



Supporting the Development and Retention of a World Class Workforce

Jeffrey S. Swartz, Executive Director

Robert Weil, Chair

**OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES, MAY 14, 2021**

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

ATTENDANCE

MEMBERS		11-Dec-20	15-Jan-21	12-Feb-21	12-Mar-21	9-Apr-21	14-May-21
DeBaere, Gregg T., CHAIR	Atlantic Coast Communications	X	X	X	X	X	X
Cirii, Frank	Camden County One Stop		X	X	X	X	X
Connors, Kristi	NJ Department of Labor, Business Services	X	X	X	X	X	X
Deitz, Jeff	NJDVRs		X	X	X		X
McFarland, Salama	Camden County Board of Social Services	X	X	x	X		X
Regensburger, Robert	Lockheed Martin	X	X		X	X	X
Sinclair, Nidia	Camden County Resource Center	X	X	X	X	X	X
Weil, Bob	WDB Chair	X	X	X	X	X	
Swartz, Jeffrey S.	WDB	X	X	X	X	X	X
Williams, Leslie J	WDB	X	X	X	X	X	X
Varallo, Kathleen	WDB	X	X	X	X	X	X

WELCOME

Gregg DeBaere, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:05am. Gregg welcomed attendees and referred to the agenda. The Committee reviewed the minutes of the meeting Friday, April 9, 2021. Gregg said he made his thorough review of the minutes and all his corrections have been made. Gregg asked if there were any further corrections or additions to the minutes. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Frank Cirii made the first motion; Nidia Sinclair made the second motion. By unanimous vote to the affirmative the motion was carried, and minutes April 9, 2021, were approved.

ONE – STOP & WDB CERTIFICATION

Gregg asked Leslie Williams, Comptroller, WDB, to report on any of the latest updates to from the State Employment and Training Commission (SETC) regarding the WDB Certification. He said he was made aware that the May SETC meeting was cancelled and will reconvene on June 2nd which makes him surer that no certification announcements will be made at that meeting. He noted that governance meets to approve certifications and then they are announced at the full SETC board meetings. He said they are still in the review process and there are many counties that have not submitted yet. Jeffrey S. Swartz, Executive Director said the certification takes place every two years and there are still 3 counties that have not been certified from that process. Leslie said she has not heard any updates. Gregg said it may be safe to assume that the regional and local plan guidance that was due to arrive in summer will probably be released sometime in the fall of 2021. Leslie and Jeff both agreed.

Gregg asked Leslie to give an update regarding the One-Stop Procurement Process. Leslie said the process is complete. There was one proposal submitted by the County of Camden and it was favorably scored by the One-Stop Procurement Task Force made of private sector WDB members. The Task Force made their recommendation to the WDB Executive Committee on Thursday, April 20. The Executive Committee reviewed the scoring rubrics and voted to award the contract to the county at that meeting. The contract will be reviewed and approved by the County Board of Commissioners at their May meeting, and it will be ratified by the WDB at their Quarterly Board of Trustees Meeting on Wednesday, June 23rd. The award letter and contract were sent to the county and once approved and signed it will be effective July 1st, the start of the new program year. She said the county will remain at the One-Stop Operator for the next two years. Gregg asked and Leslie confirmed the contract will include an option to renew for an additional two years as approved by the WDB and the County. Gregg asked if there were any other questions regarding WDB planning or SETC updates. Hearing none, he asked Frank to report updates to the open bulleted items on the agenda regarding One-Stop Operations.

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

Frank Cirii, Local Area Operations Director, reported the One-Stop has three resolutions on the Board of Commissioners May Agenda, the One-Stop Operator Contract, the CWEP contracts and one to approve several training vendor (ITA) contracts which are listed on the ETPL.

Frank reported that facilities and staff continue to follow safety guidelines and it has been confirmed that all county staff, but one has been vaccinated for the COVID 19 virus. Staff continues to follow the county policy regarding mask wearing. Staff that has been vaccinated can take off their mask in their direct work area. Gregg asked if there was a two-week requirement after the second shot. Frank said that is not listed in the county policy. Frank said there was one confirmed COVID case by a partner employee. The safety protocols worked and there was no spread in the facility. Kristi Connors, Manager, Employment Services, DOL asked how management determines whether an employee has been vaccinated or what is the protocol for asking an employee if they have been vaccinated. Frank said he is waiting for county administration to give him guidelines regarding the protocol for employee proof of vaccination. As of now he said they are accepting the word of the employee that they have in fact been vaccinated. The county may modify its current policy based on new CDC guidelines. Kristi said she has not yet received that type of guidance from the state and wondered if it was allowable to ask an employee if they have been vaccinated. The Committee discussed the issues of employee health and privacy. All agreed to follow the county policy.

Frank reported there was another glitch reported in the Unemployment UI system. There was information published at the state level on nj.com. He foresees more complaints in the coming weeks but generally calls and walk-up customer concerns are slowing down by 20% in the last month. Gregg asked if staff can help customers referred by the Commissioner's offices. Frank said they are able to help and Nidia Sinclair, Director, Resource Center, has been addressing most of those calls. Frank said there seems to be two types of complaints, those that are minor glitches and those that are associated with claims of fraud. There has been a rise in fraudulent claims using a person's job social security number and id especially in organizations that are known to be cutting back operations. He has been guiding some public sector partner

organization staff on how to immediately report the claim and follow-up. Frank said some of the long-term customer UI issues being handled by Nidia are now requiring a higher level of official input from the state. He said there are still some cases such as state transfer of claims that are mired in red tape.

Frank reported the QLess and DocuSign implementation is complete. He will rely on Scott Stetzer, Manager IT, to check in with all partner agencies and give them a refresher when customers really start coming back to in-person appointments. DocuSign is being used for two major documents, customer training vouchers and contract vouchers. Fiscal will be looking at ways the program can be incorporated into other documentation.

Frank reported the application process has been completed and submitted for approval to make the One-Stop a testing site for the HighSet or GED. Frank noted a slight snag in the approval process, but it is a good snag. He was contacted by the Department of Education and was informed that there will probably be no problem being approved but the timing of the process would be delayed because government agencies are addressed later in the year. There is a good chance the One-Stop can be certified to administer other types of testing as well. Frank noted the certification term will be a 2-4-year period as opposed to a one-year term with a private agency. The Committee discussed the benefits of becoming a testing site and improvements to referrals and credentialing outcomes. Frank said the Learning Link is fully operational and seeing customers by appointment for testing and if a customer does not have access to a computer, they can be scheduled to work at a safe station here at the One-Stop.

Frank reported he is continuing research ideas for Incumbent Worker Training. He noted that the agenda includes Camden County College but there may be other providers that may provide the upskill training. Frank will be meeting with Jeff and Nidia because waiting for information from other counties and colleges is not producing any results. He said we may have to take the lead on this type of initiative. There is a huge upside with the pandemic to connect an employer to some upskill training and we can learn from the process. Right now, many employers are scrambling to find upskilled labor and there may be some great opportunities, but it is getting the word out that will be the challenge. Frank said it may be put out as an Request for Proposal (RFP), with an application and a due date. He suggested forming a sub-committee to review the applications, guide the process and move forward. A good example might be Canada Dry who is looking for CDL drivers. They may have some employees in their warehouse that could be upskilled with CDL training one of the county's contracted training providers like Mike's Driving School. Canada Dry would pay the hourly cost for employees to attend, and the One-Stop would pay for the training. The main goal is to move forward with some sort of test case and maybe include the college in the process. Jeff confirmed that Frank has reached out to several other local areas to look for IWT models. He will contact some of the WDB Directors who have been successful. He agreed that the WDB should be open to other training providers as long as they follow the criteria established in the IWT policy. The WIOA law allows the local areas to spend 20% of training funds on IWT. Gregg agreed on the approach. He said Canada Dry could bring us a good opportunity to create a model for this type of training in the local area. Gregg asked if ten trainees is the goal. Frank said it is a benchmark but not mandatory. He will look up the particulars, but the main goal is that the employer agrees to match 25% of the cost by paying employee's wage while in training.

Frank reported the Spanish version video orientation of services is posted on the county website and staff who are attending the food distribution sites give out the directory of virtual services. The IWV is included in the Business Action Plan he wrote for the county. All One-Stop services are posted to www.camdencounty.com

- YOUTH ONE-STOP (YOS) UPDATES:

Frank reported staff are doing the best they can to engage youth in services, with Youth Counselors trying to reach youth when they can. The Financial Literacy Workshop has been created and is on hold waiting for more youth participation. The youth work experience is still a challenge, but the Youth Investment Council is working on a video that will hopefully attract more youth to the YOS.

Frank reported he sent the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) information to the county media department. They called to ask questions about the program, otherwise the WDB staff are doing a great job gathering employers and launching this year's program. Nidia asked what the total number of youth will be serviced this year. Jeff confirmed the proposal was budgeted to serve 45 youth.

Gregg asked how the Job Fair went at the Camden Kroc Center on April 15th. Frank said staff attended and it went well. He said it was a bit cold and rainy on that day and the job fair was conducted outside the facility. Gregg asked about the file review. Frank said the backlog of files has been reviewed and now it is an ongoing process as each new customer is onboarded and served by the resource center. A continuous check and balance system for file review has been incorporated into the process of enrollment. Frank also reported staff will be meeting with a new state representative in the next ten days and some monitoring of files are already in process. Some state and county auditing are also being scheduled. The Committee discussed some staff shifting at the state level and some new monitoring tools being implemented. Jeff said the visits from by new state representatives will be positive and provide some guidance about new web-based dashboards and best practices collected from other states.

Leslie reported the SYEP is going well. The WDB hosted a virtual employer information session on May 10th with 40 attendees on the call. She said there are 20 employers interested in hosting youth. Youth application are just now being sent out A deadline of May 21 has been set for the return of youth applications and employer work site agreements. Leslie said staff is preparing the work readiness workshops youth will be participating in, and she does not see a problem placing 45 youth into quality employment experiences.

Gregg asked if there were any other questions for Frank or Nidia. Hearing none, he moved on to the next solid bullet point on the agenda.

- 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 may be an increase in SNAP applications because there was a letter sent out to 770 households of unemployment claimants. The letter explained that as of January 2021, the additional \$300. federal funds would no longer count as income for SNAP eligibility. This discounting of income will make it possible for some families who were not previously eligible to qualify for benefits.

She reported that Rutgers University will be doing a study of the TANF system and will be calling on the BSS for information and input. They will be surveying outreach and other areas of concern surrounding the pandemic. They want to gauge how services are delivered pre-pandemic and now during pandemic conditions, while looking for ways to improve the TANF program.

Salama reported that waivers are continuing for SNAP interviews and recertification through the end of the year 2021 or as long as the state of emergency remains in effect. Gregg asked what will happen if the state of emergency is lifted. Salama said interviews and recertification might resume at that point which will be challenging with staff still on alternating schedules. Management is working on a plan to get staff back in the office. As of June 7th, staff will be in the office 3 days per week and the days will gradually increase every two weeks until staff is back full time. Gregg asked and Salama confirmed that if the state emergency is lifted all staff will have to quickly return to work. There are no provisions in place for taking work outside the building or for extending remote work options to staff. Salama said the pandemic has shown the need for better technology, system interface and processes.

Salama reported the FCC announced an emergency broadband benefit being issued to eligible households, so as of May 12th people can receive up to a \$50.00 credit toward their internet bill if they are receiving SNAP or Medicaid. They can also get an additional \$100.00 discount on the purchase of a laptop, tablet, or desktop computer if the customer is willing to do a co-payment of \$10-50 per month. She said the Board will likely see an increase in customers requesting verification of SNAP and Medicaid benefits.

Salama reported the state has set forth criteria for the EBT card for the coming school year. This year the benefit will be based on the number of days a child spends at home in home-based learning. The idea is that if a child is in school, they will not need the extra food assistance. The calculations will be challenging and may delay payments until school schedules are defined. She said there is also a new onetime payment of \$1,500.00 funded by the American Rescue Plan being sent to TANF households sometime in June.

Salama reported the offices are continuing daily health screening survey before entering the facility.

Salama reported comparisons and numbers of new applications during the month of April. She noted in April 2019, there were 614 new applications, in April 2020 there were 2,893 new applications and in April 2021 there were 1163 new applications received for benefits. The numbers have declined in comparison to last year at the onset of the pandemic.

Salama reported there is a supervisor on temporary leave, so she promoted Lisa Felsch to cover

the team. She was formally a temporary supervisor so she is being welcomed back to the management team and hopefully she will maintain the position with the next testing.

Salama reported the numbers for the voluntary work activities for the month of April. The call team outreached to 1,822 SNAP clients, 552 TANF clients, and 708 GA clients. She said of those calls, 160 SNAP, 8 TANF, and 9 GA, were referred to a voluntary work activity. The total numbers of clients participating in these activities are 11 SNAP, 47 TANF, and 112 GA. She said we still have the same challenges to getting clients to participate due to lack of technology and access to internet. Gregg said he appreciated the outreach continuing with the added work of all the new programs. He asked if the new broadband credit would help to engage more participation. She said it hopefully will, because it should allow more people to have access to internet service. The \$1,500.00 payment to TANF customers may initiate the purchase of technology equipment. Jeff said its great customers are getting the payment, but it could have been earmarked for specific purchases such as technology that would get them access to training. Gregg said there may be a lot of work in the verification process. He asked if the process was defined. Salama said the customers will work that out with the utility company. The payment is not coming from the BSS. There is an application process that is being managed by another entity.

Gregg thanked Salama for continuing to report the numbers. He said it is very helpful to the committee. He asked if there were any other questions for Salama. Hearing none he asked Jeff Dietz to report on DVRS.

- **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, reported there is a management meeting scheduled on Monday, May 17th to discuss plans to return to the office. He is not sure what will be involved in initial steps to return to work. Clients are still currently being engaged via teleconferencing, Zoom and Teams.

Jeff D. reported staff will take part in a training for Social Security benefits and return to work policies. This work used to be contracted out; but now the state is assigning the work to counselors, so they are being certified in benefits training.

Jeff D. reported that the Jefferson/Kennedy program is continuing and there are nine candidates in line to start next year's cohort of internships and training. TD Bank sold their license to Lenape School District. Lenape is in the process of setting up their program and determining how many participants they will recruit.

Gregg asked if any dates for return to work have been considered. Jeff D. said he is hearing about two considerations being the end of June or the beginning of 2022. Gregg also asked which of the two conferencing programs, Zoom or Teams do customers seem to be most comfortable with. Jeff D. said that Zoom seems to work better for most customers. Most counselors are

getting more adapt at both programs. Gregg asked if anyone else in the committee had a preference. Jeff S. said the state is using Zoom for most meetings and engagement. The Committee discussed their use with both programs.

- **EMPLOYMENT SERVICES, DOL**

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 service check-ins to date have reached over 4100 plus and since October 7th the number service requests forms from the state's new website of have numbered 4796 plus. Customers served numbered 1912 and 828 customers were referred for training. She said 62 customers were referred from counselors and of those 62 we were able to give resume and employment services help to them. She also said staff have been able to help a lot of people virtually. She will be switching over from Google to MS forms in the new program year, but Camden County is the only local area to have a full year of tracking the delivery of virtual services. She is keeping Google through the end of this fiscal year to protect the integrity of the data.

Kristi said services are continuing in a virtual format as discussed last month, it seems to benefit the customers not to having to worry about transportation or childcare and there has been a higher attendance rate. The virtual service request form on the new website is much more prominent so requests have grown from approximately 40 per month to 120 since it started. Kristi said it has been a very interesting kind of experiment, as the website is producing virtual walk-in customers. The State's delivery of services has not changed since 1955 so the pandemic forced the employment services to come up with new ways to provide services and it is working, while the local area has been upgrading its their delivery for some time though.

Kristi reported that Employment Services received its first virtual Opportunity Partnership Grant with AAA trucking. She said 140 vetted candidates were referred and 50 attended the information session hosted on Tuesday, May 11th. They are planning on offering rolling admissions of 8 in a cohort through the end of the year. While on the call a participant announced they received an email about a new Job Source website launch by the State. An email must have gone out to all persons registered with the state. The email has a link to the SkillUp New Jersey program. She will send the email to the committee. Jeff asked if she has heard any news about dates being considered for return to work. Kristi said, that like Jeff D., she has only heard rumors of dates, nothing definite. She did hear the state was forming a group to discuss a reopening plan. The Committee discussed concerns about the end of September when the both the state unemployment extensions and federal \$300 cares funds end. All agreed there may be a huge influx of customers at that time looking for help and training. They discussed different scenarios and possible problems associated with unemployment not seeing customers and the scramble to get services. Frank said he will be fighting to keep certain safety and security measures in place, such as parking lot and building barriers.

- **REGIONAL ACTIVITIES**

Jeff reported Camden and Atlantic County has started the first cohorts with online trainings related to the Line School Training at the Anthony Canale Training Center in Egg Harbor Township, NJ. These courses include OSHA safety and CPR. Sherwood Taylor, Atlantic Cape Community College, who oversees coordinating all the components of the line training, is still waiting for some of the yard equipment to be delivered. The program is connected to ACCC's online "Blackboard" program so candidates will be able to get updates and track their progress.

WDB Directors and the ACE team have resumed bi-weekly conference calls and ACE team is offering some job openings and instructions on how candidates from the training program could apply and will be given first preference toward application review. It does not guarantee hiring. The meetings continue to coordinate efforts and keep things moving toward good outcomes for the ACE Program. Jeff said promotions and information sessions to recruit for the 2022 program will begin in the fall of 2021.

Jeff reported the Camden Works program is continuing to successfully place Camden City residents in jobs in and around the city. Since Camden Works inception back in 2019, over 400 individuals have been placed in jobs. Kathleen Varallo, Administrative Assistant, WDB, attended the last call and reported some partner organizations to Camden Works were very interested in receiving the information about the SYEP. She asked Kristi if she might lend the newly created virtual workshop to the youth workshops. Kristi said yes, she will be happy to share.

Jeff reported meetings are continuing monthly with the State Employment and Training Commission (SETC) and the Garden State Employment and Training Association (GSETA) He announced, as in previous meetings, the Employment and Training Conference usually scheduled in October was cancelled in favor of offering a series of online trainings and workshops for frontline and management staffs. Jeff said the local and regional plans are in a holding pattern for reasons discussed earlier in the meetings.

- **CONSORTIUM & INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP UPDATES**

Jeff reported the Prologis Pilot Training Program completed; he has not received yet received and final report. There has not been any consortium meeting. Gregg asked if the Medical Coding Class completed. Jeff said he will check about program progress and outcomes.

- **BUSINESS SERVICES (BSR)**

Jeff reported the Business Services and Outreach Team met on Thursday, May 13th. Jeanne Page-Soncrant and Ricky O'Hara, Veterans Rep. continue to work on the Job Matching Initiative. Jeanne has also been helping some local businesses organize virtual recruitments and information sessions. Ryan Bennett, Truist Bank, attended the meeting with an associate and they made a nice presentation about the Truist's business and financial wellness programs. They also are willing to help with the SYEPP. Kathleen said Camden County College representatives regularly attend the BSR meetings and will also offer a workshop for youth about alternative careers and trainings. Larry Caldwell, Director Economic Development, Pennsauken Township, is also on the calls and helping to connect employers like Canada Dry with the BSR team. The team has also been discussing the continual calls for help by employers having difficulty filling

their job positions. Jeff said that from Wawa to Shoprite and many other employers, finding help is a big problem. Some employers, like Wawa, are offering retention bonuses to employees who stay on the job for ninety days or more.

Kristi announced she attended a call with PSEG and they will be doing some hiring of customer service representative in Camden County. She reached out to the WDB for a list of faith based and other organizations they could contact to spread the word about hiring.

QUARTERLY BOARD MEETING

The next WDB Quarterly Board of Trustees meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 23, @8:30am via Zoom Conferencing. Kristi suggested asking someone from the SkillUp New Jersey to speak about the program. Kathleen asked Kristi to forward a contact for the request.

NEXT MEETING

Hearing no further questions, Gregg thanked the committee. The next Operations Committee will be scheduled on Friday, June 11th, at 9:00am via Zoom Conferencing.

Submitted by:

Kathleen Varallo

Administrative Assistant