



Supporting the Development and Retention of a World Class Workforce

Jeffrey S. Swartz, Executive Director

Matthew Verney, Board Chair

**OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES, SEPTEMBER 10, 2021**

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

ATTENDANCE

MEMBERS		9-Apr-21	14-May-21	11-Jun-21	9-Jul-21	6-Aug-21	10-Sep-21
DeBaere, Gregg T., CHAIR	Atlantic Coast Communications	X	X	X	X	X	X
Cirii, Frank	Camden County One Stop	X	X	X			X
Connors, Kristi	NJ Department of Labor, Business Services	X	X	X	X	X	X
Deitz, Jeff	NJDVRs		X		X	X	
Jones-Benjamin, Michaela	Camden County Board of Social Services					X	
Martin, Lauwana	Camden County Board of Social Services					X	
McFarland, Salama	Camden County Board of Social Services		X				X
Regensburger, Robert	Lockheed Martin	X	X	X	X	X	X
Shump, Patricia	NJ Dept. of Labor					X	
Sinclair, Nidia	Camden County Resource Center	X	X				
Weil, Bob	WDB Chair	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

WELCOME

Gregg DeBaere, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:11am and welcomed attendees. Gregg said he reviewed some minor grammatical edits with Kathleen Varallo, Administrative Assistant, WDB, and they were sent out to the committee with this morning's meeting materials. Gregg asked for a motion to approve the minutes, August 6th, 2021. Bob Weil made the first motion; Frank Cirii made the second motion. By unanimous vote to the affirmative the motion was carried, and minutes August 6th, 2021, were approved.

ONE – STOP & WDB CERTIFICATION

Gregg reported that due to the efforts of Leslie Williams, Comptroller, WDB, he was happy to announce that Camden County is the first and only local area, in the State, to be approved for certification at next Wednesday's State Employment and Training Commission (SETC) meeting, September 15th. The SETC will be approving some other local area applications from 2018. There are five counties still pending from 2018. He said we were the only county they received and reviewed timely, and are approving for the current term. He thanked everyone on the WDB staff for their efforts. Leslie reported there is no update on the local or regional plan. She said we are waiting to receive more information about what those guidelines will be, and when it will be due. She said it will most likely be forthcoming in January 2022.

Jeffrey Swartz, Executive Director, reported WDB Directors from around the State presented

the option of writing one regional plan with local insertions instead of each county writing a separate local plan. The SETC stated they were not in favor of lengthy plans as in the past, but they do want to see some shortened version of a local plan from each county. They were in favor of a more detailed regional plan. The southern region, eight counties, did meet to discuss its components. He confirmed Leslie's prediction about the plans being due in January or February 2022.

- ONE-STOP CAREER CENTER UPDATES

Frank Cirii, Local Area Operations Director, reported there has been some increased walk-up customer traffic of those still needing help with Unemployment (UI) claims. He said the One-Stop did receive portable signage from the Garden State Employment and Training Association (GSETA). This signage lets customers know that UI is not available for in-person assistance and directs them to digital contacts. He thanked Jeff and the GSETA team for organizing the increased signage. There has been some customers making multiple visits and there were two incidents with irate individuals having to be escorted out of the building. These were handled professionally with no real inflamed incidents.

Frank announced the County will be co-sponsoring an in-person Job Fair at the Cherry Hill Mall, with Sun Newspaper, on Friday, September 17th, 10:00am-2:00pm, in the Nordstrom corridor. There will be county tables with staff attending. He said we will be giving out the latest version of the Virtual Services Directory with a new QR Code. He expressed his thanks to Kristi Connors, Manager, Employment Services, for obtaining the code that will be allow customers to scan access to the website containing the video orientation of services and direct contacts to virtual services. The Directory is being given out at the front desk at the One-Stop and at all county outreach events including the job fair coming up on Friday.

Frank reported staff is continuing to complete a plan for Incumbent Worker Training (IWT). The sub-committee for this initiative has met several times during the last month to finalize the paperwork. The application package is being completed so that it can be filled out electronically by the employer with assistance from Camden County College as the training provider. Laurie Maguire, Manager, MIS, is reviewing the processes by which businesses will fulfill the requirements of the program. The entire process will be reviewed and approved by the WDB.

- YOUTH ONE-STOP UPDATES

Frank reported youth sub-committee continues to meet regarding the Youth One-Stop Video. The video is looking great thanks to Alex Levitt, Administrative Assistant, WDB. The final version of the video should be ready for presentation at the September Quarterly Board of Trustees meeting.

Frank reported the Youth Counselors have been reassigned under Inocencia Gutierrez, Manager, Counseling Unit, Camden County Resource Center. Gregg asked and Frank confirmed that systems are flowing well in that area and she is doing a good job. Gregg also asked about the Financial Literacy program. Frank said the Youth Counselors have prepared a virtual Financial Literacy workshop and it is also built into vendor programs as well.

- SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SYEP)

Gregg asked Leslie to report on the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP). Leslie reported the SYEP has completed successfully. She said out of 38 recruited, 29 completed the eight week paid internship. There is a possible hire for one participant with the County. She said we are waiting to hear about confirmation of that process which is in the IT department. All participants received their final stipend and will be getting a final contact from the WDB. The regular monthly state reporting has been completed and the final reports are being prepared as a follow-up to the program. She will be getting final surveys from employers and so far, they have been favorable. Gregg thanked the WDB for a successful completion of the SYEP especially under current circumstances and he was happy that Laurie Maguire did get participants entered into the AOSOS system, so outcomes could be counted. Leslie confirmed and said she works well with Laurie Maguire. Hearing no further questions, Gregg moved to the next bullet point on the operations 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 the New Jersey CWA Directors met virtually this week starting Wednesday, September 8th to discuss continuing virtual onboarding processes. Sarah Adelman, Acting Commissioner, at the New Jersey Department of Human Services, has been joining the teleconferencing calls. Some of the topics for consideration include continuing telephonic signatures as a permanent process for all programs. They are looking at discontinuing face-to-face interviews for Workfirst NJ, but this will require a change in legislation. Salama said New Jersey may become a voluntary state as far as work participation goes for the SNAP program.

Salama reported regarding COVID response efforts. All staff are wearing masks throughout the building unless working in isolation from others in separate offices. The County has been discussing proof of vaccination or a weekly COVID testing requirement. This is being discussed with the Unions. She said the Board is still limiting client access to the buildings, the screening desk is still set up at the front entrances, and we are encouraging phone and virtual contact.

Salama also reported staff began a new training class in August. There have been seven promotions of specialists or seven promotions of agencies to specialist level as of September 20th. There will be another training class starting at the end of November. The Board is also in the process of hiring some Clerk-1's and is expected to be fully staffed again by mid-year 2022.

Salama reported, for the month of August, the Board received 1492 new applications. She said staffs are still making voluntary calls and we are not anticipating any changes to state waivers. In August, staff outreached to 952 SNAP recipients, 402 TANF, 476 GA, and currently has 3 SNAP participants, 64 TANF, and 108 GA, actively participating in volunteer work activities. Jeff asked and Salama confirmed these were new applications. He asked how these numbers are comparing to last year's new application counts for the same period. Salama said new

application counts usually go down in the summer months, and they pick back up toward the fall and winter months. She said this year seems to be different because of so many changes and the County is giving maximum benefits over other years due to pandemic conditions. She said waivers are bound to end sometime. Jeff asked about the percentage of participation achieved as a result of outreach. Salama said the positive response rates are averaging about 5%. The Committee discussed and confirmed that about 5% of clients, contacted by phone, are voluntarily participating in work activities. The Committee also discussed waivers to work activities and the state instituting permanent waivers. As of the current emergency conditions, the FEDs are issuing monthly extensions through the end of year 2021. Salama said these waivers are issued by the FED, and it would take legislation to make these waivers permanent. The Committee discussed the likelihood of NJ becoming a volunteer state. Salama said it may start with SNAP requirements and then extend to TANF and GA. There has been no word about reinstating required participation. All agreed that COVID variants will keep participants out of any in-person classroom situations for some time into the future. They also agreed there are still a lot of unknowns to consider such as vaccination mandates.

Gregg asked about the Board's progress with the QLess scheduling system. Salama said it is working well, and staff is doing great with it. She said there is still a little confusion between case management and case managers, but staff is shifting scheduling requests as needed. Kristi asked and Salama confirmed her staffs are using Qless as more of a check-in than scheduling system. Salama said customers will check in at Kiosk stations located at the entrance. Customers will see their name come up on the monitor to let them know how to proceed. Staff is still using CRM for scheduling, and it does not interface with QLess. Gregg asked and Salama confirmed the offices have been equipped with metal detectors for several years without any issues. Now that offices have a designated customer service entrance, customer flow is able to be controlled in a much better and safer manner.

- **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>

Gregg asked if Jeff Dietz, Manager, DVRS, DOL, reported any follow-up to the WDB about the transition of TD Bank to the Lenape School program and Project Search. Jeff S. said he has not heard any news other than from Jennifer Veneziani, Employer Outreach Coordinator, DVRS, who reported, at the BSOT meeting, that this year's cohort successfully completed with 100% job placement. Jennifer serves on the Advisory Committee for the program.

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/career-services/>

Kristi Connors, Manager, Employment Services, DOL, reported her division received some correspondence about a possible return to in-person work schedules as of October 18th. Staff

would be brought back to the offices five days prior, but there was also a disclaimer included to say some counties may have different schedules. She has not heard about confirmations to those dates. Kristi said county partners and the health department would have to meet with state partners to establish a maximum occupancy, staggered schedules, and customer flow. The notice did not mention in-person customer service, only that staff will return to an in-office work schedule.

Kristi said she will also be looking for guidance about vaccine mandates, required testing, safety protocols, and employee return-to-work policies. She said things may become clearer with the President's new vaccine mandates of 100 or more employees, but there are still a lot of unresolved questions. There may be county health locations established as options for regular testing. It is still not clear whether the staff would be responsible for time and attendance, and costs associated with mandatory testing or vaccination. Kristi said she is fortunate that all her staff is agreeable to a vaccination plan.

Kristi reported she attended a virtual GSETA Operations meeting on Tuesday, September 7th. and they mentioned the State will be providing additional State Troopers to nine Employment Services offices. She is assuming the nine local areas will include those that have Unemployment (UI) offices in the building. Kristi asked Jeff if he had heard any news about the extra security measures. Jeff said he heard it mentioned, but was not given direct confirmation. Jeff said Hugh Bailey, Assistant Commissioner, LWD, is supposed to be setting up regional meetings with the local areas' Chief Elected Officials, and WDB Directors throughout the State. He said this plan was at the urging of WDB Directors who felt it was important for the Department of Labor to assess each local area and their direct support needs, meaning every county is different and may have very different concerns. Jeff said he sent contacts for Camden County. Kristi said she would lobby to have ES managers included in such a meeting. They are the ones who have experience with the day-to-day operations of the Career Centers. The Committee discussed local concerns regarding walk-in traffic for UI concerns with regard to the expiration of state and federal benefits. All agreed it may take a few weeks for customers to realize benefits are ending. They also discussed security and customer flow concerns. Kristi said many customers may already know, through word of mouth and messaging from the state, that UI cannot be accessed on-site, so it may not be as big of an issue as originally anticipated. Kristi said she would follow-up after the meeting and forward the email messages that were sent out by the State. The Committee also discussed some personal experiences regarding direct contact with UI customer concerns.

Kristi reported ES checked in 1377 customers since the start of the new program year, and provided services for them. There were 983 virtual services requests that came from the website and training referrals, since July 1st was 257, with the average being about 26 per week. She said each week the referrals are sent to MIS for data entry into the AOSOS system and checked, so it has been very consistent. She worked with Laurie Maguire on a backlog of 800 requests which is now caught up. Follow-up emails are sent to customers on the Monday following their referral request addressing their interest in training. Kristi also reported that 30 customers out of those 257 training referrals are nearing completion of the process toward a Request for Training Voucher (RTV). She said we have more of an idea about the training pipeline which is good. She said ES received 30 referrals from the Board of Social Service volunteer call program. Services are provided as they are referred and the information sent out is given back to the case managers at the Board.

Kristi reported staff is still on a staggered schedule and that will probably continue, because it will be hard to safely accommodate all staff in the building at all times. There is one big room where staff operates, and it will be hard to do social distancing. She is getting more requests for staff from the central office to use the offices one to two days per week. She said Keith Austin, Manager, UI, has 11 new hires and will also be looking to occupy more space in the building. The State dropped off a temperature scanner. Once again, she is waiting for the policy regarding in-office protocols. Salama asked if there will be an option for staff to work from home. Kristi said the return-to-work order said five days per week, but did not specify how schedules will work. She intends to continue the staggered schedule for a while. Her plan is to cover all five days with 30% of staff in the building at one time. Once ES begins to see customers' in-person, they may have to recalibrate the schedule. She intends to use the UI cubicles, at the front of the building, to meet with customers. Customers will be seen by appointment only, and staff will meet them at those cubicles. The cubicles are already set up with Plexiglas that follows DCD guidelines. Security and cameras are set up out front in that area as well. Counselors are also using the classrooms to see customers where they can social distance, and DVRS has the interview rooms. The Committee discussed other possible options for seeing customers in a safe manner.

Gregg asked and Kristi confirmed that there have been no confirmed dates or deadlines, but the hybrid model is working and staff has learned a lot of valuable skills. The service partners are working well together. She attended a demonstration of the scheduling system used by the Division of Motor Vehicles. The State is procuring the system, but is not mandating its use, so if a county already has a system that is working, like QLess, it will be ok to use it. She is also being required to complete a monthly safety report. She noted that the One-Stop does not have a central Public Address (PA) system. Gregg said it was discussed at the last meeting, and Frank said there is a phone messaging system that can alert all offices in the building with any important announcements. Frank confirmed the phones are interconnected. He spoke to IT, and all phones and speakers can be accessed at one time in case of an emergency. The Committee discussed possible options to getting a system installed at the renewal of the lease.

- **REGIONAL ACTIVITIES**

Jeff reported Camden and Atlantic County have been working diligently to get the Line School Training up and running at the Anthony Canale Training Center in Egg Harbor Township, NJ. Sherwood Taylor, Atlantic Cape Community College, who oversees the program, is still waiting for some of the yard equipment and safety gear to be delivered to the training site. Sherwood has met with the cohort, they are being fitted for some safety boots, and they did a brief orientation. The climbing process cannot be completed until all the safety gear is delivered and put in place. There are 28 participants that have hung in and are still interested in completing the training. He said WDB staff has attended some outreach efforts to promote the program for 2022. The next cohort of WISE and GIE math classes will be start in January. The outreach produced about 20 plus sign-ups by individuals interested in attending information sessions that will be conducted later in this year.

Jeff reported Camden Work is going well, each week they are continuing to add more participants to their data base, move them through the program and into employment.

Jeff reported the State Employment and Training Commission (SETC), and the Garden State

Employment and Training Association (GSETA) are continuing to meet regularly. He said there is an SETC meeting next week, and as Gregg mentioned earlier in the meeting, our WDB certification will be awarded. GSETA is in the process of planning a virtual employment and training conference scheduled for November 15th & 16th, 2021. Jeff said they are lining up some outstanding presenters who are committed to speak. More information can be found on the newly launched website; www.gseta.org

- **CONSORTIUM & INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP UPDATES**

Jeff reported there have not been many Industry Partnership meetings convened. He did receive an announcement about loans being made available to businesses affected by Hurricane IDA.

Jeff reported the NJ SkillUp program seems to be going well. The WDB is continuing to promote the learning platform that is being offered free to all residents in the State. He said staff is taking some of the courses, and we are encouraging all WDB Committees to promote the program.

Gregg asked Jeff about the Hopeworks Medical Coding Program. Jeff said it was his understanding the program is still running well, but there have not been any meetings.

- **BUSINESS SERVICES & OUTREACH TEAM (BSOT)**

Bob Weil, Chair, BSOT, reported there has been an uptick in businesses reaching out to State Business Services Reps for help in making some job matches. The BSR's have been helping employers organize some virtual job recruitments.

Bob also reported Jeanne Page-Soncrant, BSR, and Ricky O'Hara, Veterans Rep. are continuing the job matching initiative. Amanda Modale, Supervisor, BSR, DOL, is continuing to send weekly reports of employer engagement while Jeanne is on partial leave. He said Jeanne did attend the last BSOT meeting on Thursday, August 19th. Jeff said she is working a partial schedule which may continue for several more months. She is still sending job postings and recruitment notices to the WDB for posting on social media platforms. Bob noted that weekly reports are showing some hires through the job matching program. Pepsi/Canada Dry made two hires of a driver and warehouse worker, so that was positive information. Gregg asked if it's safe to say the BSR's are getting more contact from local businesses they may not have heard from prior to pandemic conditions. Bob absolutely agreed more businesses are starting to turn to BSR's for help. Employers are reaching out in any direction they might find some success in hiring. He reminded the committee that prior to the pandemic the WDB was discussing referral concerns because people were working and now referral concerns are about how to get folks to want to work. It is hard to say what the next few weeks, months, will bring now that benefits are expiring. It will be an interesting time. Gregg said it will be an opportunity to engage with businesses we don't normally hear from. Jeff said Jeanne has made a connection with Amazon. They were using a staffing company which complicated relations with the BSR's a few years ago. Amazon has since formed local community engagement teams and they want to do some direct hiring efforts with the local WDB and BSRs. Amazon is no longer using the staffing company for hiring, so this presents a great opportunity for better outcomes and credit to the efforts of the BSR teams. Gregg said Amazon announced they were going to start paying for college tuition for employees, so that make those jobs start looking more attractive again. He was happy to hear about contact with Amazon. The Committee discussed complications with Amazon's former staffing company. Kristi asked if On-the-Job Training (OJT) contracts could help employers in

the County. She has heard of other counties doing more OJT's again. Jeff said Camden County does not have a designated contract writer for these types of grants. He said our local area is focusing on Incumbent Worker Training as a means to help an employer up skill more employees. He noted that OJT's can only be written for one employee at a time. Jeff said as Frank mentioned earlier, the sub-committee has been meeting with the college, and the package is being prepared. Kristi asked if IWT was an initiative funded by the State. Jeff said the funding has been earmarked by the County to spend 20% of WIOA funds on IWT.

- BEST PRACTICES DOCUMENTATION DISCUSSION

Gregg brought the committee up to date with discussions from the last meeting about the Best Practices White Paper as suggested by Bob Regensburger, Project Principal, Economic Development Programs, Lockheed Martin. Bob R. suggested the committee put together a white paper that documented some of the process changes, transition to virtual services, and response efforts during the pandemic. The document would include lessons learned, and suggestions of processes that might help going forward. He said the committee was going to think about an overarching theme and title for the document. Gregg said he was going to write an executive summary, and an outline with a table of contents, and then forward the paper to Bob R. for his thoughts. That is where we left off at the last meeting. Gregg researched the web for ideas on what makes an effective white paper. He read some articles about the eight elements of a successful white paper. He came away with some ideas. A white paper is traditionally used as a marketing document in a privately held company. It addresses a problem, proposes a solution, it is backed up by data, and is more on the technical side as opposed to an advertisement.

With that in mind, Gregg drafted a title and executive summary which he shared with the committee. Bob R reviewed the draft and made the suggestion of getting into more detail about processes and process improvements. Gregg said Kathleen did a good job of capturing what Bob R.'s vision for the document was in the minutes from the last meeting. Gregg reviewed the table of contents which addresses each area of service where the challenge can be stated, a transition or process was created or implemented to address the challenge, how it improved service, and the lessons learned that could be passed on. Gregg named the areas listed in the table of contents which were County Resource Center, Youth One-Stop, Employment Services, DVRS, and the Board of Social Services. In each of those areas, he asked the committee members as authors or managers to look at the bullet points, and write a brief summary of the following: "Here's the challenges we faced, here's the way we responded, or what we had to change, here were the positive and negative aspects of the change, and here's what we learned and how we will go forward."

Gregg reiterated the idea of keeping processes in mind, what processes were changes, and what were the positive outcomes that resulted from making the process change. The negative outcomes can be expressed by stating some of the adjustments or fine tuning that had to be made to the process to achieve a better outcome. Then, of course, lessons learned, and suggestions for going forward. The document can be wrapped up with a nice summary. Gregg encouraged everyone to offer title entries, and the committee can vote with regard to the title. He said we might even change the title as we move through creating the document. The hardest part is getting started, so he wrote the draft in an effort to formalize the idea. He asked each division leader/committee member to address the six bullet points in each area from the perspective of process improvements. He and Bob R. will review the written contributions with

an eye toward consistency and format, so the reader is not feeling like he/she is reading several separate documents. It should flow as one document addressing the responses of each area. Gregg said he wanted to set a deadline as to completion, and he will welcome suggestions as to how to write the conclusion. He said his research suggested that a good white paper should be about 5-8 pages in total length. The overall theme of the paper should remain positive and focused more on an empowerment approach to what we accomplished from a positive angle.

Gregg asked Bob R. to offer his thoughts on the draft, outline, and approach to the document. Bob R. thanked Gregg for taking the lead on preparing the draft and outline. He said Gregg did an outstanding job in helping to get this idea started. The document represents an opportunity and a platform that speaks to how the One-Stop leadership was empowered by discussions in the committee setting to address the challenges, and come up with the ideas that led to process improvements. He said it can be documented how we worked well, cross-functionally together. Bob recalled, as we moved forward through this pandemic, we came together and we looked at what would improve process, how we could improve performance, how we could work better as a team, and how the services to our customers were not only maintained, but in many respects improved. Its how the team came together and worked well cross-functionally to make improvements that can be the overarching theme and underpin the conclusion of the document. He and Gregg will review the written contributions from each area. He thinks there will be some common themes in the input to the document. The common themes will be very instructive even to us as participants in creating this document. The Committee discussed more elements to the document and the benefits to taking a positive instructive approach that worked within the county and state system not against it. All agreed the best outcomes are that improved processes are continuing and they are working to serve customers in a much more personalized way than pre-pandemic conditions. These improvements will be further complimented by improved computer, scheduling, electronic onboarding tools, and system interfaces now being procured by the State.

QUARTERLY BOARD MEETING

The next WDB Quarterly Board of Trustees meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 22nd, @8:30am via Zoom Conferencing. The annual report will be presented, and the annual master budget will be approved at that meeting. Jeff said there will be a panel discussion with employers about the challenges they faced during the pandemic, and trends in automation heading out of it.

NEXT MEETING

Hearing no further questions, Gregg thanked the committee for coming through the summer and continuing to do a great job. The next meeting will be held on Friday, October 9th 9:00am via Zoom Conferencing. Gregg asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Bob Weil made the first motion; Kristi Connor made the second motion; by unanimous vote to the affirmative the motion was carried, and meeting adjourned at 10:51am.

Submitted by:

Kathleen Varallo

Administrative Assistant