

<b>Region 4 Workforce Board</b> <b>Meeting Minutes of November 17, 2021</b> Location: Delphi Opera House (and GoToMeeting Call)	<b>NEXT MEETING</b> Wednesday, January 26, 2022 Location: TBD – Kokomo / Virtual
---	--

**Directors Present:**

Randy Vernon, chair  
 Karen Mellen, vice-chair  
 Steve Snyder, secretary  
 Mike Barnes  
 Richard Bradshaw  
 Deb Close  
 Alicia Hanawalt

Randy Holmes  
 Elva James  
 Dean McCurdy

**Excused:**

Spencer Buchanan  
 Dennis Carson  
 Shannon Polmateer  
 Amy Wood

**Staff and Guests Present:** *Roger Feldhaus, CEO; Tara Bradley, CFO; Deb Waymire, COO; Mellisa Leaming, Director of Operations; Blake Sempsrott, Financial Coordinator; Kathy Burns, Regional Business Consultant; and Tina Overlay-Hilt, Executive Assistant*

**Guests Present:** *Mayor Tony Roswarski, Mayor, City of Lafayette, and Region 4 Chief Elected Official*

**Call to Order and Welcome**

The November 17, 2021, WDB meeting was held in person and via GoToMeeting conference call. Attendees were welcomed and the meeting was called to order by Chair, Randy Vernon, at 10:40 a.m. Introductions were made. A quorum was present.

**Consent Agenda**

A motion was made to approve the consent agenda items as presented.

**Motion: Richard Bradshaw**

**Second: Elva James**

**Action:** Unanimous approval

**New Business**

**Fiscal**

**PY 21 Revenue Expense Report – First Quarter**

Tara Bradley presented the financial activity from PY21 Q1 ending September 30, 2021. During PY21 Q1 there was an increase of \$400,000 in budgeted revenue over expenses compared to PY20 Q1. This was due to an increase in WIOA funding in PY21 and the utilization of CARES Act PPP funds that reduced Service Provider expenses in PY20. Quarterly WIOA expenditures are at 17% compared to a straight-line budget goal of 25%. The Rural Healthcare Grant is ramping up. There are nine subgrantee WDBs sharing RHG performance goals across the state. We expect increased expenditures in upcoming quarters.

**Operations**

**Rural Healthcare Grant**

The Rural Healthcare Grant is a four-year USDOL grant with a goal to engage 875 individuals in training and employment in the healthcare field. There are 71 individuals enrolled as of September 30, 2021. It is challenging across all sectors to find individuals to employ, let alone those who will enroll in training. A statewide Rural Healthcare Advisory Board was established and held its first meeting on October 25, 2021. We are encouraged to think that things will begin to shift as more individuals are enrolled and trained in healthcare occupations.

### **IDWD Performance Support Grant**

Another grant made available to Region 4 Workforce Board is the WIOA Performance Support Grant. There are three separate projects contained in our grant proposal:

- One project request is for additional funding to support the Next Level Jobs Employer Training Grant. Initially, \$400,000 was allocated to Region 4. We received an additional \$1.6 million for a total award of \$2 million. We expect to use the full \$2 million to reimburse employers for their costs in upskilling new and incumbent workers.
- Another project in conjunction with Ivy Tech Kokomo is to expand the Youth Career Connect program which helps connect students in regional high schools with career opportunities in advanced manufacturing through dual credit attainment, internships, and work-based learning. Once the contract for the grant activities is received, we will ask for a modification to help with training for solar panel installers for solar panel farms being developed in several Region 4 counties. Other solar panel installer partners are Ivy Tech (Kokomo and Lafayette) and IBEW (locals 668 and 873).
- The third project is to implement a WorkLife Navigator program to improve employee productivity, reduce turnover and retain current employees. The budget for this project is \$150,000. A navigator will support employees with their real-life challenges and provide opportunities and resources that traditional employer assistance benefits can't provide. This will be a pilot launch. Our goal will be to engage at least two large employers with this project and serve up to 400 employees.

### **USDOL Monitoring of the Disaster Recovery Grant**

USDOL monitored the IDWD Disaster Recovery Grant in Region 4. We passed with flying colors.

### **DWD/USDOL Apprenticeship Grant Monitoring**

There is an upcoming monitoring review for the Apprenticeship State Expansion Grant. We feel confident going into the review. We met our project goal and have fully obligated the \$100,000 grant, which was to support 67 individuals in new and existing apprenticeships.

### **Final PY20 Performance Report ending June 30, 2021**

PY20 was a difficult year for performance. Region 4 met the performance goals in accordance with USDOL performance definitions but did not meet the goals at the 100% level that Region 4 traditionally likes to attain. USDOL's overall performance measure is meeting 90% of the performance goals. The performance measure on any individual indicator for any program is 50% of the adjusted performance goal level. Region 4 applied the USDOL definition, which it has not done before.

### **Board Administration**

#### **Audit Progress – Huth Thompson LLC**

The Executive team received the draft of the financial audit report. There are no concerns. The audit report will be presented to the Executive Committee on December 15<sup>th</sup> and to the full Board on January 26, 2022.

#### **Career and Technical Education Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment**

Region 4 hosted a collaborative meeting of Career and Technical Education programs operating in our service area. This is an effort to align programs being offered in secondary and postsecondary education with the needs of the region based on labor market demands. Our Lead Business Consultant and Data Analyst, Kathy Burns, provided the labor market data used to help align programs. Dean McCurdy, Steve Snyder, and Karen Mellen represented the Region 4 Workforce Board at the meeting. Dean McCurdy stated that it was an extremely useful meeting because all the career centers attended and were able to share their best practices. Roger Feldhaus invited Board members to check out [www.region4workforceboard.org](http://www.region4workforceboard.org) for additional information and resources available to area employers. Click on the *Workforce Trends* and *Publications* tabs.

## **Conversations with Mike Barnes**

The following two questions came up as a result of the quarterly one-on-one meeting with Mike Barnes, IDWD's Chief Workforce Officer. Mike challenged the Executive Staff and the Board to provide information that can be helpful in supporting other regions.

- ***How Can the State Support Youth-Employer Engagement?***
  - Connect with youth as early as possible.
  - By making clearer exceptions/exemptions that make it less risky for employers to work with students to gain experience in the workforce, such as work and learn opportunities.
  - By providing financial incentives.
  - Learning from examples of successful programs in Indiana or other states.
  - We need to make the state more aware of opportunities such as the Building Trades Summer Camps, Manufacturing Week activities, etc., so DWD can help support and expand these opportunities.

Steve Snyder shared the success of the Building Trades Summer Camps.

Dean McCurdy provided information about enrollments in work and learn programs at Ivy Tech. The dual credit programs have been growing exponentially over the past years. Ivy Tech Kokomo is on pace to have over 400 students graduate with a degree before finishing high school. Ivy Tech Lafayette is seeing similar numbers.

Deb Waymire added that it is a challenge to serve in-school youth with WIOA funds because of restrictive eligibility requirement. When grant funds are less restrictive, we can help students complete their dual credit attainment. We can leverage funds together with partners to help individuals.

The WHIN grant allowed us to get information about manufacturing out to students in K-12. Greater Lafayette Commerce is working with SkyePack to offer Manufacturing Week activities virtually. The program model is adaptable to any sector.

Region 4 Chief Elected Official, Mayor Tony Roswarski, spoke of efforts by the City of Lafayette and Purdue University to keep graduates in the area and to use incentives to attract other individuals to the region. It is early in these efforts, and while the numbers are low, attracting talent is the primary focus of funds available to Lafayette for economic development. Mayor Roswarski would like to be a financial partner with us to incentivize employers to bring on youth engagement programs and offer incentives for youth who participate. Dean McCurdy stated the idea sounded similar to the ITEP program with Ivy Tech where students start a career pathway in high school as a work and learn experience and leads to employment or post-secondary education. College enrollment often provides assistance in paying for skill certifications. Ideally, a program could be developed that would not require college enrollment. Once the idea is developed, it could be replicated through the state.

- ***How Can Region 4 Help Other Regions Compete for USDOL Competitive Grant Opportunities***
  - Willingness to partner with other regions.
  - Be in the game, i.e., actively pursue all appropriate grant opportunities.
  - Work together to deliver on the commitments made in the grant proposals.

## **PY20-21 WDB Annual Report**

The 2020-2021 Region 4 Workforce Board Annual report was provided to all Board members and attendees. Items discussed during the meeting were topics presented in the annual report.

**Election of WDB Officers for PY 21-22**

The terms of the current officers of the Region 4 Workforce Board Executive Committee have been extended until June 30, 2022. Thanks to Randy Vernon, Chair; Karen Mellen, Vice Chair; Steve Snyder, Secretary; and Deb Close for continuing to serve. Elections will be held in May 2022.

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 AM

**Motion: Elva James**

**Second: Steve Snyder**

**Action:** Unanimous approval by all members present

Respectfully submitted,  
Tina Overley-Hilt  
Executive Assistant

---

Stephen Snyder, Secretary  
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc.  
d/b/a Region 4 Workforce Board