

Minutes
Twin Districts Workforce Development Area
Local Workforce Development Board

Wednesday, March 6, 2024 11:00 AM
914 Sullivan Drive, Hattiesburg

LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD PRESENT:

Danny Box, Rebecca Brown, Perry Duckworth, Sedgie Foxworth, Lillie Graves, Newt Ishee, Brian Johnson, Calvin Newsom, John Poelma, David Stephens, Lucretia Williams, Valerie Wilson, and Marshall Wood, Sr.

LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD ABSENT:

Wayne Buffington, Wendy Evans (Proxy), Ricky Harrison, Lucy Lamberth, Laura "Missy" Lewis, Julia Lindsey (proxy), Tom Miles, Phil Nichols, Tiffany Parrish (Proxy), and Jermaine Simmons.

STAFF:

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

CALL TO ORDER AND COMMENTS

Mr. David Stephens called the meeting to order and greeted everyone in attendance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

ACTION: Mr. Danny Box motioned to approve the agenda; Mr. Sedgie Foxworth seconded. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Stephens called for a motion to approve the minutes from last meeting (November 30, 2023).

ACTION: Mr. Perry Duckworth motioned to approve the minutes; Mr. 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 the LEO voted to appoint Mr. Brian Johnson to the TDWDA Workforce Board. In addition, the following Workforce Board members were reappointed: Marshall Wood, Sr., Valerie Wilson, Jermaine Simmons, John Poelma, Tiffany Parrish, Lucy Lamberth, and Perry Duckworth.

Mr. Newsom concluded his report.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Stephens called on Ms. Allison Hawkins to present the Twin Districts Update. She began by introducing Ms. Courtney Taylor, the new Executive Director of AccelerateMS, and Mr. Brian Johnson, the new Area Director of the Twin Districts region for MDES and who was just appointed to the Workforce Board.

SMPDD is 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.

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

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. Ms. Hawkins made special mention of Ms. Shonta Duncan and Mr. Kenny Jett, who moved quickly to transition the participants.

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.

Mr. Stephens asked if Climb has other locations within the TDWDA. Ms. Hawkins replied, yes, but the other sites are not funded by TDWDA.

Mr. Perry Duckworth mentioned he planned on meeting with Multi-County, and if they wanted to resume operation, how would they need to improve? Ms. Hawkins explained the next procurement cycle would not be until 2025, so they could not restart that site before then. However, they can use that time to do research, and tour other Youth sites in the region and learn their best practices.

Ms. Hawkins concluded her report.

TWIN DISTRICTS FINANCIAL REPORT

Mr. Stephens 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. Valerie Wilson asked if the reduction in funding has greatly affected TDWDA programs. Ms. Hawkins explained that the losses in WIOA funding have been mostly offset by other State and Federal sources.

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. Stephens called for a motion to approve the modification.

ACTION: Ms. Rebecca Brown motioned to accept the PY22 Layoff Aversion Plan Modification 1; Ms. Lillie Graves seconded. Motion carried.

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

ACTION: Mr. Perry Duckworth motioned to accept the PY23 Dislocated Worker Transfer of Funds Request; Mr. John Poelma seconded. Motion carried.

Ms. White concluded her report.

ONE-STOP COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Stephens 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 motioned to approve the recommendation. Mr. Stephens called for a vote.

ACTION: Ms. Rebecca Brown motioned to approve the Incumbent Worker Funding Level Recommendation; Mr. Sedgie Foxworth seconded. Motion carried.

Ms. Brown concluded her report. Mr. Stephens called for a motion to accept the reports given by Ms. Hawkins, Ms. White, and Ms. Brown.

ACTION: Mr. Calvin Newsom motioned to approve the reports; Ms. Lillie Graves seconded. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Stephens asked if there was any New Business. Ms. Hawkins took a moment to introduce Ms. Donna Hollis and Mr. James Hester from the Office of Grants Management (OGM) at MDES, as well as Ms. Kawana McCary, who is Executive Director of the East Central Planning and Development District (ECPDD).

Back on the topic of Career Coaches, Mr. Stephens asked if there were vacancies in any of the remaining school districts. Ms. Hawkins explained that we currently have 35 coaches in 41 schools, with some of the smaller schools sharing a coach. She added that the State Legislature is currently debating further funding, which would allow more coaches to be hired. If this funding is secured, we could potentially have up to 60 coaches total.

Mr. Danny Box asked if the coaches received any training on interacting with employers. Ms. Hawkins clarified that the coaches are focused primarily on the students, and getting them on correct career path. That could include connecting them with businesses/industries in the area, WIOA-funded Youth training programs, college tracks, etc.

Ms. Valerie Wilson asked Ms. Rebecca Brown the process would be for a small business to apply for workforce funding. Ms. Brown answered that the business should start by inquiring at a One-Stop Center, which would be located at the nearest WIN Job Center. Ms. Marilyn Minor added that they could also contact the SMPDD Office for further direction.

Mr. Stephens took a moment to introduce Mr. Maury Hull, from Hol-Mac Corporation, and the chair of the Industry Advisory Council (IAC). Mr. Stephens suggested that he would also be a good point of contact for businesses. Mr. Hull added that the IAC plans to meet soon.

ADJOURNMENT

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