



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Supporting the Development and Retention of a World Class Workforce

Jeff S. Swartz, Executive Director

Carl A. Donato Jr., Chair

Operations Committee Meeting Minutes
Friday, January 10, 2025, 9:00 AM (Zoom Conferencing)
1111 MARLKRESS ROAD, SUITE 101, CHERRY HILL, NJ 08003

ATTENDANCE

Table with 5 columns: NAME, ORGANIZATION, TRUSTEE MEMBER, and 10-Jan-25. Lists attendees such as DeBaere, Gregg T., CHAIR and others with their respective organizations and attendance status.

WELCOME

Gregg DeBaere welcomed attendees and called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m. Gregg noted that the meeting minutes have been revised to a new format, and some corrections were made. He then asked for a motion to approve the December 6, 2024, meeting minutes. Motion to approve the minutes was made by Bob Weil, seconded by Frank Cirii. With a majority vote to the affirmative, the motion carried and the minutes for December 6, 2024, were approved.



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QUICK RECAP

The committee discussed the strong jobs market and challenges faced due to the introduction of new NGOs (Notice of Grant Opportunity), the need for better management of operations and the potential for apprenticeship programs. The meeting also covered the progress of training classes, the challenges of hiring and retaining staff, the data trends for their service centers, and various updates and plans for the upcoming year.

REGIONAL UPDATES AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Jeff Swartz, Executive Director

Leslie Williams, Chief Financial Officer, SYWEP Manager

• **Jobs Market and Summer Youth Work Experience Program**

Jeff discussed the strong jobs market, with a net of 250,000 jobs added in the final jobs report for the year and an additional 130,000 in December. He also mentioned the State of New Jersey had been audited and several local areas had received findings and corrections. Jeff stated that GSETA would reach out to the State and the Federal level to assist these areas. He commented that the new administration coming in November would likely bring new management personnel.

Leslie submitted the WDB's grant application for the 2025 Summer Youth Work Experience Program through a new system and is waiting for a notice of award. In addition to stipends for 50 Camden County youth funded by the State. Atlantic City Electric (ACE) will fund stipends for 50 Camden County residents for "STREAM" (Science, Technology, Reading/Writing, Arts and Math) internships. Camden County has pledged to provide positions for program participants. The program application is expected to be released to the public on April 1st. The application process with electronic forms created by Michelle. Leslie noted that volunteers will be needed to help interview potential Summer Youth Employment Program participants. Frank to coordinate with Leslie on scheduling applicant interviews and will work with county departments to secure internship positions for the program.

Leslie shared that she would be undergoing surgery and will resume working from home on March 3rd.

ONE-STOP CAREER CENTER

Frank Cirii, Local Area Operations Director

• **Addressing NGO Challenges and Communication**

Frank expressed concerns about the challenges faced by the team due to the introduction of new NGOs (Notice of Grant Opportunity) in their operations. The lack of clarity and consistency in the NGO process has affected One-Stop operations and continuity of service. Jeff highlighted the issue of for-profit NGOs not being bound by the same rules as non-profits, and the lack of guidelines for profit margins. The team also discussed the issue of poor communication from the State level, which was causing confusion and delays. The team agreed to reach out to Brianna, who oversees the NGO process, for further clarification. The conversation ended with the suggestion to follow up with the awardees to understand their challenges and how they overcame them.

• **Addressing NGO Support and Literacy Challenges**

Frank expressed concerns about the lack of coordination and support for NGOs after they receive awards. He emphasized the need for a proper system to manage the large amounts of money being put into NGOs. Frank also discussed the reorganization of staff and the potential for cross-training. He mentioned the need for better management of operations and the importance of addressing low literacy and math skills in their programs. Frank also discussed the potential for apprenticeship



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programs and the challenges faced with the loss of the literacy grant. Jeff mentioned that they had not received a literacy grant, but he is still having conversations with regional partners to provide literacy services to customers.

Gregg and Frank discussed the challenges of low literacy and math skills in their programs, particularly in the Learning Link. They acknowledged the need to find ways to address these barriers and improve outcomes. They also discussed the potential for colleges to oversee the literacy program for the State, which could lead to better co-enrollment and credentialing opportunities.

BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Salama McFarland, Case Management Asst. Administrator

Salama reported on the progress of their training classes. There were 10 graduates beginning on the floor as of December 30th. Salama noted that there were no new updates on the ABAWD (Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents) waiver extension and time sanctions were working well. Regarding ABAWD training updates, everyone who works with SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) population was trained in relation to the above guidelines. The potential staff schedule staggering has been tabled indefinitely because some departments are not able to make staggered hours work.

Salama provided numbers on completed EPDTs, CSAs, and referrals for employable and unemployable activities for December 2024.

Table with 7 columns: DEC 2024 TOTALS, EPDT'S COMPLETED, CSA'S COMPLETED, EMPLOYABLE ACTIVITY REFERRALS, UNEMPLOYABLE REFERRALS OR EXEMPTIONS, G-JOB SCHEDULED, NEW EMPLOYED (CM SUPPORT). Rows include GA, TANF, SNAP, and MONTHLY TOTAL.

- For January, to date, of 88 people scheduled for G-Jobs, 17 people reported and 14 remained.

Gregg observed a decline in customer flow and employment numbers, which he attributed to the national unemployment numbers. He expressed concern about the potential need for additional staff if the trend continues.

NJ DOL EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Kristi Connors, Manager

Kristi presented her reports for Employment Services for December 2024 (see attached).

- Hiring Challenges and Software Integration

Kristi discussed the challenges of hiring and retaining staff, noting a decline in the quality of candidates and a decrease in the number of resumes received. She also mentioned the State's new mentoring program and the ongoing software modification project. Kristi expressed concerns about



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the feasibility of integrating SimplyGov with AOSOS, a task that has been ongoing for some time. The team also discussed the potential for using SimplyGov for various tasks, including customer check-ins and activity tracking. The conversation ended with a discussion about the challenges of data migration in the AOSOS replacement project.

- **Service Center Data Trends Discussed**

Kristi and Gregg discussed the data trends for their service centers. They noted a decrease in the number of customers served per day and a shift towards more virtual services. They also observed an increase in the number of walk-ins and a higher show rate for UI services. Gregg suggested that the data indicates they have successfully communicated the availability of their services in Clementon. Kristi agreed, noting that the data shows a higher level of assistance applications in those areas. They concluded that UI services are on an upward trend, while their own services are experiencing a slight decline.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Business Services & Outreach Team

Bob Weil

- **New Jersey Employment Programs and Initiatives**

The Business Services team meets regularly to discuss various employment programs, grants and initiatives available in New Jersey aimed at supporting employers and job seekers. They explore opportunities to promote services such as targeted hiring events, virtual recruitment, on-the-job training programs to employers and job seekers., and tax credits for hiring specific groups. They also discuss forming partnerships, customized training programs, and understanding living wages. The meeting covered upcoming job fairs, events, and business connections in the local area.

PLANS FOR UPCOMING YEAR

Gregg and Jeff discussed various updates and plans for the upcoming year. Jeff shared updates on the ACE Spark Program, the SETC co-enrollment issue, and upcoming events such as the SHRM and the GSETA conferences. He also discussed the WDB's participation in upcoming high school career fairs and the potential for a new initiative with the CPAC housing program. Leslie confirmed that the WDB is in good financial shape to handle the summer youth program. In the event the State grant is not awarded to the WDB, the program will proceed with using ACE funding for 50 Camden County residents for "STREAM" internships. The team also discussed the internal issues at Atlantic City Electric and their plans to spend down the money they have.

- **Utilizing Funds, Pipeline, and Future Growth**

In the meeting, the team discussed the need to utilize funds effectively and the potential for a new program to replace the summer youth program. They also discussed the need for a pipeline of young people in the industry, as many experienced workers are nearing retirement. The team also discussed the need for more funding and the potential for a 100% increase in their current funding. They praised Michelle's innovative approach to streamlining processes and Richelle's efforts in securing contracts with providers. The team expressed optimism about their progress and the potential for future growth.

- **L.E.A.D. Conference Update**

Jeff discussed the recent participation of Richelle and Michelle from the Workforce Board at a L.E.A.D. Conference. Richelle shared her experience of a poverty simulation workshop, which she



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commented was eye-opening and emotionally triggering for some participants. Michelle attended the youth homelessness seminar and made valuable connections for the Youth Investment Council.

SUMMARY

One-Stop Operations

- Frank and Jeff to continue exploring options for providing literacy services despite not receiving the literacy grant.

NJ DOL Employment Services

- Kristi to follow up on the status of the 5 positions to be backfilled in her department. She will provide updates to the committee on the progress of the AOSOS replacement project and the development of the One Stop videos for each location.
- Frank to continue working on clarifying roles and responsibilities related to NGO data entry and reporting.
- Gregg to keep the "math literacy barrier" item on the agenda for future meetings to track progress and solutions.
- Frank to continue monitoring and addressing basic skills deficiencies in math for Learning Link participants.
- Kristi to update staff on changes in learning link and CASAS testing processes.

Board of Social Services

- Salama to provide updates on the ABAWD waiver extension at the next meeting.

Workforce Development Board

- Jeff to continue coordinating with Hope Works in Camden for their upcoming summit. He will organize CCWDB's participation in the Annual SHRM Conference.
- Jeff to explore the possibility of keeping the ACE Electric lineman training program on standby for future implementation.
- Jeff to follow up with staff about attending the upcoming public policy series event on education and workforce
- Leslie to continue preparations for the summer youth employment program, including setting up QR codes for applications. She will provide updates on the Summer Youth Work Experience Program progress before her surgery. She will prepare for handling work responsibilities from home during her recovery period after surgery
- Michelle will assist with organizing a youth focus group for the Youth Investment Council.
- Richelle will continue meeting with providers and preparing contracts.

ADJOURNMENT

Gregg asked for a motion to adjourn. A motion to adjourn was made by Kristi Connors and seconded by Bob Weil. The meeting adjourned at 10:47 a.m.

The next Operations Committee meeting will be held on Friday, February 14, 2025 at 9:00 AM. on Zoom.

Submitted by: Debra Vaughn, Assistant to the Executive Director