



Supporting the Development and Retention of a World Class Workforce

Jeffrey S. Swartz, Executive Director

Robert Weil, Chair

**OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES, OCTOBER 22, 2020**

WDB Office, 1111 Marlkrass Road, Cherry Hill (Zoom Conferencing)

ATTENDANCE

Member	24-Apr-20	8-May-20	12-Jun-20	16-Jul-20	13-Aug-20	18-Sep-20	22-Oct-20
DeBaere, Gregg T., CHAIR							
Cirii, Frank	X		X	X	X	X	X
Connors, Kristi	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Deitz, Jeff	X	X		X	X		
Jones-Benjamin, Michaela							
Maguire, Laurie						X	
McFarland, Salama	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Regensburger, Robert	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Sinclair, Nidia	X	X		X	X	X	X
Weil, Bob	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Swartz, Jeffrey S.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Williams, Leslie J	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Varallo, Kathleen	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

WELCOME

Gregg DeBaere, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:03am, welcomed attendees and referred to the agenda shown on the screen. He noted reports sent to him by the WDB showed UI claims dipped below 30,000 which is an improvement over the last several months.

ONE – STOP & WDB CERTIFICATION

Gregg asked Leslie if there were any changes to the status of Partner Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) and One-Stop Certification Documents. Leslie Williams, Comptroller, WDB, confirmed there are no new updates or feedback regarding the current documents, but she did get word that guidance will be forthcoming, in December, regarding the new WDB Certification process. The WDB Certification will be due by the end of February 2021 and the One-Stop Certification will be due by the end of June, 2021. She noted there are still some counties who have not submitted documents for the prior certifications. Gregg said he has been discussing the processes with the SETC Governance Committee. Many of the delayed applications were the result of a transition in leadership. He said the new processes will be similar to the last ones so it should be fairly easy to follow. Leslie said the regional and local plans are also slated for an update in the coming year. She noted the funding allocations were announced this month and have been sent to the Freeholder Board for approval. The WDB *did* submit an LEO agreement for the pro-rated nine-month program year. The Committee discussed challenges facing the One-stop to expend funding due to the pro-rated year, the pandemic, state waivers, and lack of referrals.

ONE-STOP AND YOUTH ONE-STOP (YOS) UPDATES

Frank Cirii, Local Area Operation Director, reported staff and operations have been going well. All are following the safety plan and luckily there have been no COVID incidents to report. Screenings have been going well and employees are working safely. He said there are seven employees who have requests for remote work. They are permitted to work remotely up to three days per week. These employees fill out daily activity reports via a platform that has been launched by the county in Microsoft Teams. It is really good for management because it digitally documents exactly those employees are working on grant funded programs, so they are being productive.

Frank reported that all customers visiting the facility by appointment are met at the door for screening. There is a log being kept, until the QLess program is fully implemented, so that contact tracing can be conducted if there is a COVID incident. Most services can be provided virtually, but there are instances such as testing that must be conducted in person. Learning Link assistance and upgrading of skills are being conducted virtually but testing is completed in person by appointment. That is the best, most secure and efficient way to do testing. Financially, it is not cost effective to set up remote testing. If a customer has any type of barrier such as computer access and document scanning, they are always welcomed to schedule a safe appointment with their assigned counselor.

Frank reported the One-Stop and partners are in the second phase of implementing the QLess scheduling system. The infrastructure and software have been set up. Staff and partner training on utilization of the program are being scheduled as of this reporting. The first training is for the users and there is training for the managers on how to manage the data. Once training is completed, the system will be fully implemented within the next three to four weeks. Frank noted the good news is that the One-Stop is still slow, so it will be a soft opening and hopefully more upcoming use as the partner agencies open in the new year. By then, we should have good records of customer flow as to who is being seen and for what services. The One-Stop is offering a great data keeping program that is free of charge to the partner agencies located in the facility.

Frank reported that UI claims discussed earlier are coming down, however concerns are still being addressed via email and in the parking lot as customers try desperately to walk-in for assistance. UI is still telling us to instruct customers to check their email, junk email and to continue pursuing the call centers if the problem cannot be resolved digitally. He and Nidia Sinclair, Director Resource Center, are still fielding complaints that are referred by the local freeholder and elected official offices.

Frank said progress at the Learning Link was mentioned earlier in his report. He announced that Nidia and staff are working on an application to become a High-set (GED) test site. Nidia will be joined by Dr. Lauren Hill, Camden County College, for a meeting on November 6th, at the One-Stop, to work through the application process. He said becoming a testing site will be an advantage for customers who participate in learning link services and will help improve performance and credentialing outcomes. In the continuum of service, the objective is to provide a system that keeps the customer on a continuous track toward career development without having to be referred out to other facilities.

Frank reported that promotions are continuing by distributing flyers at the counties' food distribution and immunization sites. The County is continuing to message residents and direct them to the county website where the directory of virtual services is listed. The One-Stop is also working through the partners to message their email contacts through email blasts and flyer distribution. The One-Stop is also working with a county list of employers or businesses who received micro loans from Care Act funding, as a part of the COVID Response Business Action Plan.

- YOUTH ONE-STOP (YOS) UPDATES:

Frank reported that training vouchers were written for two youth in the past week so that is good positive motion for the Youth One-Stop. Bob Weil, Chair WDB, asked if it was known how these youth accessed services. Frank said calls have been coming in through the virtual services links on the county website; the names are given to Nidia and then assigned to a counselor to follow-up. Frank also reported the county approved the purchase of approximately 20 chrome books so youth could access services from OEO, a youth training provider.

Leslie reported the Summer Youth Employment Program ended at the beginning of September. The WDB finished with a total of 13 participants. The program started with 19 participants, but some left for school or personal reasons. The final report is due in November, but Leslie will submit the final local report by Friday, October 23rd. She thanked CC Freeholder Carmen Rodriguez, for incorporating participants in Camden City's work on the Census. Leslie felt the program was successful given the short lead time for preparation and circumstances due to COVID response efforts. Youth were exposed to weekly career readiness workshops thanks to WDB Board member and the YOS staff. Gregg asked if participants received information about Financial Literacy and who contributed the workshop. Alex Levitt, Administrative Assistant, WDB, said representatives from Truist Bank, referred by Matt Verney, WDB Youth Chair, conducted that workshop and did a great job.

Frank reported there are no candidates currently in the pipeline for Youth Work Experience, but it is a priority. Leslie asked if youth vendors are completing work experience and can it be counted in YOS numbers since they are co-enrolled. Frank said the short answer is yes, they can count because they are co-enrolled and are entered into the ASAOS system, however, the state may view it differently. Frank also reported on a meeting held with Camden City representatives. They were very interested in participating in the Community Work Experience Program (CWEP) program so Scott Stetzer will be following up with them to review the CWEP program and contract. Gregg asked about the list of referrals Nidia and staff received. Frank said all employment service referrals are given to Debbie Friedner, One-Stop Career Counselor, for process and review of eligibility and then on to a counselor. There has been some movement because of those referrals. Frank thanked Kristi Conners, Manager, Employment Services, DOL., for the referrals.

Gregg asked if counselors are helping customers understand the final step from training to credentialing. Frank said that is part of Nidia's follow up unit. She is conducting special meetings with staff and coordinating with Laurie Maguire, Manager, Information Systems. Gregg thanked Frank and Nidia for their efforts.

- **BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES UPDATE**

It is the mission of the Camden County Board of Social Services to provide timely, efficient, cost-effective delivery of social, medical, and economic programs in a compassionate and financially responsible manner. The Camden County Board of Social Services is accessible to disabled persons. (Follow the link for more information. <http://www.camdencounty.com/service/social-services/>)

Salama McFarland, Case Management Administrator, Board of Social Services, (BSS) reported there is still no new updates on the work activity component. The Board received and was able to process 1399 new online applications during the month of September. She said traditionally September is a higher application month. Salama reported 983 new applications have been received so far for the month of October. She announced there is still a \$150,000 household income cap for families who need any type of childcare assistance and encouraged the committee to share this information with contacts. Salama also reported as of November 4th, the Board is expecting about 2000 inmates to be released in the state of New Jersey. DFD will provide the local Boards with the names for each county so they can be prepared for possible applications for assistance. The State is expecting about 80% of those individuals to be applying for assistance. A portion of the application can be completed while the individual is still incarcerated and the date of application is based on the release date. It will be up to the individual to visit the agency in order to complete their application. Gregg asked how relative the number of new applications was rated to other years. Salama said there is usually a higher rate of applications in September. She said August seemed to show the highest rate of applications seen in this year.

Salama reported a COVID Housing Assistance Program (CHAP) has been announced to provide rental and housing assistance to individuals or households with certain defined income limits.

Gregg asked Salama if she was able to determine whether or not the QLess scheduling system will interface with the Board's POS system. Salama said she has not heard back from QLess yet. She said it will be good if all their applications can be processed through the POS and use the QLess system for appointment scheduling. Gregg asked Frank if he was made aware of the interface concern. Frank said it would be no problem for the satellite office at the One-Stop. The Board overall may be looking into a separated contract with QLess. The Committee discussed more concerns and issues regarding the QLess system. Frank said the trainings will reveal a lot more information and customers who cannot download the app can still be helped at the front desk.

Gregg asked Salama if she was able to confirm that clients will be scheduled for work activities on a staggered basis. Salama confirmed those clients being referred for mandatory work activities will not be scheduled all at the same time. They still have not discussed exactly what that will look like and work activities were not mentioned on the last DFD call.

- **DVRS UPDATES & PROJECT SEARCH – JEFFERSON/KENNEDY HOSPITAL**

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services provides counseling, training, education, transportation, job placement, assistive technology, and other support services to people with disabilities. (Follow the link for more information) <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/dvrs>

Jeff Deitz, Manager, DVRS, was not in attendance at the meeting. There were no new updates. Jeff S. said he continues to receive reports from Ricky O'hara, Veterans Business Services Reps and he is serving a population of disabled Veterans.

- **EMPLOYMENT SERVICES, LWD**

Employment Services provides Camden County with Career and Employer services including Temporary Disability Benefits, Family Leave Insurance, Maternity Leave, Unemployment Insurance, Social Security Disability and Workers Compensation. Services for employers included job candidate screening and recruitment. (Follow the link for more information) <https://www.nj.gov/labor/aboutlwd/>

Kristi Connors, Manager, Employment Services, DOL, reported on a new hire that started on September 28th, she was interviewed prior to the shutdown. This young lady is working out well and has energized the rest of the staff. She is bilingual but carries a non-bilingual title. Kristi said she will be conducting three more interviews for the bilingual position. COVID funding is presenting opportunities to fill in some staff positions which haven't been filled in about nine and a half years.

Kristi reported her staff referred 160 ES customers for training opportunities. She referred to the work flow report that was sent to the committee. She said it showed 26.2% of customers served were Camden City residents and that was before the shutdown. From July through September 21st, the reports show 25.2% of virtual services to Camden City residents. It was questioned early on, in the move from Camden to Cherry Hill, if residents would be able to easily access services in the new location, and now the current question is whether or not they will be able to access virtual services. Many customers are being referred through the RESEA program and they are currently served primarily by phone. Kristi reported that as of this morning's report, 1144 people checked in for services. She said ES is generally seeing a good trend. She is holding off on sending out email blasts, as mentioned at the last meeting, until the QLess system is fully implemented. In that case, there may be better tracking. It will be more productive to have a consistent way of checking in customers throughout the system. She is hoping QLess will be a tool to consistently count service across all program areas. As service gets busier, it will be better to start fresh with the new system rather than having to stop and re-train staff on a whole new way of tracking service.

Gregg asked Kristi if there was any word released on the state's new website. Kristi heard there was a problem with the server system. The State is Beta testing the differences between one larger server to their transition to smaller mobile server systems and the bandwidth does not currently seem to be able to support the new design or format. The State's IT Department is still working on the current technical issues.

Gregg asked Kristi if she was able to get the video orientation of services translated into Spanish and uploaded to the website. Kristi said she was able to get the video translated and it is Camden County specific, meaning all services offered at the local resource center are highlighted. She will circulate the link to the video but commented that getting anything uploaded to the county website before the election will be difficult. She will also send it to Nidia for content review. She was not sure the website would support the Spanish version because there is no other similar Spanish translated content. She is thinking that a link could note the Spanish version and expand for viewing. Leslie said she noticed the English version video on another county websites. Kristi said other counties are using the generic version. She complimented her staff for all the work they did. It was also requested to create a version specific to Bergen County. She felt the video was a good way to promote services the public may not have been aware of and the DOL is not funded for marketing. The video can be updated as services are added. Jeff asked if Kristi's staff might be able to help with a youth video being produced by a sub-committee of the Youth Investment Council. Kristi said to send an email and yes her staff might be able to help. The Committee complimented Kristi on the great job done on the video. All have received favorable comments about the video from WDB's around the state.

Kristi also reported she is working with the state Business Service Division to create a tracking system for virtual recruitments and rapid response efforts. There have been some of these types of virtual drive-by events but the state is not able to get data about jobseeker response. She is recommending a tablet check-in system similar to the one being currently used by ES in the local area.

Kristi encouraged the committee to share the directory of virtual services on all social media sites and with WDB Committees...

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=70&v=wWPlc1EJFO8&feature=emb_logo&fbclid=IwAR39blVYNW5JLWAO3gnWxShvg9SFHYEa5OgvkTItg6HEYemculFcxEuQmI

The Committee also discussed some announcements about possible funding for Workforce Development and College collaborative initiatives. These funds would be channeled through unused Care Act Funds. No definitive programs have been established as of yet.

- **COOPER HOSPITAL – MEDICAL CODING INITIATIVE (CMCI)**

A consortium including Cooper University Healthcare, Camden County College, Hopeworks, the Camden County One-Stop and the Camden County Workforce Development Board have organized to create a certificate program in Medical Coding offered by Camden County College and approved by the American Health Information Management Association as an appropriate training platform, with the addition of certain life skills training provided by Hopeworks. Hopeworks will qualify participants for the positions and the career ladders will be identified by Cooper. This will further enable the participants to advance academically towards securing associate and baccalaureate degrees.

Jeff reported there has been no new activity regarding that initiative. HopeWorks, Camden is very involved with the program and they are now open for some virtual and in person classes.

- **REGIONAL ACTIVITIES**

Jeff reported that the Atlantic City Electric (ACE) Training Initiative will resume in early 2021. There are two current cohorts, one from 2019, and another finishing up this year. Approximately 24-30 participants will be awaiting the line training which should take place in the spring of 2021. The ACE team and WDB hosted its first Employer Information Session on Thursday, September 23rd, via Zoom Conferencing. Instructors of the program reviewed the curriculum and value of the training for employers on the call who were not aware of the program. Jeff said 6 quality employers attended the information session. They seemed very excited about the program. Hopefully, they will be in a position to hire some of the trainees as they complete the program in 2021. Leslie clarified that ACE did agree to extend the grant year, so there will be no recruitment in 2021 outside of the current cohorts finishing up the line training. Recruitment for a new cohort will begin in the later part of 2021 for a January 2022 start. The Committee discussed planning and equipment logistics for the line training site located in Egg Harbor Township. Atlantic Cape Community College will take the lead in organizing and implementing that training.

Jeff reported on the Camden Works Initiative. He reminded the committee that the WDB is a managing partner to the program and he continues to attend bi-weekly call updates. To date, there are approximately 165 Camden City residents employed in jobs through these efforts.

Jeff reported GSETA is offering a whole host of member training webinars, in place of their annual workforce training conference. The virtual workshops are geared toward up skilling frontline staff and managers of the One-Stops and Career Centers around the State. GSETA is planning a conference in 2021. Jeff will keep the committee posted on the planning of that event.

- **CONSORTIUM & INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP UPDATES**

Jeff reported there was a manufacturer's webinar conducted on October 21st with partners from around the state. This was not an Industry Partnership event. The WDB did not attend that event, but some other local areas attended in the north.

- **BUSINESS SERVICES (BSR)**

Jeff reported the Business Service Team met virtually on Thursday, October 11th, at 2pm. The BSR's continue to work on the Job Matching Program as directed by the state. Jeanne Page-Soncrant, BSR, has been very good at following up with employers when a match or application is filed and she is also taking calls from employers with immediate needs. Jeff said it was mentioned at the last meeting about a letter to Howard Miller, State Director, BSR Team, requesting clear BSR direction with the local WDB. Jeff noted that Jeanne and Ricky O'Hara are working well with each other and report regularly to him. The WDB is posting job recruitments and promoting college training initiatives on social media platforms.

Kathleen asked Kristi if there were any new updates to the On-The-Job training contracts. Kristi said the BSR's are waiting for state issued laptops for onboarding. The easiest way to implement the program is to extend an individual's unemployment benefits by placing them in a working relationship with a willing employer. She said Ida Stewart is the state OJT Writer and will be available to help with the program

QUARTERLY BOARD MEETING

The next WDB Quarterly Board of Trustees meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 16th @8:30am via Zoom Conferencing. The new master budget will be approved at that meeting and the annual report will be presented. Jeff said the WDB will be honoring Steve Ravitz, Ravitz Family Markets, Shoprites, who was a community leader and friend to the WDB. He passed away in April 2020 from complications due to COVID. The WDB will also invite Congressman Donald Norcross to say a few words on his behalf and to give a brief state of affairs following up the election. Bob Weil noted that Congressman Norcross once served on the CCWDB.

Gregg asked Leslie if she was able to designate funding allocations with Barbara Pape, Manager Fiscal, One-Stop, and prepare the budget. Leslie confirmed allocations have been submitted for approval by the county and the LEO agreement has been submitted for signature.

NEXT MEETING

Hearing no further questions, Gregg thanked the committee and noted the meeting was accomplished in 57 minutes.

The next Operations Committee meeting will be scheduled for Friday, November 13th, at 9:00am via Zoom Conferencing.

Submitted by:

Kathleen Varallo

Administrative Assistant