



**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

*Supporting the Development and Retention of a World Class Workforce*

Jeffrey S. Swartz, Executive Director

Carl A. Donato Jr., Chair

**Operations Committee Meeting Minutes  
Friday, February 9, 2024, 9:00 AM (Zoom Conferencing)  
1111 MARLKRESS ROAD, SUITE 101, CHERRY HILL, NJ 08003**

COMMITTEE INFORMATION AND ATTENDANCE								
NAME	ORGANIZATION	TRUSTEE MEMBER	8-Sep-23	13-Oct-23	14-Nov-23	8-Dec-23	12-Jan-24	9-Feb-24
DeBaere, Gregg T., CHAIR	Atlantic Coast Communications NJ, Inc.	✓		X	X	X	X	X
Buscher, Steven	NJ DOL-Unemployment		X					
Cirii, Frank	Camden County One Stop	✓	X	X	X	X	X	X
Connors, Kristi	NJ LWD-Employment Services	✓	X	X	X	X	X	X
Deitz, Jeff	NJDVRS	✓	X					X
Guzman, Elizabeth	NJDVRS					X		
Maguire, Laurie	Camden County One-Stop						X	X
McFarland, Salama	Camden County Board of Social Services		X	X		X	X	X
Mendez, Kelly	Camden County Board of Social Services				X			
Peterson, Jyi	Camden County One-Stop			X	X		X	X
Regensburger, Robert	Lockheed Martin	✓	X	X	X	X	X	X
Romolini, Eric	Camden County One-Stop			X			X	
Sinclair, Nidia	Camden County Resource Center			X			X	
Weil, Bob, BSOT Chair	Conner, Strong & Buckelew	✓				X		X
Wemple, Anita	CPAC	✓	X	X		X		
Gutbezah, Maayan	WDB					X	X	X
Henderson, Bridget	WDB		X	X	X	X	X	X
Levitt, Alex	WDB		X	X	X			
Swartz, Jeffrey S.	WDB		X	X	X	X	X	X
Vaughn, Debra	WDB		X	X	X	X	X	X
Williams, Leslie J	WDB		X	X	X	X	X	

**Welcome**

Gregg DeBaere welcomed attendees and called the meeting to order at 9:08 AM. Gregg asked for a motion to approve the minutes for the committee meeting on January 12, 2024. Frank Cirii motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Jeff Swartz. With a majority vote to the affirmative, the motion carried and the minutes for January 12, 2024 were approved.

**WDB Planning and SETC Updates**

Jeffrey Swartz, Workforce Development Board

- The State sent feedback on the draft of the MOU/IFA that the WDB submitted in December. The feedback was positive. The State identified sections where additional details are required before final submission, so the WDB will be working on addressing these details. There is also certain language that the State would like to see, and Jeff confirmed that using this language in the final draft will not be an issue.
- There are a number of partner signatures that are still outstanding. All partners have been notified and are expected to submit their signatures to the WDB by the March deadline.
- The State Employment and Training Commission (SETC) has hired a new Interim Executive Director, named Kevin White. They also hired a new Deputy Executive Director named Joan Desmarais. Jeff and the executive leadership from Garden State Employment Training Association (GSETA) will reach out in the coming weeks to meet with him.

**One-Stop and Career Center Update**

Frank Ciri, CC One-Stop

- Frank reported that a fair number of employees have been out of the office due to upper respiratory illnesses, which have been primarily non-Covid-19 related. Covid-19 tests have been distributed to employees and staff.
- A side door was damaged at the building, and it is being fixed.
- A small car accident happened between two drivers in the parking lot, but nobody was injured.
- Staff training and commissioner approvals are going well.
- There has been a lack of training coming from DOL, and they have been relying more and more on GSETA. In the last 4-5 months, the DOL have allowed GSETA 1% of all WIOA training dollars. This has its positives and negatives. Frank mentioned that one of the issues is that this has created an environment where the DOL is not training on evaluating, funding, and auditing due to outsourcing these functions. GSETA has been making many decisions and has been funding training that is unrelated to the One-Stop mission. Frank and Jeff have been discussing these issues and what the implications are.
- Since December, the One-Stop has tested 203 people pursuing their GEDs. There was a slight registration glitch that was worked out. They are now averaging approximately somewhere in the 50s each month for GED tests, which has been a great success.
- The One-Stop is still waiting on the State's response regarding Chromebooks which have been issued to clients to aid in their job search. Unreturned Chromebooks and insurance issues have made the program cumbersome, requiring a police report for each Chromebook not returned. Frank feels it would be easier and more useful to the clients to allow them to keep the Chromebooks upon completing the program.
- The One-Stop is moving forward with their outreach project. The focus will be on train stations, buses, and other public transportation used to promote partners and services at the One-Stop, using their QR code. This will be rolling out in the next three months.
- There have been 84 referrals for the month of January. 20 participants attended, and 19 remained in the program, and 22 are currently enrolled. Frank attributes these successful numbers with the synergy between the Board of Social services and Jyi Peterson's counselors.
- There were no updates on the Incumbent Worker Training Program.
- Frank noted that the January 26<sup>th</sup> job fair at the Cherry Hill mall was successful. There are two more that the One-Stop is co-sponsoring on May 17<sup>th</sup> and September 13<sup>th</sup>.
- On March 1<sup>st</sup>, there will be a youth job fair at the Camden County Technical Schools at the Pennsauken campus, and one at the Gloucester campus on March 6<sup>th</sup>.
- Gregg asked Frank what the trends are at the job fair in terms of the types of employers who attend, and what skills they are looking for from perspective employees. Frank said that the need for public safety employees is still great, with recruiting activity for police officers, corrections officers, 911 operators, etc., as they struggle to find candidates. There are also recruiters for CDL drivers and employees in healthcare.
- Gregg asked about the construction trades. Frank says they are not usually at job fairs, and that the DOL is doing really well with the apprenticeship programs in the construction industry.

### **Youth One Stop-Update**

Jyi Peterson, CC One-Stop

- Many of the clients in Youth Work Experience need full-time work, and many are working part-time. Those who are not working part-time don't have what they need to become eligible for training. They are going right into school. Things have slowed down, but it is expected to pick back up again when the weather gets warmer, especially with construction companies picking up again. There is a mechanic/oil shop in lower Camden County that want to hire some of their youth.
- Work Experience has slowed, but they have kept 1-2 on, just to keep things moving.
- Since Work Experience has slowed, participants are missing the financial literacy piece of their Professional Development classes and training, but they will receive this once the classes start filling up again.
- Jyi noted that in his experience, banks very interested in opening accounts when providing financial literacy training. Many of the youth already have bank account, and those who do not are encouraged to open new ones. Since stipends cannot be distributed to pay apps, bank accounts are required.
- Currently, there are 18 participants in school or finishing school, who can now attend training to increase their skills.
- Two weeks ago, Youth Work Experience had an orientation. They had 12 participants. 2 of the 12 were out of county residents, and one of them was receiving unemployment benefits, so they were referred to the counseling unit to get support from Dislocated Worker Funding. The rest of the participants were eligible and are either in Learning Link or working on their counseling so they can attend school.
- Gregg asked if they have a financial literacy curriculum. Jeff said that the WDB does have a financial literacy curriculum for the Summer Youth Work Experience Program participants, but that may be different from that which Jyi uses for his Youth programs.
- Jyi said that he is FDIC certified, so he is able to teach financial literacy. He said that he still likes to utilize community banks to teach this, because some of their participants may find employment at the banks. He also likes getting the bank involved as a part of the community. The downside is that the banks are always trying to get the kids to sign up to open bank accounts with them.
- The One-Stop can print out certificates of completion, but Jyi feels those look better coming from a financial institution.

### **Board of Social Services (BSS) Update**

Salama McFarland, CC Board of Social Services

- DFD (Division of Family Development) hosted training on January 24, 2024 in relation to the ABAWD (Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents) Program. There were many questions from participants in the chat, but BSS was able to answer a lot of them live. There were still many people on the call, and some of the questions were not able to be answered live. In response to this, there will be a Q&A sheet created, and once they are able to answer them all, they will provide it, along with a copy of the presentation and the recording. That will allow staff to train other staff who were not able to be on the call.
- Federal law imposes time limits on individuals who are subject to ABAWD work rules, but who are not compliant, and receive SNAP benefits. Those who are not compliant can receive SNAP benefits for no more than three months for any three-year period. Camden County is one of the counties exempt from participation in the ABAWD work rules. A new DFDI instruction was sent out on

February 6<sup>th</sup>. This instruction also speaks about the general SNAP work rules, which requires SNAP recipients ages 16-59 who do not need an exemption, to register for work, take a suitable job if offered, not voluntarily quit a job more than 30 hours a week, or reduce their work hours below 30 hours a week without good cause. It also specifies that ABAWD work rules require SNAP recipients ages 18-52 (which will change to 18-54 in October, 2024), who do not have a child under the age of 18 in their household, and who do not meet a federal exemption to work and/or participate in a work program, such as SNAP Employment and Training, for a total of 80 hours a month, or participate in a work fair. The work can be paid, it can be for goods and services, or it can be an unpaid opportunity – all of these things can count in their 80 hour/month requirement.

- There are four counties that are subject to the ABAWD work rules. Those counties are Hunterdon, Morris, Somerset, and most of Mercer, excluding Trenton City. Because they are subject to it, they get a certain number of exemptions. Those discretionary exemptions apply to these four counties. Ultimately, no cases in New Jersey should close out due to ABAWD regulations for the period of February 1, 2024 – January 31, 2025.
- ABAWD also created notifications that will go out directly from the system to the clients. Salama can forward those notifications to anyone interested in seeing what they look like. The information in the notifications includes opportunities for employment and training, internships, etc.
- BSS is trying to engage clients as much as possible, because after the end of the year, Camden County may not get another exemption, making those clients eventually subject to ABAWD work rules. There are many questions from BSS on how to run this program while Camden County is under exemption; we will look to DFD to provide guidance.
- BSS had to reach out to all the counties regarding the TANF sanctions program and provide information on how many of the participants were non-compliant, and how many would be pending as sanctioned if they were to allow it at this time. It's still up in the air how the TANF sanctions would be implemented.
- BSS currently has one training class going with one trainer. Salama has asked DFD for information on how to go about doing the training to make sure everyone is up to speed.
- BSS has a SAIF (Supportive Assistance to Individuals and Families) Case Conference coming up on February 14<sup>th</sup>.
- Every summer for the past few years, EBT have been issuing benefits to school-aged children for a free or reduced paid lunch. This is going to be a permanent program. Anyone who receives SNAP assistance gets a regular EBT card. Anyone who is eligible for the summer EBT program will receive a different EBT card. This program will be done through the State, directly through the school systems.
- Gregg asked Salama how good the school record keeping systems are in the county, particularly in Camden City. Salama said that for the most part it's good, but there are occasional questions that come up. The school system is responsible for making corrections and changes and sending them to the State.
- For the month of January, there was 127 EPDTs; 109 were for GA; 18 were for TANF. There were 171 CSAs completed; 124 were for GA; 47 were for TANF; 137 employable activity referrals; 88 for GA, 48 for TANF and 1 for SNAP; 52 referrals for exemptions were imposed; 33 were for GA, 18 for TANF, 1 for SNAP. 15 clients were employed and received supports: 14 for TANF and 1 for SNAP. For January, 73 were referred to G-Jobs, with 23 remaining in class. For February, 82 were referred for G-Jobs, with 27 reporting and 22 remaining in class.

**DVRS Update**

Jeff Dietz, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services

- DVRS is in the process of a full agency review with the Rehabilitation Services Association (RSA). This will take a couple more months, but they are reviewing DVRS as a whole.
- DVRS is in the process of doing interviews to possibly hire more staff.
- DVRS has been presenting at schools to get ready for Project Search, recruiting more kids for next year. The program has grown.
- Jeff is getting closer to getting approval to work within the Department of Corrections (DOC) and the County jail, with the intention of working with inmates before they are released, getting all their paperwork in order, and helping them post-incarceration.
- Through Business Services and Outreach, DVRS is getting involved with inmate apprenticeships and internships. These services allow them to become more work ready. One of the issues that inmates encounter from DOC is that they have lived incarcerated on a schedule of when to get up, eat, sleep, etc. Then they are released back into society and need to be able to self-regulate and assimilate back into the world. Jeff said that in the past, he has found that helping inmates make a plan for post-incarceration, once they get out, means that they reintegrate more successfully and avoid incarceration in the future.

**NJ DOL/Employment Services (ES) Updates**

Kristi Connors, Employment Services Manager

- DOL was given an interviewer aid position. This person would be admin support for the career coaches.
- The I Lead program, which is a DOL summer internship, is coming back. DOL is starting to look for interns. The interns are with DOL for six weeks.
- More veterans are being reached by the new DVOP, Declan Callan. They are doing outreach at Home of the Brave and Veteran's Haven and assisted 14 veterans on recent visits.
- The DVOP is looking to do more outreach. The American Legion in Collingswood has a meeting from 7:00 AM-11:00 AM every Tuesday over coffee and donuts. Kristi would like to attend this meeting once a month or so, just to get the word out about Veterans services offered at the One-Stop.
- Kristi presented her report. The charts are attached to the end of the minutes.

**NJ DOL/Unemployment Insurance (UI) Updates**

In Steve Buscher's absence, no updates were provided.

**Business Services and Outreach Team (BSOT) Updates**

Bob Weil, Treasurer

- Bob presented his updates on the Business Services and Outreach Team (BSOT). The last meeting was on January 18<sup>th</sup>.
- Bob reported that Irene Perez from DVRS said that the State is making an effort to hire employees with disabilities.
- Several of their vendors have been awarded innovation and expansion grants, which includes scheduling a job fair. They are aiming to do this in the spring of 2024.



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- DVRS is opening 90 cases for individuals with disabilities who do not require assistance in order to gain employment.
- Pavithra Lakshminarayan from NJDOL reported that Puratos has been helpful with career awareness events as part of the action team. They promote career awareness, STEM education, and exploring the manufacturing process in the food industry/food manufacturing sector. An event was held in Egg Harbor Township School District last month. Discussions are just starting with Lockheed Martin to do a similar program, beginning with the Camden School District.
- NJEDA has spearheaded meetings with the NJDOL Industry Partnership Unit regarding the CHIPS and Science Act. Discussions have begun with the Camden County offices of Lockheed Martin, Joint Base MDL, FA Tech and some industry partners from North Central Jersey as well.
- Antoinette Fugee at Cooper University Hospital reported that Cooper is continuing to develop partnerships with local high schools for workforce development programs, including a Phlebotomy program, a Critical Care Tech Program, and a Medical Lab Tech Pilot Program.
- Cooper recently sponsored 6 members of its frontline team for the EMT Program in partnership with Hopeworks and Camden County One-Stop.
- BSOT Committee chair Ryan Thompson reported a Financial Literacy Quick Trust update, which a Truist Bank program providing budgeting workshops for the students at Atlantic City High School in partnership with the African American Chamber of Commerce. This program is available to incorporate financial literacy into training programs throughout New Jersey.
- Angela Randall from the Community Planning & Advocacy Council (CPAC) reported that she is currently working with an Advisory Board along with young adults who are experiencing housing instability. Their group illuminates what is going on in the world of employment for youth who do not have parental involvement and guidance. Some are out of school and the majority are without income. These are individuals between the ages of 16 and 24. CPAC will conduct an annual homeless count in Camden County. They held a resource fair at Cathedral Kitchen, off of Federal St. in Camden, on January 25th.
- Jeanne Page-Soncrant from New Jersey Dept. of Labor (NJDOL) hosted a virtual recruitment event for PILOT Services to hire direct support professionals for group housing. She has 2 virtual recruitments events scheduled with Wawa and Cooper University Hospital.
- Connor Strong and Buckelew has open positions for experienced insurance professionals. Interested parties can go to the company's website to find open positions and upload their resumé.

**Regional Updates/Workforce Development Board Updates**

Jeffrey Swartz, Workforce Development Board

- Jeff continues to meet with Camden Works on a scheduled basis. The Camden Loop project, which provides transportation to residents, is going well.
- Jeff reminded the committee of the upcoming May 6<sup>th</sup> youth job/resource fair in Clementon. There are also a number of job fairs in March, including a career fair at Timber Creek High School on March 27<sup>th</sup>, Highland High School on March 28<sup>th</sup>, and one on April 1<sup>st</sup> in Winslow Township.
- The WDB received the RFP (request for proposal) for the Summer Youth Employment Program, which is now called the Summer Youth Work Experience Program. The WDB will send the completed application to the State mid-February.
- Jeff discussed the One-Stop Operator procurement that will be necessary for 2024. The dates for this will be finalized after it is discussed at the Executive Committee meeting.



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- The Quarterly Board meeting is coming up on March 20<sup>th</sup> via Zoom. Jeff asked the committee to think about ideas for success stories and reach out with any suggestions.

**Final Comments**

The next Operations Committee meeting will take place on Friday, March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 9:00 AM.

**Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn was made by Bob Weil and seconded by Salama. The meeting adjourned at 10:54 AM.

Submitted by:

Maayan Gutbezahl, Committee Coordinator