

Minutes
Twin Districts Workforce Development Area
Local Elected Officials Board

Thursday, April 27, 2023 9:30 AM
906 Sullivan Drive, Hattiesburg

PRESENT

Wayne Barrow, Clark Bond, Jackie Bradford, Marvin Chapman, Curtis Gray, Kenneth Harris, Arthur Keys, Calvin Newsom, Burkett Ross, Bobby Rushing, and Greg Shaw.

ABSENT

Terry Bass, Bobby Bolton, Randy Bosarge, Lorenzo Carter, Henry Cochran, Christopher Cole, Travares Comegys, Kirby Nazary, Dwight Norris, and Obbie Riley.

STAFF

Allison Hawkins, Patricia Morrison, Marilyn Minor, Shari White, Shonta Duncan, Marvin Dickey, Kenny Jett, Elena Borel, Natalia Diaz, Jameka Thigpen, and Grant Wesley.

WELCOME/CALL TO ORDER

LEO Chair Calvin Newsom greeted those in attendance and called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

ACTION: Mr. Wayne Barrow motioned to approve the agenda; Mr. Bobby Rushing seconded. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

ACTION: Mr. Wayne Barrow motioned to approve the minutes from last meeting (January 18, 2023); Mr. Bobby Rushing seconded. Motion carried.

TWIN DISTRICTS UPDATE

Ms. Allison Hawkins presented the Twin Districts Update. She began by thanking Ms. Rebecca Brown for finding a meeting space for the TDWDA Board on short notice, following a maintenance issue at the established location.

Ms. Hawkins stated that although WIOA funding was down 8 to 9%, it should not have too much effect on current and future programs, and that staff will stay diligent to ensure it's used efficiently.

The next TDWDA Board meeting will be in July, with the exact date to be determined. The TDWDA Annual Meeting will be on the Coast, sometime in October or November.

We now have 14 coaches hired through the AccelerateMS Career Coach Program, with positions available for 10 more. With additional funding approved by the State Legislature, there will be even more positions in the near future. Ms. Hawkins told the LEO members that SMPDD will work with them closely to get a Career Coach placed in their school districts, and asked the LEO to reach out to their local superintendents about the program.

Ms. Hawkins asked for Ms. Natalia Diaz to come forward, and elaborate more on the High School Career Coaches. Ms. Diaz began by stating that the coaches hired have been great in their roles, with 1,500 one-on-one meetings with students since January. The primary goal has been making sure every student is enrolled, employed, or enlisted after completing high school. The coaches also work closely with the local community colleges and other work-based learning programs to connect them with willing students.

Ms. Diaz then introduced Ms. Jameka Thigpen, the High School Career Coach for the Stone County School District. Ms. Thigpen explained that she has worked in education for a while before taking this position. The most rewarding aspect has been being an advocate for the student, helping them navigate all their options following graduation and determining the correct path. Since the Coaches are not employed directly by the school, they can dedicate themselves full-time to this role.

Ms. Thigpen also shared a couple of her recent success stories. The first involved a student who was not succeeding academically, and was considering dropping out. However, the student also admitted to working on electronics as hobby, and enjoying the process. The individual was then later placed into a career path to take full advantage of those skills. Another story involved a set of students who were under Child Protective Services, and directing them to the Faith Scholarship Program to fund their university aspirations.

Ms. Thigpen took a moment to thank the other High School Career Coaches in this program for all of the work they have accomplished. Ms. Thigpen then ceded the floor back to Ms. Hawkins.

Ms. Hawkins explained that the SMPDD staff was reaching out to all the schools that don't already have a High School Career Coach in the TDWDA, and again encouraged the LEO members to do the same for their respective districts.

Ms. Hawkins concluded her report.

TWIN DISTRICTS FINANCIAL REPORT

Mr. Newsom called on Ms. Shari White to present the Financial Report. Ms. White began her report with the PY22 Overview of Current Funding. On January 24, 2023,

TDWDA received NFA #500-22-4. This allocated the PY22 Rapid Response funds in the amount of \$442,500. This increased the PY22 Allocation to \$7,872,259. A copy of the NFA is included in the meeting packet.

At the January 2023 TDWDA Board meeting, the LEO approved the transfer of \$500,000 from PY22 Dislocated Worker Fund to PY22 Adult funds. On February 13, 2023, MDES OGM approved that transfer request. The Funding Overview reflects that transfer. This brings the Total Funds Available to \$15,659,493.07.

Ms. White continued with the Obligations and Expenditure Summary. The expenditures reported are for the Third Quarter costs - the period ending 3/31/23. The Obligations were as follows: Adult was 100% obligated, Dislocated Worker 80.5%, Youth 90.3%, and Rapid Response/Layoff Aversion was 54.7%. The overall obligation for all funds was 87.1%.

As for Third Quarter (3/31/23) Expenditures: Adult was 56% expended at \$2,709,621.13; Dislocated Worker 40% at \$882,696.07; Youth 41% at \$2,270,251.70; and Rapid Response/Layoff Aversion was 79% expended at \$841,835.40. Overall, TDWDA has expended 49% of its PY22 Obligations. Please note that the PY22 Youth Work Experience Rate is at currently at 39.34%.

Next, Ms. White went over the Unobligated Remaining Funds: Dislocated Worker has \$528,372.66 unobligated, Youth \$600,389.51, and Rapid Response Layoff Aversion \$885,337.73. Please note, Unliquidated Obligations are funds that have been obligated, but not yet expended.

Ms. White continued with the Expenditure by Quarter Report. Expenditures for Third quarter were \$2,257,947.69, with total expenditures this year at \$6,704,404.30. In comparison to last year expenditures at this time (\$5,811,362.56) there is an increase of \$893,041.74, so our expenditures are continuing to trend upwards.

Ms. White then requested the following transfer of funds:

- \$360,708.00 from PY21 RR Layoff Aversion to PY21 RR Dislocated Worker
- \$43,044.00 from PY21 RR Data Collect & Tracking to PY21 RR Dislocated Worker
- \$50,000.00 from PY21 RR Economic Analysis to PY21 RR Dislocated Worker

This adds up to a total transfer of \$453,752.00.

The justification for this modification request is to better align the RR/LA funding with TDWDA current needs to support TDWDA job seekers as well as local business and industry. With the approval of this transfer request, TDWDA should be able to expend all funds within the specified time frame and should not need an extension. Currently, we have obligated all of our WIOA Formula Adult funds. This plan modification/transfer of funds will allow us to meet our current funding requests by freeing up Dislocated

Worker funds that will ultimately serve more WIOA Adults. Mr. Newsom called for a motion to accept this request.

ACTION: Mr. Donald Hart motioned to accept the Rapid Response Transfer Request; Mr. Arthur Keys seconded. Motion carried.

Next, Ms. White presented another Transfer of Funds request. The transfer of the previous request moved \$453,752 into PY21 Rapid Response Dislocated Worker funds, which can be expended for any Dislocated Worker activity. This will free up Formula Dislocated Worker funds. Expenditures for the Dislocated Worker Fund are only at 40%, while \$528,372.66 remain unobligated. Meanwhile, there is a projected *increase* in Adult Fund expenditures. Ms. White request that the LEO approve a transfer of \$500,000 from PY22 Dislocated Worker funds to the PY22 Adult funding stream to meet projected obligations and expenditures. Mr. Newsom called for a motion to accept this request.

ACTION: Mr. Clark Bond motioned to accept the PY22 Dislocated Worker Fund to PY22 Adult Fund Transfer Request; Mr. Jackie Bradford seconded. Motion carried.

Ms. White concluded her report. Mr. Newsom called for a motion to accept both Ms. Hawkins' and Ms. White's reports.

ACTION: Mr. Clark Bond motioned to accept the reports given by Ms. Allison Hawkins and Ms. Shari White; Mr. Greg Shaw seconded. Motion carried.

ONE-STOP COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Newsom called on Ms. Rebecca Brown to present the One-Stop Committee report. Ms. Brown began with the One-Stop Certification update. The Committee met on April 4, 2023. She reminded the LEO that multiple WIN Job Centers were conditionally certified as One-Stop Operators through December 15, 2022, which was later extended to April 30, 2023, to allow them to address minor issues that barred them from full certification. All requested changes have been made to the One-Stop centers, with the exception of Columbia. Columbia has reported that the landlord has completed some of the work, and the remaining work is scheduled for completion, pending the contractor's schedule. The Committee voted to approve the certification for all the Centers through June 30, 2025. Ms. Brown requested that the LEO also approve these certifications. Mr. Newsom called for a motion to approve the One-Stop Certifications.

ACTION: Mr. Wayne Barrow motioned to approve the One-Stop Certifications; Mr. Arthur Keys seconded. Motion carried.

Ms. Brown continued, and explained that the Committee voted to adjust the Carthage WIN Job Center from being open full-time to part-time two days per week. Ms. Brown cited staff resignations/retirements creating a staff shortage, as well as a decrease in the volume of customers. As of April 1, the Center is being operated by staff from other

WIN Centers near the area. These Centers also have a shortage of staff. Ms. Brown requested that the LEO approve this adjustment. Mr. Newsom called for a motion.

ACTION: Mr. Kenneth Harris motioned to approve the Carthage WIN Job Center adjustment to part-time operation; Mr. Bobby Bolton seconded. Motion carried.

Next, Ms. Brown reported the Committee's One-Stop RFP Proposal Recommendations. They had completed the evaluation of the MDES proposal, which was the only proposal received. Ms. Brown stated that the committee selected MDES as the next One-Stop Operator/Career Services Provider pending the following:

- MDES must agree to serve residents from all TDWDA counties, including those without comprehensive or affiliate locations.
- MDES must agree to provide publicly accessible Wi-Fi at all comprehensive and affiliate centers during hours of operation, effective July 1, 2023.

Mr. Newsom called for a motion to approve the Committee's One-Stop RFP Proposal Recommendation.

ACTION: Mr. Jackie Bradford motioned to approve MDES as the One-Stop Operator/Career Services Provider; Mr. Marvin Chapman seconded. Motion carried.

Ms. Brown also encouraged the LEO members to visit the One-Stop Centers in their area to make sure they comply with the accessible Wi-Fi stipulation.

Ms. Brown concluded her report.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Newsom announced that the meeting packet includes copies of the TDWDA LEO By-Laws and the TDWDA Conflict of Interest policy. In order to maintain WIOA compliance, every LEO member must read these items and sign the corresponding Acknowledgement forms. Signed forms must be returned to SMPDD staff as soon as possible.

Ms. Patricia Morrison stepped forward to present the TDWDA Monitoring Update. CCC Tax Services, LLC, was selected after a RFP procurement. They have been doing great, and SMPDD staff will be meeting with them later today for a progress update. Ms. Morrison concluded the report.

ADJOURNMENT

With nothing further to discuss, Mr. Calvin Newsom called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

ACTION: Mr. Greg Shaw motioned to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Arthur Keys seconded. Motion carried.

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