

**SYSTEMS PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE MEETING**

**February 19, 2021**

**Camden County Workforce Development Board Office (Zoom)**

**ATTENDANCE:**

Members		23-Aug-19	15-Nov-19	28-Feb-20	22-May-20	21-Aug-20	20-Nov-20	19-Feb-21
<b>Abusi, Pat, CHAIR</b>	RailRoad Construction of South Jersey		X	X	X	X	X	X
Bryant, Janice	CCOS, Fiscal Manager			X	X	X	X	X
Cirii, Frank	Local Area Operations Director, CCOSCC	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Doran, Ryan	IBEW Local 351				X	X		
Maguire, Laurie	CCOS, Manager, Information Systems	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Pape, Barbara	CCOS, Senior Accountant	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Raymond, James	TD Bank			X			X	X
Sinclair, Nidia	CCOS, Director, Career Center					X	X	X
Weil, Robert	Conner Strong & Buckelew Companies Inc.							X
Swartz, Jeffrey S., Exec. Director	WDB	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Primas, Theo	WDB	X	X		X	X	X	X
Varallo, Kathleen	WDB	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Williams, Leslie J	WDB	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

**WELCOME:**

Pat Abusi, Chair, Systems Performance Committee, welcomed everyone and asked for a roll call of attendees. Leslie Williams, Comptroller, WDB, named all attendees on the call. Pat welcomed Ken Brahl, Literacy Chair, WDB and Matt Verney, Vice Chair, WDB, and Chair Youth Investment Council, to the call. Pat thanked everyone in advance, for their participation in the meeting.

The Committee reviewed the minutes dated November 20, 2020. Pat Abusi asked if there were any edits or corrections to the minutes. Pat asked for a motion to approve the minutes dated November 20, 2020. Jim Raymond made the first motion. Jeff Swartz made the second motion. By unanimous vote to the affirmative the motion was carried, and the minutes were approved.

**FISCAL REPORTS REVIEW**

Barbara Pape, One-Stop, Senior Accountant, presented the revised Master Budget 2020-2021, Fund Balance Report and Contract Analysis Summaries.

Barbara said the revised Master Budget will include additional funds added to the Learning Link budget. She will forward the adjusted budget to the committee for review and recommendation to the full board for approval at the next quarterly meeting, March 24<sup>th</sup>. The adjusted budget includes cost allocations for staff and fringes to that grant and reduced costs to the other grants.

Barbara reported on the Fund Balance Report, through December 31, 2020, shared on the screen. She said the report shows the current year grants and the prior year grants. WIOA funds from the prior year, shown halfway through the current year, are still not close to being spent. The biggest concern is that referrals have slowed down considerably since the start of the pandemic. Leslie Williams, Comptroller, WDB, pointed to these funds in the report and confirmed current expenditures as being 50% or below in Adult funding. Jeffrey S. Swartz, Executive Director, WDB, noted that these are funds carried over from PY 2019-20. WIOA funds carry over for two years, whereas WorkFirst funding carries over for one year. Barbara also noted the additional Learning

Link funds do not show up in this report because funds were received in January and the report is run through December.

Barbara reviewed the WorkFirst funding. She said most of these funds were spent which is better than last year. It also helped to have the extra three-month extension of the program year. She noted the current year grant allocation reflects a nine-month program year, October 1-June 30, 2021, because of that extension. Most of these funds should be obligated by then and there is a column shown in the report for funds that have been contracted out but not necessarily spent yet by the customer. Barbara asked if there were any additional questions about the Fund Balance Report. Hearing none she went on to present the next report.

Leslie shared the Contract Analysis Reports through January 31, 2021, Youth & Adult Service Providers, Camden County OEO, The Work Group, and Camden County College. Barbara said the reports show the prior year and current year activity. She said enrollments are low due to lack of referrals. She said the providers are transitioning to remote engagement and things are coming together. There are still funds in unclaimed benchmarks from the prior year. Barbara reported the TANF and CWEP Providers are facing the same challenges to providing services and these program activities are a bit harder to engage remotely. Barbara said it is the same challenge with GA, enrollments are low. She said there is not much else to report due to pandemic conditions, all providers are doing the best they can. She noted reports prior to the crash of the pandemic showed improvements in activity.

Jim Raymond, TD Bank, asked if unemployment going up would have some positive effect on enhancing enrollment. He asked if there was something that can be done to stimulate engagement and referrals. Jeff said it is a great question because enrollments would normally go up in times of greater unemployment. Unfortunately, public access to computers and in-person services are limited. The increase in incentives to stay home due to state waivers and federal cares funding does not help the current situation. Many of the referrals come from the Board of Social Services and waivers to requirements to participate in work activities make these actions voluntary. Under the current conditions, there is no incentive for an individual collecting these benefits to look for work or seek career planning services. These factors are contributing to lower enrollments across the State. Theo Primas, Program Evaluator, WDB, added that these programs are funded for job readiness and many of these customers have barriers to or are not ready for employment. Some have low reading and math level skills and English as a second language, barriers.

The Committee discussed and agreed on concerns and challenges facing referrals and enrollments. Jeff noted that Theo has been actively seeking ways to offer accommodations so providers can recruit customers on their own and not solely rely on referrals from the Board. There are providers who have found creative ways to drive referrals and the One-Stop is sharing those best practices in their partner meetings. Theo reported a meeting is scheduled for today, February 19<sup>th</sup> @10am led by Dr. Lauren Hill, Director, Adult Basic Skills, Camden County College. She and her staff members will be sharing best practices and successful ways they are using to promote enrollments. He also complimented the efforts of Nidia Sinclair, Director Resource Center, Laurie Maguire, Manager MIS, and other staff for their efforts to join Theo in discussions, ideas, and offerings to accommodations for Providers. Recruitment is new to the providers; this is something they have not been permitted to do in past years. Nidia said they developed a reverse referral process to allow providers to do their own recruiting, bring in customers and if they are in need of additional

supports, they could send them to their case manager for a formal referral. The Committee discussed other provider concerns, and all agreed that full cost reimbursement as requested by one provider, is not an option to be considered at this time. Nidia noted that the TANF population will be the hardest to recruit because of child remote learning and connectivity issues.

Bob Weil, Chair, WDB, reflected on the fact that a year ago, the committee was discussing spending concerns when unemployment was very low and this year, when unemployment is very high, due to the pandemic, the committee is discussing the same concerns. Funds are sitting unspent that could benefit other local areas like Texas, as reported on the news media channels, as having such great needs. His thoughts centered on apprenticeship opportunities for local contractors to be able to hire additional helpers as they might travel to and rebuild homes in Texas. He said parts of Texas have been devastated by storm and power outages. Construction crews are being called in from all parts of the county to help. The Committee discussed the idea. Barbara said local funds are limited to training costs. Travel and accommodation expenses are not allowable costs. Food costs are allowable for a one-time meeting but cannot be spent for daily work crew meals. The Committee agreed the State Apprenticeship Office might have more flexibility to coordinate this type of program.

Jeff backtracked the Committee to discussions about the amended Master Budget adding Learning Link funds. He said a motion is needed to recommend the adjusted budget to the full board for approval as mentioned above. Pat asked if there were any further questions regarding the motion. Frank Cirii, Local Area Operations Director, noted that the Learning Link funding allotments were drastically reduced this year. The additional funds are not an increase. They are meant to supplement the reduction in funding. Pat asked for a motion to approve the adjusted Master Budget with the additional Learning Link Funding. Barbara Pape made the first motion and Frank Cirii made the second motion. By unanimous vote to the affirmative, the motion was carried to recommend approval of the amended Master Budget to the full board for approval at the next Quarterly Board of Trustees Meeting, March 24, 2020.

#### PROGRAM EVALUATOR REPORT

The Committee reviewed the Program Evaluator Report submitted by Theo Primas, WDB Program Evaluator. Theo reviewed his updates as follows.

- (66) 2020 contract packages have been sent out. Packages are still being processed.
- (34) ITA providers are currently eligible to receive CCOS referrals

Theo reviewed letters attached to his report regarding a letter sent to the WDB, One-Stop and Elected Officials by Arnold Byrd, OEO. He has not heard of any responses to those correspondences but has arranged for the virtual meeting as mentioned earlier in the meeting. This meeting is being convened to discuss best practices for the accommodation of active provider recruitment. Theo said he is holding off conducting any monitoring activity at this time and especially since the contracts did not start until October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020. He is gathering the data needed to conduct WIOA Youth monitoring. He received what was needed from the MIS office and he sent out requests for selected youth files from the providers. These files are scanned and sent to him so he can review them remotely as was done last year due to COVID response efforts. Theo said youth service monitoring should be completed by the end of March. WorkFirst monitoring will follow.

Theo reported procurement activities will be conducted in the coming month. The second term renewal is not an option for this year. Theo has begun the procurement process and is gathering Request for Proposals (RFP) from several other local areas as a point of comparison. He has been discussing the RFP's with Nidia to streamline the process based on current allowable accommodations that have been put into practice under current conditions. The content and procedures have been updated to address current conditions and these have been discussed on an ongoing basis. Theo said he is not seeing the need to conduct "Think Tank" meetings to address what has already been put into place in the last few weeks. He sees the challenges to be in streamlining the process of procurement with regard to making it logistically feasible. He found the local RFP to be much lengthier as compared to other local areas. The local RFP is about 75 pages long as compared to other local area RFPs being about 18 pages and they address the same common measures. The local area is very meticulous in laying out the points of detail in the services and it is also very repetitive in some areas because it addresses different customer scenarios. (Example; CWEP with basic skills and then there is a CWEP with occupational skills etc.) He said these services may be essentially identical except for 3-4 points. The local area also generates separate RFPs for different service populations whereas other areas include all categories of service in one RFP. A modified RFP could allow the proposer to address all areas of service in one RFP that would enable or simplify the review process. The current process makes the review more complicated in that there is a lot of cross referencing back and forth between the multiple RFPs'. Theo also noted the local scoring rubric is 12 pages long whereas the other local areas cover the point of reviews in one two-sided page. He felt the RFP can address everything that needs to happen in a more streamlined fashion at least for this current period, given the current circumstances. A broader approach to defining program actions and outcomes will not necessarily lessen the quality or standards of the content given what is already addressed in the requirements. This will allow for a more dedicated review team with less complicated proposals that can be reviewed remotely. The review process will have to be conducted remotely due to COVID response guidelines and lots of people sitting around a table with lots of paperwork is not going to work.

Theo reported the Youth procurement process will be less complicated. Being able to receive proposals in a PDF format as opposed to boxes of paperwork will be a much more efficient process. Theo also proposed that other local areas adjusted their program year to run from October through June. He posed the above questions to the committee for consideration. Barbara said the funding comes from the state and Camden County's fiscal years runs from January – December. The program year must coincide with the award dates on the Notice of Award and adhere to the county fiscal year. This cannot be changed. She asked Theo questions related to the county contract in the RFP. She said the county's contract is very meticulous and cannot be changed or modified as it relates to the RFP. She noted that every time the county has changed its' RFP or contract process, it has been in response to problems with State review or criticism. The contracts are currently in full compliance and she did not want to change them and open them up for any further criticism. She also noted it is very helpful for fiscal to have one contract per fund. If the contract is mingled with different funding streams, the provider may be opted to shift enrollments to accommodate reimbursements. Theo said he thought about this concern and did not see any reason why several contracts could not come out of one proposal.

Theo and Barbara discussed more of the details of the RFP such as matching skill sets of CWEP, TANF and GA with occupational skills. Theo said all the information is addressed in the RFP. He said the offers can be made with separate contracts. Barbara said as long as the separate

requirements for separate funds are addressed in the single proposal, it is key to the process. She suggested Theo concentrate on what the different programs are that we offer and not mix WIOA and Workfirst NJ. It must be delineated between populations such as TANF, GA, and SANP and it must be delineated by fund. Theo said he will look to fiscal for more guidance in the process. Theo reiterated that so many of the services are so similar, they can be address in one proposal outside of a paragraph or two addressing a difference such as timekeeping and hours. This will save reviewers from having to look at two whole separate proposals that address the same services with slightly different reporting requirements. Location and program structure is the same in both cases. Pat asked if Theo could have another discussion offline with Barbara and fiscal to iron out the details and return to the committee with the findings. He said there may be aspects that effect accounting and budgeting he may not know about that could be worked out.

Pat welcomed Matt Verney, Vice Chair, Chair, Youth Investment Council (YIC) to speak about a request from Lori Godorov, Director Work Group, a WIOA Youth Provider. He said Lori made a request to increase the per unit cost for participants in the upcoming program year. Her concerns are based on conditions of the pandemic. The Work Group and other providers have been faced with higher costs to transition to remote learning and connectivity with participants. Matt asked to speak with the committee to get a better understanding of WIOA funding and requirements and get a better sense of how the WDB can answer this request. Matt said he understood the funding is capped at a certain amount and understands that enrollments are down, and costs are higher. He asked if consideration of raising the cost per unit would happen mid-year or is it something that would be addressed in the upcoming procurement process.

Matt again acknowledged WIOA funding is capped and then allotted per slot, but considering costs are going up (even pre COVID costs were starting to go up) we need to look at increasing the funding and still effectively serve. He asked that funding be increased to \$7,500 per slot. He said that would help youth providers considering they cannot serve as many people with social distancing guidelines. He asked the committee for input as to what it does to the overall WIOA funding. Questions: Will there be enough funds? And is \$7,500 the right amount. Is that too much or too little? Nidia said this consideration is being discussed and asked Theo to comment on what he found when researching other local areas. Theo said most of his research was focused on WorkFirst contracts, but he is aware of rising costs and would Aire on the side of quality versus quantity. Matt said he sees rising operational costs in all areas of private and public sector business including insurance, fuel, supplies and more. Matt asked if data is available to support an increase and are there funds sitting unspent that could be distributed wisely to offset these rising costs. Not supporting this request might push providers out of business altogether. He also agreed with Theo's comment on the quality of programming. The Committee discussed aspects of programming and all agreed the current local providers have a good track record and do a great job serving participants. Matt said the overall challenge is keeping our providers engaged with wanting to provide services considering the limited revenue they receive and with the challenges of COVID they would either go out of business or go into a more profitable line of services and we will be left with no providers.

Pat asked the fiscal management attending the meeting if an analysis could be conducted to give the committee a better idea about what dollar amount, or cost per unit would be feasible. Nidia said fiscal can be a great support to help the committee make a sound recommendation. Pat suggested that Barbara and the fiscal office do an analysis as soon as possible and if a special

meeting is needed, the committee could meet again to make a recommendation to the Executive Committee. He said we should move on this request quickly in case it affects the procurement process. Theo said the current cost per unit @ \$6,000.00 allows us to serve 100 youth, if raised to \$7,500.00, would allow us to serve 80 youth. As Matt noted, serving a little less but keeping the doors open is a valid consideration. Theo noted that currently the contract calls for 60% direct cost reimbursements and 40% is reimbursed for benchmarks achieved which is probably the most lenient in that regard since he has been at WDB. As he looked at other counties, Theo said the cost reimbursement structure is very different, but he was not in favor of changing that in the local area. He did suggest that holding too tightly to old structures might chase away the good providers we have. Jeff said the team at the One-Stop has been very diligent in seeking accommodations to help providers as discussed earlier. Nidia said achievement-based cost reimbursement is a struggle to survive for these providers and they are doing their best to stay connected and engage participants under extraordinary conditions.

Jeff said that additional funding may be designated under "Education and Awareness" in WIOA that would allow the providers to promote and attract customers. The Providers would be given a set amount to conduct recruitment activities. The WDB is not designated to use funds for advertising but this might be an allowable cost to providers. This would be a one-time additional payment that would not raise the cost per unit but provide additional support during this time. Nidia asked if this type of funding is allowable for the county to run a campaign, noting this was not allowable in the past. She also noted the providers do most of their recruitment using social media and internet platforms. Jeff suggested funds might be a separated restricted payment to the provider that would be specific to offsetting the cost of internet, education, and awareness. He had a concern about cost per unit funding being absorbed into administrative costs. Matt and Theo said the vendor usually builds the cost of recruitment into their budget so it would be factored in with an increase to the cost per unit. Matt said that increased operational costs seems to be the biggest provider concern. Serving less participants is not changing or reducing those fixed costs and those costs are rising. He is not sure if marketing is the solution to help with rising fixed costs. Pat said the analysis must be done and then the committee can determine how to move forward. Maybe in that way, the increase can be divided to say \$1000.00 cost per unit and as Jeff suggested, \$500.00 per unit additionally for education and awareness. Nidia reminded the committee that the cost per unit is based on reimbursement so if the provider advertises and still only serves 10 customers, that is not really supporting the provider.

Frank suggested that a sub-committee or analysis would help to define the answers and objectives. He asked further about the objective of the request for raising the cost per unit. Matt said it may be a loss to the provider by contracting with the County and if they cannot meet their costs, they might either go out of business or look elsewhere for more profitable contracts. Nidia said the Work Group could drop off because they have other programs. The other providers contracted to us really rely on the One-Stop's ability to provide them with participants to keep their business open. She agreed with Frank that consideration must be done with a broad-based approach. Theo did some research while the committee was discussing the subject and found that in 2020 the Work Group's reimbursed cost per unit came in at \$6,000.00 and in 2007 it billed at \$7,000.00 per unit. Matt noted the difference as being lower now than 13 years ago. The Committee questioned the reduction. Laurie Maguire said the reason the cost per unit was higher at that time was because we were being held to a certain cost per participant rate. It was lowered to make sure a certain standard was met and at this time, so far, we do not have a specific cost per participant rate. The

Committee asked and Laurie confirmed that at this time there is no fixed cost per participant rate. Some committee members were still cautious about raising the cost per unit and would want to find other ways to support the providers during COVID conditions. Nidia noted that an increase was provided in this last program year. Pat also asked about when COVID restrictions are lifted, will the increase be re-evaluated? The Committee discussed other concerns such as performance and agreed to meet or participate with fiscal in a analysis or broad-based sub-committee discussion. Jeff agreed and said a change in the cost per unit would need to be recommended by the System Performance Committee to the Executive Committee for approval as a matter of process and procedure.

Pat asked for an update on credentialing. Nidia said she established a follow-up team that is diligently reviewing files, contacting training vendors and ensuring the proper information is entered into the AOSOS system. Hopefully, there will be an increase in the next performance reports.

Pat thanked everyone for attending and praised the committee for active discussions such as today. He said it gives us all a better understanding of what each other does and how their job impacts the entire system. He said its about communication, the more we communicate, the better it serves the customer, and as we are seeing circumstances and things change. Everyone may not be aware of those changes and how it affects other people, and these discussions make it easier. He thanked Bob, Ken and Matt for attending today's meeting and for their support of these discussions and the work of the committee. He said the next meeting will is scheduled for May 21<sup>st</sup>, but if a special meeting is needed, it can be scheduled once the fiscal office makes its recommendations

Pat asked for a motion to adjourn, Nidia Sinclair made the first motion, Barbara Pape made the second motion. The meeting was adjourned at 9:51am.

The next WDB Quarterly Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 24<sup>th</sup> @8:30am, via Zoom. The amended Master Budget will be approved at that meeting.

The next quarterly meeting of the System Performance Committee is scheduled for Friday, May 21, 2021 @9:00am via Zoom conferencing.

Submitted by,

*Kathleen Varallo*

WDB Administrative Assistant