

Minutes
Twin Districts Workforce Development Area
Local Workforce Development Board

Tuesday, June 25 11:00 AM
914 Sullivan Drive, Hattiesburg

LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD PRESENT:

Millie Bordelon, Danny Box, Rebecca Brown, Wayne Buffington, Kammie Carpenter, Perry Duckworth, Wendy Evans, Sedgie Foxworth, Lillie Graves, Brian Johnson, Lucy Lamberth, Calvin Newsom, Tiffany Parrish, David Stephens, Valerie Wilson, and Marshall Wood, Sr.

LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD ABSENT:

Ricky Harrison, Newt Ishee, Lucy Lamberth, Laura "Missy" Lewis, Julia Lindsey (proxy), Tom Miles, Phil Nichols, Jermaine Simmons, and Lucretia Williams.

STAFF:

Allison Hawkins, Patricia Morrison, Marilyn Minor, 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. Calvin Newsom 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 (March 6, 2024).

ACTION: Mr. Danny Box motioned to approve the minutes; Mr. Perry Duckworth seconded. Motion carried.

LEO BOARD UPDATE

Mr. Stephens called on Mr. Calvin Newsom to present the LEO Board Update. Mr. Newsom announced that Ms. Millie Bordelon, MGCCC, and Ms. Kammie Carpenter, Petal Area Chamber of Commerce, were appointed to the TDWDA Workforce Board. Ms. Bordelon is taking Mr. John Poelma's seat following his retirement earlier this month. Ms. Carpenter will be the new Executive Director of the Petal Chamber following Ms. Valerie Wilson's retirement. Mr. Stephens welcomed both new members to the Workforce Board.

Mr. Newsom concluded his report.

TWIN DISTRICTS UPDATE

Mr. Stephens called on Ms. Allison Hawkins to present the Twin Districts Update. She began by stating that the High School Career Coach program was now in its third year of operation. The Mississippi State Legislature also recently approved a budget increase for the program by an additional \$3 million, adding up to a total of \$15 million. We have also hired new coaches for George County, Wayne County, Lauderdale County, Bay-Waveland, and Quitman school districts. With two more coaches hired for Lamar County, we will now have a total of 42 coaches serving in the Twin Districts Area. This also means we have at least one coach in every TDWDA county.

Program monitoring is still ongoing and progressing well, with no findings so far with the subrecipients or SMPDD's own program.

Before the Financial Report, Ms. Hawkins reminded everyone that there was 9% reduction in overall WIOA Funding this year, with similar cuts the previous years. In spite of this, SMPDD is shifting to compensate while maintaining high enrollment numbers and increasing performance.

Ms. Hawkins concluded her report.

DAVID STEPHENS' REPORT

Mr. Stephens returned to the podium to give a brief update. The Southeastern Employment & Training Association (SETA) Spring Conference was held in March of this year. The primary take-away from that conference was that the Workforce environment was rapidly changing, and that the LWDB must be a source of reliable and effective leadership to navigate these changes.

At the National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB), Mississippi Representative Donnie Bell (District 21) received the Workforce Advocacy and Policy Award for contributions to workforce programs within K-12 education. His nomination was submitted by the SMPDD/TDWDA staff.

The Mississippi Manufacturers Association primarily focused on employee retention, and the effect of competent management and leadership driving employee satisfaction.

TWIN DISTRICTS FINANCIAL REPORT

Mr. Stephens called on Ms. Elena Borel to present the Financial Report. She began her report with the Program Year 2023 (PY23) Overview of Current Funding. On February 12, 2024, TDWDA received NFA #500-23-6. This NFA provided the TDWDA the authority to expend and request an additional \$200,000 in PY23 Rapid Response/Layoff Aversion Funds. A copy of this NFA is included in the meeting packet. From PY21 and PY22, there was a total of \$6,582,060.90 in carryover funds. Combined with \$7,012,336.00 in PY23 funds, this creates a Grand Total of \$13,594,396.90.

Ms. Borel continued with the Obligations and Expenditure Summary. The expenditures reported are for the Third Quarter costs - the period ending 3/31/24. The Obligations were as follows: Adult was 95.5% obligated, Dislocated Worker 98.8%, Youth 92.6%, and Rapid Response/Layoff Aversion was 68.6%. The overall obligation for all funds was 93.5%.

As for Third Quarter Expenditures: Adult was 45% expended at \$1,921,652.77; Dislocated Worker 42% at \$1,236,025.59; Youth 57% at \$2,778,119.70; and Rapid Response/Layoff Aversion was 47% expended at \$258,263.16. Overall, TDWDA has expended 49% of its PY23 Obligations, equaling \$6,194,061.22. Please note that the PY23 Youth Work Experience Rate is at currently at 48.69%.

Next, Ms. Borel went over the Unobligated Remaining Funds. Unliquidated Obligations are funds that were obligated, but not expended. Closeouts will be due from the providers around mid-August, and all funds that have not been expended by the providers will roll forward into PY24.

Ms. Borel continued with the Expenditure by Quarter Report. Expenditures for the Third Quarter were \$2,285,768.40, which is around a 26% increase from the prior quarter. We expect the expenditures to increase again in the Fourth Quarter.

Mr. Stephens asked if the 4th quarter expenditures were meeting expectations. Ms. Hawkins clarified that at least 80% needs to be *obligated* by the end of the program year, which has been met. After that, we have two (2) years to expend the funds.

Ms. Borel concluded her report.

WIN JOB CENTER REPORT

Mr. Stephens called on Mr. Brian Johnson to present the WIN Job Center Report. Mr. Johnson began by stating that he was very proud of the performance numbers since January of this year. Prior to that, the numbers were very low. However, at that time, four WIN Job Centers had no managers assigned to them, and many other long-term

employees were retiring. Since then, three of the four WIN Centers now have managers. The fourth center, Meridian, did have a manager, but he tragically passed away not long after being hired.

Mr. Johnson stated that TDWDA WIN Job Centers were required to make 2,500 new WIOA enrollments this program year (PY23). That goal was met three weeks ago, and the new total as of last week is 2,562. Also, there were 398 ITA enrollments accounting for \$1,467,039, as well as 192 OJT agreements at \$1,436,783.

In more good news, there were very few Rapid Response events, which follow mass-layoff situations. The one major Rapid Response conducted was at Sanderson Farms in Jones County this past week, where they were bought out and the majority of their corporate staff were laid off. However, the Laurel WIN Center stepped in at their request, and has been working with them daily to get them back in the workforce.

Moving into the new program year, staffing has improved at WIN Centers, with several new employees hired. The new managers are currently in training.

Mr. Johnson concluded his report.

YOUTH COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Stephens called on Ms. Lillie Graves to present the Youth Committee Report. Ms. Graves began by stating that the Committee met virtually on June 11, 2024, and recited the Program Update provided by Ms. Duncan at that meeting. So far, the youth providers have served 383 participants; 305 Out-of-School and 78 In-School Youth.

Three of the seven youth providers have already met enrollment goals, and another two are very close, and should reach their goals by the end of PY23 (June 30).

Performance goals are doing very well, and have increased significantly in comparison to last year's.

Contract negotiations are underway. Due to the decrease in WIOA funding, youth providers were asked to trim their budgets significantly. Carry-over funds have also mitigated some of the cuts, and helped avoid removing a provider entirely.

CCC Tax is still in the process of monitoring SMPDD and youth providers, and has not released the final report.

The Youth Committee approved one action item: the PY24 SMPDD Youth Subaward, which includes the operation of the four Youth Sites that SMPDD operates within the TDWDA. Since there was an overall reduction in WIOA funding, small line-item adjustments were made throughout the budget to reduce the cost. However, these cuts will not affect the services provided or the number of participants served, which will remain the same. Other than the lower costs, the subaward is the same as last program

year. Ms. Graves requested that the Workforce vote on the PY24 SMPDD Youth Subaward. Mr. Stephens called for a motion.

ACTION: Mr. Sedgie Foxworth motioned to approve the PY24 SMPDD Youth Subaward; Mr. Perry Duckworth seconded. Motion carried.

Ms. Graves thanked SMPDD and the SMPDD Youth staff for all of their hard work.

Ms. Graves 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 June 6, 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 PY24 to Incumbent Worker Training, based on current employer needs in the area. Ms. Brown then motioned to approve this transfer. Mr. Stephens called for a vote.

ACTION: Ms. Rebecca Brown motioned to approve the Incumbent Worker Funding Level Recommendation; Ms. Millie Bordelon seconded. Motion carried.

Ms. Brown continued with the Dislocated Worker Eligibility Policy update. The only change to policy is the addition of one more eligibility criterion, which states, "individuals that have been able, available, and seeking work for a minimum of eight (8) consecutive weeks." The current Dislocated Worker Attestation form would be updated to reflect this change. Ms. Brown motioned to approve the policy update. Mr. Stephens called for a vote.

ACTION: Ms. Rebecca Brown motioned to approve the Dislocated Worker Eligibility Policy update; Mr. Perry Duckworth seconded. Motion carried.

Ms. Brown continued with the One-Stop Center Recommendations from the State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB), and asked Ms. Allison Hawkins to present their findings. Ms. Hawkins began with a brief overview of the SWIB itself, explaining that its members are appointed by the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and others among the State Executive Staff. The SWIB serves as an advisory board to the Office of Workforce Development (i.e. AccelerateMS), to monitor publicly-funded workforce development programs, and to recommend strategies and policies that enhance coordination among programs and activities towards continuous improvement of Mississippi's complex workforce development system.

The SWIB made the following recommendation: WIOA Core Partners must examine ways to reduce public workforce system infrastructure costs, improve access to services and training in areas of the greatest prime-age employment gap, and areas with existing and anticipated high labor market demands. Examine current operating structure and procedures of WIN Job Centers along with other WIOA funded programs and make recommendations for any improvement that may reduce administrative costs and increase program access and efficacy as well as detailing how participants will be directed to priority occupations, established by AccelerateMS and associated training programs. For example, how many WIN Job Centers should there be? How should centers be staffed? What are the most efficient means for centers to communicate and correspond with the population? What are barriers to a higher percentage of this population accessing meaningful occupational training?

Following this recommendation, the One-Stop Committee examined the following metrics:

- WIN Job Center (WJC) customer count over the last 12 months
- Rental costs
- Space needs vs. size of facility
- Geographic considerations, i.e. access to job searchers

The Committee does not currently recommend closing any of the WJC's in the workforce area. However, the Committee does believe that we can reduce the costs of some centers by reducing rental costs. This can be accomplished by relocating or adding paying partners to the facility.

As for the WJC staff, the Committee recommends that the one-stop operator (currently the MS Department of Employment Security) work within the budget given to them, possibly by removing vacant positions. The staffing is the responsibility of the operator who is selected through a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process.

One-Stop operational costs (facility and staff) are currently at 50%, and training expenses are at 50%, totaling \$4,300,000. The Committee recommends the following in facility/staff costs:

- PY 2024 – decrease operations by \$200,000 resulting in 45/55 ops vs. training
- PY 2025 – decrease operations by another \$200,000 resulting in 40/60 ops vs. training.

To direct people to priority occupations, the Committee recommends establishing a sector training center as a pilot at the Hancock County WJC. The WJC would be relocated to a facility nearby the PRCC campus that is scheduled to open in August 2024. It will be a challenge to make this a reality without funding partners.

Finally, TDWDA is a proponent of improving upon the digital delivery system for WIOA career services. The Committee recommends that the SWIB/AccelerateMS establish a

statewide platform for digital delivery with input from the local workforce areas. Similarly, MDES should provide Wi-Fi internet access to its customers at all WIN Job Centers in the area, as previously recommended in the past. Some WJC's have only recently installed Wi-Fi, while others still do not have it at all.

With no further questions, Mr. Stephens called for a motion to approve the recommendations.

ACTION: Mr. Brian Johnson abstained from the vote. Ms. Rebecca Brown motioned to approve the One-Stop Center Recommendations; Mr. Danny Box seconded. Motion carried.

Ms. Hawkins presented one last item for the One-Stop Committee Report. She stated that it has been recommended by the Committee Chair, Ms. Rebecca Brown, to appoint Ms. Millie Bordelon to the One-Stop Committee. Mr. Stephens called for a motion.

ACTION: Mr. Calvin Newsom motioned to appoint Ms. Millie Bordelon to the One-Stop Committee; Ms. Lillie Graves seconded. Motion carried.

With all reports concluded, Mr. Stephens called for a motion for their approval.

ACTION: Ms. Millie Bordelon motioned to approve the meeting reports; Mr. Perry Duckworth seconded. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Stephens called Ms. Valerie Wilson forward. Ms. Wilson is retiring, and will soon be leaving as Executive Director of the Petal Area Chamber of Commerce, as well as her position on the TDWDA Workforce Board. Mr. Stephens presented Ms. Wilson with a plaque to show gratitude for her years of service to the Board, as well as to the people of south Mississippi.

ADJOURNMENT

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