

Minutes
Twin Districts Workforce Development Area
Local Elected Officials Board

Wednesday, March 6, 2024 9:30 AM
914 Sullivan Drive, Hattiesburg

PRESENT

Lorenzo Carter, Christopher Cole, Steven Crotwell, Hal Hayes, Arthur Keys, Stephen Lee, Frankie Massey, Kirby Nazary, Calvin Newsom, Joe Norwood, Obbie Riley, Steve Stringer, George Walters, and Tim Wise.

ABSENT

Nathan Barrett, Terry Bass, Demarrio Booth, Randy Bosarge, Terry Frazier, Donald Hart, Jon R. Jones, Darron Keys, Dillion McInnis, and Greg Shaw.

STAFF

Leonard Bentz, Allison Hawkins, Patricia Morrison, Marilyn Minor, Shari White, Shonta Duncan, Marvin Dickey, Elena Borel, Stephen O'Mara, Kenny Jett, 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. Joe Norwood motioned to approve the agenda; Mr. Hal Hayes seconded. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

ACTION: Mr. Joe Norwood motioned to approve the minutes from last meeting (November 30, 2023); Mr. Chris Cole seconded. Motion carried.

TWIN DISTRICTS UPDATE

Mr. Newsom called on Ms. Allison Hawkins to present the Twin Districts Update. She began by welcoming the newly appointed Local Elected Officials (LEO) Members to the Board, and introducing the Southern Mississippi Planning and Development District (SMPDD) and East Central Planning and Development District (ECPDD) staff present. Then, she gave a quick overview of the Twin District Workforce Development Area (TDWDA), SMPDD, ECPDD, and the counties that constitute each. Ms. Hawkins also

gave a brief explanation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which provides the funding for the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth (both In-School and Out-of-School) programs. These funds flow from the Department of Labor at the federal level, down to the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) at the state level, then finally to TDWDA and the other Workforce Areas.

Mr. Leonard Bentz asked if a Workforce 101 training would be provided to the LEO in the future. Ms. Hawkins answered that, yes, this training is held on an annual basis, usually at the annual TDWDA Board meeting toward the end of the calendar year.

MDES is beginning its monitoring on the SMPDD WIOA-funded programs, which will include both fiscal and programmatic monitoring.

SMPDD is also in the process of monitoring its subrecipients, which include various workforce training providers such as the community colleges, trade schools, and other agencies. This monitoring was contracted to CCC Tax Services, and should be completed soon.

As discussed in the last meeting, SMPDD has had continuous problems with both Multi-County Community Service Agency and Climb CDC subrecipients. Both agreements have been terminated. Multi-County was never able to become fully operational in a reasonable timeframe, even after multiple contract extensions. There were no participants ever enrolled, so there is no need to consider continuation of a Youth Site in Clarke County at this time.

With Climb CDC, there were audit compliance issues that could not be resolved. They have not been able to provide SMPDD with audited financial statements for the last three years. This issue was noted in the latest monitoring report. In October 2023, SMPDD/TDWDA put Climb on notice that termination was imminent if the issues were not cleared by January 15, 2024. SMPDD did not receive any follow-up on this matter from Climb.

The SMPDD/TDWDA board staff has assumed operations of the Climb program in Picayune. There are existing participants and a staff that we can work with on a temporary basis. Our main concern is that the participants, both current and those that have exited the program, receive the training that was outlined in the agreement with Climb.

We are disappointed that we were not able to continue these agreements, but we must act in the best interest of the participants and uphold the fiscal and programmatic integrity of our Youth Programs.

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 Program Year 2023 (PY23) Overview of Current Funding. From PY21 and PY22, there was a total of \$6,582,060.90 in carryover fund. The PY23 Allocation was \$2,226,683 for Adult; \$2,236,663 for Dislocated Worker; \$2,348,990 for Youth; totaling \$6,812,336. This leads to a combined total of \$13,394,396.90 available for PY23 activities.

The PY23 Allocation Highlights include the transfer request of \$500,000 from PY23 Dislocated Worker to Adult that was approved by the TDWDA Board at the last meeting (November 30, 2023). On December 19, 2023, TDWDA received the approval for the transfer request from the Office of Grant Management (OGM). The Board had also approved the transfer request with the PY21 Rapid Response categories. On December 19, 2023, TDWDA received approval for the \$34,169.04 transfer from OGM. A copy of both approvals is included in the meeting packet.

Ms. White continued with the Obligations and Expenditure Summary. The expenditures reported are for the Second Quarter costs - the period ending 12/31/23. The Obligations were as follows: Adult was 94.5% obligated, Dislocated Worker 97.4%, Youth 92.6%, and Rapid Response/Layoff Aversion was 69%. The overall obligation for all funds was 93.3%.

As for Second Quarter (12/31/23) Expenditures: Adult was 29% expended at \$1,240,345.35; Dislocated Worker 26% at \$753,188.25; Youth 36% at \$1,752,039.61; and Rapid Response/Layoff Aversion was 40% expended at \$162,719.61. Overall, TDWDA has expended 31% of its PY23 Obligations. Please note that the PY23 Youth Work Experience Rate is at currently at 47.35%.

Next, Ms. White went over the Unobligated Remaining Funds. Unliquidated Obligations are funds that were obligated, but not expended. We are expecting final expenditures to increase each quarter and the total amount of Unliquidated Obligations will decrease.

Ms. White continued with the Expenditure by Quarter Report. Expenditures for the Second Quarter were \$1,814,077.20, which is very close to what was expended this time last year.

Next, Ms. White presented the Projected PY24 Funding for TDWDA, a copy of which is included in the meeting packet. We are expecting a 9% decrease for PY24. This decrease is State Wide, not just our area. The report also contains a Four-Year Comparison, showing a 24.25% reduction in WIOA funding.

Ms. White then introduced the PY22 Layoff Aversion Plan Modification #1, and asked Ms. Patricia Morrison to present the justification. Ms. Morrison explained that the justification for this Modification #1 request is to better align the RR/LA funding with current needs to support TDWDA job seekers as well as local business and industry.

\$35,000 was moved from RR Economic Analysis to the RR Strategic Planning, Business Outreach, Outreach Specialist, Incumbent Worker Training category. Mr. Newsom called for a motion to approve the modification.

Mr. Joe Norwood wanted to clarify that Adult funds could also be used to serve Dislocated Workers, but Dislocated Worker funds could not be used for Adult. Ms. White confirmed that was case.

Mr. Obbie Riley asked if the training funds could be used by an employer to train an employee to use a new machine, or something similar. Mr. Maury Hull, from Hol-Mac Corporation, replied that yes, and that they have used those services for that purpose.

Mr. Riley then asked if they could be used to train someone in public position, such as a courthouse clerk. Ms. Hawkins replied they usually could not, but there are exceptions, especially if there's a well-documented need for it.

ACTION: Mr. Obbie Riley motioned to approve the PY22 Layoff Aversion Plan Modification #1; Mr. Lorenzo Carter seconded. Motion carried.

Next, Ms. White asked that the transfer of funds for the modification also be voted on by the LEO. Mr. Newsom called for a motion.

ACTION: Mr. Arthur Keys motioned to approve the PY22 Layoff Aversion Transfer of Funds Request; Mr. Steve Stringer seconded. Motion carried.

Ms. White concluded her report.

ONE-STOP COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Newsom called on Ms. Rebecca Brown to present the One-Stop Committee Report. Ms. Brown began with a brief overview of the One-Stop Committee, and its role within the TDWDA. The Committee last met on February 26, 2024, and discussed the Incumbent Worker Funding Level. Under WIOA regulations, the Board can spend no more than 20% of Adult and Dislocated Worker funds on Incumbent Workers, either Customized Training or On-the-Job (OJT) Training. The One-Stop Committee voted to allocate \$300,000 for PY23 to Incumbent Worker Training, based on current employer needs in the area. Ms. Brown then presented this transfer to the LEO for their approval. Mr. Newsom called for a motion.

ACTION: Mr. Obbie Riley motioned to approve the Incumbent Worker Funding Level Recommendation; Mr. Chris Cole seconded. Motion carried.

Mr. Newsom then called for a motion to approve all three reports given by Ms. Hawkins, Ms. White, and Ms. Brown.

ACTION: Mr. Lorenzo Carter motioned to approve the reports; Mr. Hal Hayes seconded. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Newsom announced that Mr. Brian Johnson is the new MDES Area Director for the TDWDA. He will be taking Ms. Connie Valentine's position, who announced her retirement at the last Board meeting, and left on December 31, 2023. Mr. Johnson has also been appointed to fill Ms. Valentine's role on the TDWDA Workforce Board. Mr. Newsom called for a motion to confirm this appointment.

ACTION: Mr. Steve Stringer motioned to approved Mr. Brian Johnson's appointment to the TDWDA Workforce Board; Mr. George Walters seconded. Motion carried.

Next, Mr. Newsom explained that there were several current Workforce Board members whose terms have expired, and several of those re-appointments have been put forward: Lucy Lamberth, Tiffany Parish, John Poelma, Jermaine Simmons, Valerie Wilson, Perry Duckworth, and Marshall Wood, Sr. Mr. Newsom called for a motion to approve these re-appointments.

ACTION: Mr. Hal Hayes motioned to approve the re-appointments; Mr. Steve Stringer seconded. Motion carried.

Ms. Hawkins clarified that there were a few other Workforce Board members in the Private Sector category with expired terms, but would like to give the new appointed LEO members time to review these appointments, and decide if they would like to keep them on the Board or appoint someone new from their county.

Then, Mr. Newsom explained the TDWDA LEO By-Laws and the TDWDA Conflict of Interest policy to the LEO members. 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.

ADJOURNMENT

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

ACTION: Mr. Hal Hayes motioned to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Arthur Keys seconded. Motion carried.