



Supporting the Development and Retention of a World Class Workforce

Jeffrey S. Swartz, Executive Director

Robert Weil, Chair

**OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES, APRIL 9, 2021**

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

ATTENDANCE

MEMBERS		13-Nov-20	11-Dec-20	15-Jan-21	12-Feb-21	12-Mar-21	9-Apr-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	
McFarland, Salama	Camden County Board of Social Services		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	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 9:08am. Gregg welcomed attendees and referred to the agenda. The Committee reviewed the minutes of the meeting Friday, March 12, 2021. Kathleen Varallo, Administrative Assistant, WDB noted Gregg made some minor corrections to the minutes and the final version was attached to latest reminder email. 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; Bob Regensburger made the second motion. By unanimous vote to the affirmative the motion was carried, and minutes March 12, 2021 were approved.

ONE – STOP & WDB CERTIFICATION

Gregg asked Leslie Williams, Comptroller, WDB, to summarize the latest information from the State Employment and Training Commission (SETC) regarding the WDB regional and local plan developments. While Leslie was signing on to the call, Gregg reported he spoke with Sheryl Hutchison, Deputy Executive Director, SETC, and confirmed that all documents regarding the WDB Certification were received. He reminded the committee that Leslie reported at the last meeting the SETC email system was not set up to receive large files. Leslie referred them to the website and link to the annual reports, so they now have everything they need to complete the review and approval process. Gregg also reported Sheryl shared with him the state’s intent to push the deadline date back to September 2021 for revising the regional and local plans. Plan guidance is being prepared and will be forthcoming in the summer months. He said Leslie is on the right path with her suggestion to pull up the plan, review and look for new “out of the box” types of ideas that can be incorporated into the new document. It is not yet known how the

guidance will direct the plan, if it be a question-and-answer format, as the last two times have been, or if it's going to be a fresh start with a new format. Gregg said Sheryl told him it's going to be in the framework of the State Combined Plan and aligned with WIOA laws which are in the process of re-certification by the Federal Department of Labor. Gregg said he thinks it will be at least mid-summer before there is clear direction.

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

Frank Cirii, Local Area Operations Director, reported the One-Stop facility is rolling along and coordinating with the County Health Department. Health officers are logging everyone entering and leaving the facility. Screening and temperature scans are being conducted for customers visiting the One-Stop by-appointment-only. Frank reported there has been one incident of COVID-19 with a state employee. The facility was traced using state protocols, also the extra cleaning and sanitizing of all surfaces. There is extra cleaning staff on duty during regular business hours and the usual cleaning at night. All high contact areas such as doorknobs and copy machines are wiped down regularly during the day. He said safety protocols are regularly reviewed and updated as state and county rules change or update. The Committee discussed county vaccine policies. Frank said the county is strongly encouraging staff to get vaccinated and providing flexibility that allows for extra time to make vaccine appointments during the workday as needed. Kristi Connors, Manager, Employment Services, DOL, asked if the county and or state would move toward making it mandatory for public service workers to get the vaccine. Frank said it would be a legal issue that has not been fully determined yet. He encouraged the committee to pass on the latest information about vaccine appointments to their staff. Frank said the County is doing a great job with making vaccination sites and appointments available into evening hours.

Frank reported a resurgence of many customers having reached their one-year anniversary of an unresolved unemployment claim. Frank noted that Nidia Sinclair, Director, Resource Center, is still fielding many of those calls referred by the Board of Commissioners. Jeffrey S. Swartz, Executive Director, said he attended a call with WDB Directors and the Commissioner of Labor who announced somewhat of a mitigation in UI concerns due to more IP coming online and the incorporation of newly written software to further support the system. The Committee discussed ongoing concerns about unanswered claim issues. Jeff said the WDB office continues to receive calls from customers about their claim concerns. The Committee also discussed ongoing concerns that unemployment extensions, federal supplements, and state waivers to work activities is severely affecting all one-stop and partner operations. Frank said the lack of referrals and client commitment is counterintuitive to the overall system. Hopefully, the performance measures will not be held to the normal standards as the program year end rapidly approaches. There have been some referrals trickling in and a few customers are being placed in training, but it is a huge challenge for all the partners. He said even the other end of training and placement is being affected because customers are not taking jobs offered to them, so employment entered will show dismal results in Quarters two-four on performance reporting. Employers who attend meetings are voicing their concerns about how impossible it is to hire during these extended periods of unemployment when jobseekers are making more to stay at home than return to work. It is making it impossible for employers to compete with these extensions. He does not see any change to the performance and job placement concerns until the extensions expire. Once benefits end, customers may get another extension while participating in training or partner engagement. Frank said it is important for the Operations Committee to

know what is going on and that management is doing all it can to work with providers and make accommodations such as allowing them to recruit participation and sharing best practices at One-Stop Partner and Operations meetings.

Frank reported staff is still in the soft practice mode with the QLess scheduling system. He has asked Scott Stetzer, Manager IT, to check in with all partner agencies to make sure they are properly trained and do not have any system concerns. Gregg asked if the Board of Social Services resolved their interface issues. Anna Hagerty, Board of Social Services, said the Board is not using the system yet. She said the Board requested some language translation options for it to be effectively used to communicate with certain customers and their appointments. She also noted that there are so few people checking in that it is hard to even use the system in practice mode. Q'Less has not been implemented yet. Frank said operations have not gone as expected. He did note that Scott is working with fiscal and the managers to implement the DocuSign program as quickly as possible. There seems to be more of a demand in that area of document transfer. It has already been incorporated into two onboarding documents. Gregg asked if it was working out. He remembered that fiscal was picking and choosing which documents to use. Frank said it is working out well and management will be reviewing all documents that could be processed using DocuSign. He said there are a lot of steps and codes that must be set up behind the process.

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. He said the Learning Link is fully operational and seeing some customers by appointment for testing while the rest of services can be provided online or remotely.

Frank reported he is continuing email correspondence with Camden County College about proposals for Incumbent Worker Training Opportunities. The College has sent example proposals from Middlesex County. Middlesex is working with Brookdale Community College and they are preparing a final draft of their agreement. Frank asked for a copy of their proposal and agreement. His position with Camden County College is to wait until final proposal drafts are approved by the WDB in that local area and once a copy is received, he will facilitate a meeting with Jeff to review and hopefully by the next meeting have a template to present that is modeled after a successful proposal. He also proposed to the college that they find a partner for this type of opportunity that they have worked with in the past. It would then be made available to any employer in the county with similar training needs. Jeff said it has been discussed with WDB Directors around the state that 20% of WIOA funding can be spent on Incumbent Worker Training and there has been a focus on using these funds productively to help employers upskill their current workforce. Many feel these funds would be well spent to upgrade the skills of current workers thereby lowering the risk of layoffs as well as the risk of investment in training new employees who do not have a commitment to the employer. Many employers might find it less of a challenge to upgrade the skills of current workers rather than finding unknown skilled labor. Jeff agreed it will be good to start with a successful model. Jeff said it is about keeping local companies competitive, keeping them operational in the county and investing in the current workforce. Gregg suggested a good focus would be to address the transition to remote work by providing employers and staff with some Microsoft Teams training. If there are going to be more employees working from their house, they are going to have to know how to effectively use this technology. He said Team's training would be a good

way to start off this program. Frank said he added this type of technology training to the One-Stop's COVID response plan.

Frank reported the bi-lingual version of the video orientation of services was posted on the county website and is displayed side by side with the regular English version. There were some minor edits to the video and bi-lingual contact information. Every possible bit of information about how to access One-Stop services is posted to www.camdencounty.com

- YOUTH ONE-STOP (YOS) UPDATES:

Frank reported youth engagement is slow, but it is being promoted at the food distribution and immunization sites taking place around the county every Friday. These sites are alternating between Camden and Lindenwold. Staff is there at these giveaways to help give away food and make sure that everyone gets a copy of the One-stop virtual services directory. He said One-Stop staff will be participating in an outdoor job fair at the Camden Kroc Center on Thursday, April 15th.

Frank said there is not much to report about financial literacy accept it is ready to deliver as more youth engage. He also noted that without many youths in the pipeline, its hard to move youth work experience forward. Youth currently engaged are being prepared for training grants.

Frank reported Nidia Sinclair, Director, Resource Center, is still working with a team to review youth and other customer files to make sure that every file is updated with any possible missing information or documentation. They are also following up with customers to find out if they may have tested for a credential after training and if so, retrieve that information. They have been taking a few hours on two to three days per week to complete this process. Nidia said over 150 files have been reviewed to make sure all credentials or performance documentation has been recorded in the AOSOS system. Frank said these updates should have a positive impact on performance reporting and audits. He reminded the committee that credentialing is a huge statewide challenge.

Frank reported that the WDB has submitted a proposal to the state for a Summer Youth Employment Program in summer 2021. There has been some coordination with employers who have participated in the past. The WDB is also coordinating an added learning workshop component which is mandated this year in the program. Leslie said while awaiting grant award, the staff is moving ahead with coordinating efforts associated with the program. There are several employers that would love to host youth having had good experiences with the program in the past. Once the award is announced, information will be posted to the WDB website and the board members have already been sent some information. She said the nice thing about this year's program is the youth do not have to meet any eligibility requirements they just have to be Camden County residents, and between the ages of 16 – 24. She said Kathleen will be working on the work-readiness program which will require 4-5 hours per week of learning. Jeff said the grant is proposed to serve 45 youth. Gregg asked and Leslie confirmed that only 20 youth were served last year because of COVID response efforts. She said about 40 were served the summer before, 2019. Jeff said some local areas have proposed to serve 100 or more youth but we in the local area feel 40-45 is more manageable and will make for a more organized and quality experience for youth in that they are carefully screened and match to their career path interests. Gregg asked and Jeff confirmed the program will run for 8 weeks of youth employment ending

in August. Leslie said the youth will be paid \$12.00 per hour in a stipend so employers do not have to put them on their payroll. She said this was suggested by the state last year, so we will use the same payment system.

Gregg asked if there was any progress on the Youth One-Stop success story video. Alex Levitt, Administrative Assistant, reported he is currently in the process of editing three youth videos provided by youth counselors at the One-Stop. He is crosscutting the three individual videos to make them cohesive, and his goal is to have a draft version completed for review by the sub-committee, overseeing the project. The draft will be presented at the next Youth Investment Council meeting on Wednesday, April 28th.

- **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/>)

Anna Haggerty reported for Salama McFarland, Case Management Administrator, Board of Social Services (BSS). She said staff is taking a Covid survey every morning before entering the building. The State is still issuing the maximum allotment for SNAP benefits though the month of April.

Anna reported during the month of March there were 1211 new applications received for benefits. She said Salama noted the number of new applications is significantly more than this time last year. Gregg noted that number is more than last month as well.

Anna reported the numbers for the voluntary work activities for the month of March. The call team outreached to 2,009 SNAP clients, 827 TANF clients, and 1,561 GA clients. She said of those calls, 179 SNAP, 20 TANF, and 31 GA, were referred to a voluntary work activity. The total numbers of clients participating in these activities are 2 SNAP, 63 TANF, and 113 GA. Gregg was encouraged to note participation is up slightly from last month and the call volume seems to be up as well. Anna said the challenge is the phone numbers and connectivity of the clients. The tough part is getting through to clients or knowing if their phone or phone number is still active.

Anna reported that supportive services such as transportation and childcare are still available to clients. She noted that voluntary work activities do not have a minimum number of hours attached to them. Gregg asked if there was any news about when waivers to work activities would end. Anna said she heard June but has not heard if there will be any further extensions. Anna said the biggest barrier to participation in work activities is remote access and internet connectivity. Some clients may be interested in work activity but may not have internet or a computer. The Committee discussed options such as smart phone connection. Kristi said some services can be accessed by a smart phone, but certain forms would require downloading an app and some customers may not know how to complete that process. Jeff suggested creating some sort of a user guide to help customers navigate access using a smart phone. Kristi said there would be a lot to coordinate with that option and some phones do not support the extra apps if a customer is at maximum data. Frank said if customers want access to training, all they have to

do is call and they will get assistance to help them through the process. They can be met at the door with printed documents or whatever is needed. The Committee further discussed options for connecting customers to work activities. All agreed help can be given to the customer on a case-by-case basis. The most important concerns can be met with assistance once a customer commits to a work activity or training. All agreed the Board's outreach to customers and clients has been a great effort and well worth the time.

- **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 there were any updates from Jeff Deitz, Manager, DVRS. Hearing none he asked Kristi for updates from the Department of labor regarding a possible return to work date. Kristi said she has not heard any news about a return to in-person service or operations. She reported that Jeff Deitz was participating in applicant interviews today and was in the process of onboarding more staff to his division.

- **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 her recommended candidate for the employment service trainee was contacted by the State and offered the position. She is waiting for updates to the status of that hire. The candidate emailed her great interest in joining Kristi's team.

Kristi reported her staff completed the Spanish version of the Virtual Services Orientation video and it is now posted the website as Frank mentioned earlier. There is also a written copy of the directory translated to Spanish, but she is not sure if that will make to the website, but it has been shared with all partners. She said it could be posted as a labeled link, so it does not clutter the page.

Kristi 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 1600 plus. She said services are continuing in a virtual format. It is a benefit to customers not to have to worry about transportation or childcare and there has been a hirer attendance rate.

She noted the virtual service request forms are posted to the new NJ website. Kristi said the State launched a new website www.careerservices.nj.gov and the request form drops down as soon as the site is opened. Kristi said referrals by way of this form have become our RESEA walk-in customers and it is made easy for them to participate. She said the tracking system is working well and other counties are asking for help to implement its use in their local areas.

Gregg asked if many local areas are asking for help with her tracking system. Kristi said some are looking for a customer satisfaction survey. The Committee discussed a prior survey used in Camden County. Kristi said Sheryl Hutchison did contact her about the check-in form. Gregg mentioned Sheryl spoke to him as well about its use.

Kristi reported she developed and is using an easy access form for onboarding RESEA customers. The form is easier to print out than the current form used by the state. She is piloting the use of the form and it seems to be working out well. She is still referring customers to the website for orientation and services with interest in training. She reported over 600 referrals to date and 107 more since the last month.

Jeff brought up concerns about the Metrix Skill-up program licensed to all the local areas in the State. He said there has been some confusion about program monitoring. Jeff would like to set up a meeting with the local partners to decide the best and most appropriate method of operation. He said Kristi is going to contact other local areas who have been successfully offering the program. Kristi said she asked for a list of local areas using the program so she could contact them for best practices. Jeff noted another concern about the courses in the program. The State purchased the license for an eight-month pilot period. Jeff said a WDB committee member brought it to his attention that some courses in the Metrix format take longer than 6-or 8 months to properly complete. He said there are some unanswered concerns that need to be addressed before promoting the program. Kristi said some counties are requiring two weeks of soft skills training in the program before approving a full-scale learning course. She also said a letter will be going out to every UI claimant offering registration in the Metrix training so questions are bound to follow that will need to be answered. She said claimant's UI benefits may be affected if they sign up for learning and may get mistakenly kicked out for including it when claiming weekly benefits for extending UI. She said there is some very important training needed for counselors to understand how to guide customers through the Metrix system and we do not know when the letters will be sent out. Frank said he wants to include Laurie Maguire, Manager Information Systems in any meetings about the program. He said we do not want the program to interfere with our established training funding or performance measures. Leslie said there is no credential associated with the Metrix offerings. It is up to the individual to get the credential. The courses are all levels. She said we can gather background information and UI claim numbers in the registration through the administrative end of the program. Jeff said there is another call with WDB Directors that might provide more information before the big roll out of the program.

Gregg asked Kristi if the resume video, mentioned at the last meeting, has been completed. Kristi said the video is still in process. There was a review meeting this past Tuesday, April 5th and edits are being completed.

- **REGIONAL ACTIVITIES**

Jeff reported Camden and Atlantic County will be starting the Line School Training in April at the Anthony Canale Training Center in Egg Harbor Township, NJ. He attended the first virtual orientation meeting on Monday, April 5th, which was presented by Sherwood Taylor, Atlantic Cape Community College, who oversees coordinating all the components of the line training. He and the program instructors were on the call including 28 candidates. The candidates received a good overview of what will be involved in the training and what is expected of them. The

program will be 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 met via conference call on Thursday, April 8th. The ACE team announced 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. Their job postings were received and sent to the cohorts. The meetings continue to coordinate efforts and keep things moving toward good outcomes for the ACE Program.

Jeff reported he sent a progress report issued by the Camden Works Committee to the WDB Executive Committee. The Advisory meeting was held yesterday, Thursday, April 8th, and was attended by Congressman Donald Norcross who had some positive remarks for the success of the Camden Works initiative. The highlights include reports that since Camden Works inception back in 2019, over 400 individuals have been placed in jobs. The numbers have far exceeded expectations and the initiative has helped establish some great relationships with employers in the Camden City district.

Jeff reported meetings are continuing monthly with the State Employment and Training Commission (SETC) He and Gregg attended a board meeting and the state is still working on getting their board member ratios in line with more private sector members. They have not received final approval of their state combined plan.

- **CONSORTIUM & INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP UPDATES**

Jeff reported the Prologis Pilot Training Program seemed to go very well. The pilot program initiative was sponsored by Prologis, which is a national leader in transportation, distribution, and logistics. The program ran through the end of February 2021. He is still waiting for a final report.

- **BUSINESS SERVICES (BSR)**

Jeff reported the Business Services and Outreach Team will meet on Thursday, April 15. Jeanne Page-Soncrant and Ricky O'Hara, Veterans Rep. continue sending their regular reports of employer engagement and continue to work on the Job Matching Initiative. Ryan Bennett, Truist Bank, joined the last meeting and is scheduled to make a presentation about the Truist's business help programs at this upcoming meeting.

QUARTERLY BOARD MEETING

The next WDB Quarterly Board of Trustees meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 23, @8:30am via Zoom Conferencing.

NEXT MEETING

Hearing no further questions, Gregg thanked the committee. The next Operations Committee will be scheduled on Friday, May 14, at 9:00am via Zoom Conferencing.

Submitted by:

Kathleen Varallo

Administrative Assistant