

Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board Meeting
Via Microsoft TEAMS Meeting
December 12, 2024

Minutes

Members Present: Cindy Rauner, Kelly Williams, Carrie Akins, Luara Askins, Marcia Chase, Stacey Cook, Robin Cullers, Lee Greely, Kathy Guzman, BJ Hall, Christy Lombardi, Brian Miller, Tami Radisch, Christian Sorochty, Michelle Stewart, Stephanie Witte, Alexis Zoss

Members Absent: Alan Crawley, Heidi Lybarger, Mike Scott, Dr. Yolanda Wilson, Michael Young

Staff Present: John Hartline, Ruthy Davis, Melinda Bowling, Briana Capuano, Jacklyn Chembars, Sandy Faucheux, Ashley Raley, Tiona Turner

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 9:01 am by Cindy Rauner, Chair.

WELCOME AND ROLL CALL

Cindy Rauner opened the meeting with a warm welcome and introduction of attendees.

MISSION MOMENT

Ashley Raley shared a video highlighting the success of a recent Adult Program participant, Mr. Lee. Mr. Lee successfully completed the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) training at Lexington Healthcare Training Institute. Demonstrating his dedication to his career in healthcare, he obtained both his CNA License and Certified Medical Technician (CMT) license through the Maryland Board of Nursing. Mr. Lee is now preparing to take the Geriatric Nursing Assistant (GNA) certification exam in the coming weeks, further advancing his qualifications. Mr. Lee has already applied to nursing school to begin his journey toward reaching his ultimate goal of becoming a Registered Nurse. Mr. Lee was offered positions from three different employers and decided to accept an offer with Morningside House Senior Living.

BUSINESS

- A quorum was established.
- A motion to approve the minutes from the September 12, 2024, Workforce Development Board meeting was made by Kathy Guzman, seconded by Stephanie Whitte, and carried.
- A motion to approve the consent agenda documents was made by Stephanie Whitte, seconded by Christy Lombardi, and carried.

WIOA REAUTHORIZATION

Ruthy provided an update on the proposed changes with the WIOA Reauthorization “A Stronger Workforce for America Act.” The committees in the House and the Senate at the Federal level that address Workforce have come to a compromise plan with three factors that are very problematic for us.

1. Dedicating 50 percent of the funding to individual training accounts (ITAs). This requirement is still in the proposed legislation and would require 50% of formula funds to be dedicated to training. 8% of the 50% can be allocated to supportive services. While this is helpful, it does not help sustain staff salaries. If this happens, it will be very detrimental to our programs and workforce team.
2. Increasing the Governor’s Set Aside- This is the amount that comes out of WIOA formula funds and can be utilized at the Governor’s discretion. Since the inception of

WIOA, historically this has been 15%. This compromise bill increases it to 25% which means, right off the top of our Formula Funds, 25% would be given to the State.

3. Redesignation of Local Workforce Areas- The Governor is required, prior to the 3rd full program year after the date of the enactment of the Reauthorization, to review and potentially redraw lines of workforce areas both regionally and at the local level. The opportunity exists that we could become one workforce area throughout the state or perhaps we could be a few regions and not the current 13 areas that exist today.

This bill would need to pass through both chambers during the lame duck session of Congress before the new President Elect is inaugurated. This process is called “hot lining” the bill which entails a call to each member of the Senate, asking if they want to approve this bill by unanimous consent. If one Senator does not agree, they will go through the normal process of obtaining 60 votes to bring it to the floor for a vote. There are currently 2 Senators who have placed a hold on this bill.

Brandon Butler, Executive Director of Maryland Workforce Association, has mentioned that when they were reauthorizing WIA, the process took over 10 years. MWA recently created and sent a letter to all Congressional representatives for Maryland with these concerns as well as TCCSMD endorsing MWA’s letter.

TCCSMD Finance Director, Melinda Bowling ran some numbers on the impact this would have if the reauthorization passed as proposed. Currently there are 15 workforce team members, if this reauthorization passes as proposed, our workforce team would be down to 6 employees, and we would need to close the St. Mary’s American Job Center. There are no more cubicles available for staff at the Waldorf AJC, therefore, we would need to call on our partners to ask for space for our team members. This new proposed reauthorization would intensely cripple us along with other local areas, specifically the rural areas, due to the lack of transportation systems in our region. Workforce areas across the nation are voicing their concern over these three elements of the reauthorization as well.

ROAD TO CAREERS GRANT

Brandon Butler provided an overview of a grant opportunity “Road to Careers Grant” which is industry focused and structured similar to the EARN grant. This grant provides a preference to be awarded to local workforce areas. Details include an industry focus on transportation construction, awards of up to \$500k, program duration of 36 months, 3 different program tracks of the grant: Adult Education Experiential track, Pre-Apprenticeship, and Registered Apprenticeship tracks. We believe a pre-apprenticeship track makes sense for our area. Looking for engagement and partnerships from our network of organizations who are interested in partnering with us for this grant. Three letters of commitment are needed for this grant application which is due on Feb. 28th. We are planning to convene an informational virtual meeting in early January to discuss it further with anyone who may be interested. The TCCSMD Executive Board will be voting on this at their next meeting next Thursday and Ruthy anticipates 100% support from the TCCSMD Executive Board to move forward.

ST. MARY’S AJC HOLIDAY CLOSING

Ashley shared with the Board that the AJC will be closed, and services will be provided remotely from December 24th until January 2nd. Typically, there isn’t an influx of job seekers at the AJC this time of year.

EARN GRANT UPDATE

Jackie Chembars provided an update for Belinda.

- 6 businesses to date have requested training.
- 34 employees are either currently in training or have completed training.
- 2 requests in process
- \$63,334.30 spent and/or obligated of the \$100,000 in training dollars awarded.

The program has been a success, and we anticipate utilizing the remaining funding before the second year of the program grant. Ruthy added that EARN grants allow you to request more funding once 75% of the current awarded amount has been expended. She anticipates this will be the case, as they hope to be able to serve more with additional funding. Lee Greely mentioned there will be a follow-up quarterly meeting with the group to be held in January.

NEW START GRANT UPDATE

Briana provided an update on this grant which was awarded in December 2023. The program will run into spring with 2 more classes. This grant award was \$36,000 with a goal of providing entrepreneurship training to currently incarcerated or previously incarcerated individuals. Once those individuals complete the course, they have an opportunity to apply for a micro loan of up to \$50,000 with the Department of Commerce. The goal was to serve 32 people, so far 31 individuals have been served. A graduation was held last Friday for the 11 previously incarcerated individuals who participated in the program through the SBDC. Honorary attendees included Assistant Secretary Erin Roth and Delegate Jazz Lewis who sponsored the grant. Currently, 5 individuals have submitted their applications for microloans and Briana is working with 2 others to submit theirs. This has been a successful program for us and Southern Maryland was the only workforce board in Maryland who applied for and was awarded the grant.

WORKFORCE STATISTICS FY23& FY24

Ruthy shared some statistics with the Board on what has been accomplished in the last two Fiscal Years. Those statistics included:

Serving Southern Maryland Citizens

- 4,043 Citizens Engaged with TCCSMD Staff to Seek New or Better Employment
- \$1,441,366 Skills Upgrade Training Dollars Spent on Behalf of Southern Maryland Citizens
- Summer Employment for Southern Maryland Young People:
 - 38 Paid On-Site Employment Experiences
 - 106 Paid Virtual Learning Experiences

Serving Southern Maryland Businesses

- 2,468 Workforce Services Provided to Southern Maryland Businesses-e.g., Job Postings, Recruitments, Candidate-Pre-Screening, Incumbent Worker Training, Labor Market Data
- 224 Customized Recruitments Held
- 572 Citizens Hired as a Result of Customized Recruitments

Mobile Career Center-Meeting People Where they Are

Regular Monthly Stops: Twin Beaches Library, SMILE Inc., Fairview Library, Prince Frederick Library, Solomons Library, Charlotte Hall Library, Leonardtown Library, Outlook Recovery, Pyramid Healthcare, Lexington Park Library

Special Events: 49 in the last 2 years

- 289 Total Stops
- 1,878 Southern Maryland Citizens Served

MARCH BOARD RETREAT

Ruthy shared with the board the plans the Executive Committee has agreed on for the March Board Meeting which will focus on a Board Retreat which will be facilitated by MaryAnn Lawrence of PowerNotes LLC. We've discussed during the past couple board meetings where board members sit on the board, what's your contribution and what further contributions could you make to the board? We will continue this discussion along with what help the board staff need to continue to provide the services and to do our jobs better. The March meeting will be held virtually on March 13th at 9am.

Public Comment & Announcements:

Carrie Akins provided information on the Skills USA competition being hosted at the Calvert Technology Academy on Feb. 1st from 8am-1pm. This will include Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's County best of the best students showcasing all the trades including cybersecurity and cosmetology.

Michelle Stewart shared with the group that Eric Bonner was announced as the Maryland State Department of Education, Assistant State Superintendent for Rehabilitation Services, who joined on October 16th.

Adjournment:

A motion to adjourn was made by Laura Askins, seconded by Carrie Akins, and carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:52 am.