

Minutes
Twin Districts Workforce Development Area
Local Workforce Development Board

Thursday, July 27, 2023 11:00 AM
914 Sullivan Drive, Hattiesburg

LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD PRESENT:

Danny Box, Rebecca Brown, Perry Duckworth, Wendy Evans, Sedgie Foxworth, Lillie Graves, Calvin Newsom, Tiffany Parrish, Jermaine Simmons, David Stephens, Lucretia Williams, Valerie Wilson, and Marshall Wood, Sr.

LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD ABSENT:

Wayne Buffington, Ricky Harrison, Newt Ishee, Lucy Lamberth, Laura “Missy” Lewis, Julia Lindsey, Tom Miles, Phil Nichols, John Poelma (Proxy), and Connie Valentine

STAFF:

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

CALL TO ORDER AND COMMENTS

Mr. David Stephens called the meeting to order and greeted everyone in attendance. He also provided a brief update from the Mississippi Manufacturers Association-Mississippi Extension Partnership (MMA-MEP) convention from June. ConnectMS is operated by MMA-MEP, and works to connect industries and businesses across the state, as well as with the rest of the country through logistical supply chain optimization. Mr. Stephens suggested that if any Board member is interested in this program, they should contact Ms. Abigail Barnes.

The National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) was also represented at the conference, and they explained that although the number of manufacturers listed in the U.S. is very high, only around 160,000 real manufacturers are actually in operation. NAM is working diligently to clear up this category.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Stephens called for a motion to approve the agenda.

ACTION: Mr. Marshall Wood motioned to approve the agenda; Mr. Calvin Newsom seconded. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Stephens called for a motion to approve the minutes from last meeting (April 27, 2023).

ACTION: Mr. Sedgie Foxworth motioned to approve the minutes; Ms. Lillie Graves seconded. Motion carried.

LEO BOARD UPDATE

Mr. Stephens called on Mr. Calvin Newsom to present the LEO Board Update. Mr. Newsom announced that Ms. Wendy Evans, Director of Integrated Pathways at Jones County Junior College, was appointed to the TDWDA Workforce Board to fill Ms. Jennifer Griffith's vacancy. Ms. Griffith took a new position at the college, and can no longer serve on the Board. Mr. Stephens welcomed Ms. Evans to the Workforce Board.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Stephens called on Ms. Allison Hawkins to present the Twin Districts Update. She began by giving an update on the One-Stop Centers' Wi-Fi installation progress. Although the previously established deadline was July 1, more time will be needed to complete the project due to privacy/security requirements and procurement procedures. This should take six to eight weeks to complete, with high-traffic Centers receiving priority.

The High School Career Coach program is going well, with 16 Coaches currently in schools and another 23 expected to be placed by the end of the hiring process. Progress within the schools has been great, with many students being connected to career pathways. Mr. Danny Box asked about the quality of the pool of applicants for the program. Ms. Hawkins explained that they all seem dedicated and capable, with each one vetted by SMPDD and the respective school district. SMPDD also takes referrals from the school districts if they already have someone in mind. Mr. Box also asked if SMPDD takes hiring recommendations from LEO/Workforce Board members. Ms. Hawkins replied that we do, and that the job is posted on the SMPDD website as well as local WIN Job Centers.

Monitoring of the SMPDD Youth Program and subrecipients is almost complete. The monitors (CCC Tax Services) have been very efficient and thorough, and should wrap up within the next couple of weeks.

The latest MDES Annual Report to the Department of Labor has been released, and has some really good information on the Twin Districts Workforce Development Area, as well as the rest of the State.

The TDWDA Annual Board Meeting will be November 28-29, the week after Thanksgiving, and will be at Centennial Plaza in Gulfport. Please let SMPDD staff know

of any scheduling conflicts. Also, feel free to suggest topics of interest for meeting workshops.

Mr. Stephens mentioned a Career Coach being featured on a local news broadcast, and reiterated that it's a great program to have in our area. Ms. Hawkins agreed, and took a moment to introduce Ann Holland from Mississippi Power, who was present at the meeting. Recently, multiple SMPDD Career Coaches attended the MS Power Careers Day in Hattiesburg, which highlighted six different careers at the power company. Ms. Holland explained that many people only think of the lineman positions when there are multiple other career paths available, ranging from technical, mechanical, environmental, and others. She stated that they plan to do another Careers Day in the Fall, which will highlight six or seven more careers. Ms. Hawkins added that we plan to do the same with more industries in order to expose students to as many careers as possible so that they can find the one that works best for them.

Most subrecipient subawards have been executed, only one left is MDES, which is larger and takes longer to complete. All Youth Subawards are executed and in place.

Ms. Jennifer Griffith is moving to a new position at Jones County Junior College, and cannot continue to serve on the Workforce Board. As such, Ms. Wendy Evans will be her replacement.

Ms. Hawkins concluded her report.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Mr. Stephens called on Ms. Shari White to present the Financial Report. Ms. White began her report with the PY22 Overview of Current Funding. On April 28, 2023, TDWDA received NFA #500-22-5. This NFA gave TDWDA the authority to expend and request an additional \$23,035 in Dislocated Worker Funds. A copy of the NFA notification letter is attached to the meeting packet.

At the April 2023 TDWDA Board meeting, the LEO approved the transfer of \$500,000 from PY22 Dislocated Worker fund to PY22 Adults funds. On June 5, 2023, MDES OGM approved that transfer request. The Funding Overview reflects that transfer. The Funding Overview reflects that transfer. This brings the Total Funds Available to \$15,682,528.07.

Ms. White continued with the Obligations and Expenditure Summary. The expenditures reported are for the Fourth Quarter costs - the period ending 6/30/23. The Obligations were as follows: Adult was 100% obligated, Dislocated Worker 100%, Youth 100%, and Rapid Response/Layoff Aversion was 82.5%. The overall obligation for all funds was 97.8%.

As for Fourth Quarter (6/30/23) Expenditures: Adult was 74% expended at \$3,956,957.31; Dislocated Worker 44% at \$983,754.42; Youth 52% at \$3,184,704.92;

and Rapid Response/Layoff Aversion was 91% expended at \$1,460,839.17. Overall, TDWDA has expended 62% 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. The only fund not 100% obligated is the Rapid Response/Layoff Aversion, and those funds will be obligated during PY23. Unliquidated Obligations are funds that were obligated, but not expended. Closeout packages are due from the youth and adult providers by August 7th. There are usually additional expenditures reported in the closeouts, so we are expecting final expenditures to increase and the total amount of Unliquidated Obligations will decrease. All PY22 funds that were not expended at 06/30/23 will roll over into the PY23, and they will be re-obligated during this program year.

Ms. White continued with the Expenditure by Quarter Report. Expenditures for Fourth quarter were \$2,881,851.52, with total expenditures this year at \$9,586,255.82. In comparison to last year expenditures at this time (\$8,888,960.14) there is an increase of \$697,295.68.

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

ACTION: Mr. Danny Box motioned to accept Ms. Hawkins' Director's Report; Ms. Lillie Graves seconded. Motion carried.

ACTION: Mr. Calvin Newsom motioned to accept Ms. White's Financial Report; Mr. Sedgie Foxworth seconded. Motion carried.

WIN JOB CENTER UPDATE

Mr. Stephens called on Ms. Rebecca Brown to present the WIN Job Center update, in Ms. Connie Valentine's absence.

Ms. Brown began by stating that there are now 29 On-the-Job training agreements, totaling \$883,814.65. In addition, 139 participants have been placed in OJT Agreements during PY22. Partnered companies include Chevron in Pascagoula, St. James Lighting in Columbia, Raytheon in Forest, Kohler in Hattiesburg, and Gipson Steel in Meridian.

At the conclusion of PY22, 535 participants have been enrolled in ITAs, and \$1,189,910.65 in ITA funds have been obligated. In addition, 40 individuals were served under Supportive Services at a total of \$20,067.

A total of 2,539 WIOA enrollments were entered from July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023. This was 102% of the goal.

A Rapid Response was held June 1, 2023, for ASR-Pioneer in Columbia, MS, with 96 laid-off.

As of May 1, 2023, the Carthage WIN Job Center changed from operating 5 days a week to just 1 day; Monday, 8am to 5pm. At a later date, the office will open two days a week.

The Pascagoula WIN Job Center has a new manager: Mr. Marquis Westry, who started employment June 1. Ms. Brown introduced Mr. Westry, who is in attendance at the meeting. He retired from the United States Air Force, and has an extensive career in law enforcement. He has over 15 years of management experience, and we are happy to have him as an MDES employee.

Ms. Brown concluded her report.

YOUTH COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Stephens called on Ms. Lillie Graves to present the Youth Committee report. Ms. Graves began by stating that in PY22, the Youth Providers served 350 participants: 285 Out-of-School, and 65 In-School Youth.

This year's subawards have been completed, along with an extension of Multi-County's PY22 subaward, which only started this March. This will give them more time to get their new program off the ground.

East Central Community College will downsize from its original three proposed sites to only two.

CCC Tax Services has finished monitoring all the subrecipients, and is nearly done with the SMPDD Youth Program. So far, there have been no major findings.

Next, Ms. Graves presented the updated TDWDA Youth Work Experience policy. The purpose of this policy is to give guidance on how to administer work-based learning/work experience opportunities to eligible WIOA Youth. Changes to the policy include more specific and detailed work experience definitions, virtual work experience is now allowed (but still requires worksite pre-approval), work experience hours increased from 400 to 600, maximum allowable wages raised to \$12 an hour, Youth providers may contract with payroll services agencies, and the allowable expenditures for work experience have been expanded. Ms. Graves then motioned to approve the updated policy.

ACTION: Ms. Lillie Graves motioned to approve the updated TDWDA Youth Work Experience Policy; Mr. Sedgie Foxworth seconded. Motion carried.

Ms. Graves then presented the updated TDWDA Youth Eligibility & Data Validation Policy. The purpose of this policy is to detail the requirements for WIOA Title I Youth eligibility and data elements documentation and streamline the eligibility process for youth receiving services in the Twin Districts Workforce Development Area. The primary change to this policy was allowing Self-Attestation as acceptable documentation when

hard copy documentation is not readily available. This will prevent undue hardship on applicants when they need services the most. Once enrolled via the TDWDA Youth Program Self-Attestation Form (included in meeting packet), providers can then assist applicants in obtaining necessary documentation (birth certificate, low-income verification, etc.) with supportive services funding. Ms. Graves then motioned to approve the updated policy.

ACTION: Ms. Lillie Graves motioned to approve the updated TDWDA Youth Eligibility & Data Validation Policy; Mr. Calvin Newsom seconded. Motion carried.

Ms. Graves concluded her report.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Hawkins gave a brief overview of the Industry Advisory Council. It consists primarily of representatives from large manufacturers in the Twin Districts area, and the Council's purpose is to provide feedback on the WIOA-funded workforce programs that SMPDD/TDWDA implements, and that the industries/businesses utilize. However, if a business receives WIOA funding, they cannot be a member of the Workforce Board and vote on its use due to Conflict of Interest. Still, it is important that the TDWDA maintain relationships with local industry and business leaders to understand the needs and challenges faced by employers, and to gauge the effectiveness of the implemented programs. The Industry Advisory Council was established to fulfill this role.

Next, Ms. Hawkins named Maury Hull from the Holmac Corporation as the new Industry Advisory Council Chair. Mr. Stephens welcomed Mr. Hull, and advised that the Board members should use the Council as an avenue to address any economic issues they may encounter.

Mr. Stephens then announced that SMPDD staff is still missing signed acknowledgement forms for TDWDA Workforce Board By-Laws and the TDWDA Conflict of Interest policy from some of the Board members. In order to maintain WIOA compliance, every Board member must read these items and sign the corresponding Acknowledgement forms. Signed forms must be returned to SMPDD staff as soon as possible.

ADJOURNMENT

With nothing further to discuss, Mr. Stephens adjourned the meeting.