toolkits and resources for employers, culminating in a conference and integration into current workforce services. Swafford discussed that the Mississippi Valley was 1 of 16 boards selected and that each group is focused on their local area so all of their projects are different. There was a discussion regarding the subjectivity of the term "quality," how it will be measured, and the overall goal of educating employers on job quality without alienating them.

BOARD STAFF REPORT

Swafford provided general updates, including the addition of a new board staff, Job Quality Academy and Workforce Communities in Action initiatives have started, and initial steps have been taken in the process to develop new Memorandum of Understanding and Infrastructure Funding Agreement by July 1, 2024.

Taylor provided business service updates and reported that 149 business services have been provided in Burlington and 125 have been provided in Davenport. Taylor advised that the Business Referral Form is up and running in order to establish a single point of contact for employers and reduce duplication of services. Taylor reports that 29 interest forms have been filled out for the Retrain and Retain grant and 4 grants have been awarded. Taylor discussed that Muscatine and Burlington have started veterans networks, Solokovich reported that Clinton is looking to start one, and Tripp advised that the Quad Cities veteran network meets every third Thursday of the month.

Tripp discussed the social media strategy and advised that the social media team has been trained and everyone has access to Hootsuite in order to post on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Tripp reported on the upcoming Youth program event in Clinton on October 4, 2023 from 2:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. which will offer youth an opportunity to explore careers using hands-on activities and simulators.

Swafford discussed other upcoming events, including a panel discussion on Thursday, August 24, 2023 at the Iowa State Association of Counties and a Virtual Reality presentation that has been accepted for the NAWDP Youth Symposium in November and the Iowa ACTE conference. The next in-person full board meeting will be Monday, November 20, 2023 at Kent Corporation in Muscatine. The annual board training, which will be focused on strategic planning, will be Thursday, November 30, 2023 in Burlington.

There was a discussion about what information board members would like to see included in a quarterly newsletter. Responses were that they would like to see a summary of services provided, links to social media platforms, testimonials, event highlights and upcoming events. Tripp already sends county-specific labor market information to CEOs, chambers, and economic development partners. Swafford inquired whether board members would be interested in a platform to store and communicate board information. Costs of these platforms vary. There was some discussion that a platform would be helpful as sometimes emails are blocked by security filters, files are too large, or emails are difficult to find if they need to be referenced later. Since meeting agendas, packets, and minutes are posted and stored on the current board webpage, it was determined that future communication would direct board members to the current webpage rather than invest in another platform or system to keep track of.

OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

***ADJOURNMENT**

Nicol made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Parchert, and the motion carried. Duke adjourned the meeting at 2:26 p.m.