

Region 4 Workforce Board Meeting Minutes of March 23, 2022 Location: Ivy Tech-Lafayette and Virtual GoToMeeting	NEXT MEETING Wednesday, May 25, 2022 Location: Kokomo Inventrek and Virtual
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Directors Present:

Randy Vernon, chair
 Karen Mellen, vice-chair
 Steve Snyder, secretary
 Mike Barnes
 Spencer Buchanan

Alicia Hanawalt
 Randy Holmes
 Elva James

Excused:

Richard Bradshaw
 Dennis Carson
 Deb Close
 Dean McCurdy
 Shannon Polmateer
 Amy Wood

Guests Present: *Judy Hasselkus, DWD, Regional Support Manager.*

Staff Present: *Roger Feldhaus, CEO; Tara Bradley, CFO; Deb Waymire, COO; Mellisa Leaming, Director of Operations; and Tina Overley-Hilt, Executive Assistant*

Call to Order and Welcome

The March 23, 2022, WDB meeting was held at Ivy Tech in Lafayette and via GoToMeeting conference call. Attendees were welcomed and the meeting was called to order by Chair, Randy Vernon, at 8:30 a.m. Introductions were made. A quorum was not present at the start of the meeting. Approval of the consent agenda was moved to later in the meeting.

New Business

Operations

Review of Board’s Strategic Plan Progress

Deb Waymire reintroduced to the Board the goals, objectives and strategies of Region 4 Strategic Plan and provided an update on the progress that has been occurring. Handout was provided to members with details. Deb touched on highlights.

- Goal #1- We will realign/refocus the current workforce to meet employer work skills and work behaviors demands:
 - Seven WorkKeys Profiles have been completed to help upskill new employees and incumbent workers.
 - Region 4 received \$1.2 million of Employer Training Grant funds to upskill incumbent workers; \$190,000 for training solar panel installers; \$100,000 to support the development of new apprenticeships for 67 individuals; \$50,000 of Workforce Ready Grant funds to assist individual workers upskill; and \$2.5 million of Rural Healthcare Grant funds to train individuals for entry-level healthcare occupations.

- Goal #2-We will realign/refocus the emerging, future workforce to meet employer work skills and work behaviors demands:
 - This has been challenging during the pandemic but will look to ramp up this year.
 - Jobs for America’s Graduates (JAG) held Regional Career Development Conference (CDC) and Statewide CDC. A student from Region 4 was named Outstanding Senior of the Year.
 - In collaboration with Greater Lafayette Commerce and local schools through a Wabash Heartland Innovation Network (WHIN) grant, Region 4 has engaged thousands of students in STEM activities including Manufacturing Week, Coder Dojos, and Innovation and Design Studios. We will present a final report on these activities at the May Board meeting.
 - In collaboration with DWD, we established State Earn and Learn (SEAL) pre-apprenticeship programs and the iWork program at the local level for out-of-school youth to engage in work-based learning activities.

- Goal #3-We will support initiatives that provide career opportunities for underutilized and incumbent workers that will meet employer work skill demands:
 - Region 4’s America’s Promise Grant, Rural Healthcare Grant, Apprenticeship Expansion Grant and WIOA assisted 182 workers.
 - Assisted 45 companies with applying for Employer Training Grant funds.
- Goal #4-We will collaborate with and convene strategic stakeholders, local partners, businesses, groups, and agencies to leverage resources.
 - Region 4 has reached out and continues to collaborate with groups to bring funding to the region.
 - Always seeking grant opportunities.

Roger Feldhaus recommended that, with the change in the economy and the change in the issues affecting the workforce, a strategic planning session be scheduled later this program year. A draft summary of Indiana’s WIOA Combined Plan Modification is also available. It includes initiatives to be aware of and include in Region 4’s plan.

Grant Overview Chart

Deb Waymire continued sharing a spreadsheet with grant funding sources, funding amounts, and the purpose of each grant.

- **Disaster Grant** - \$131,500 Humanitarian Assistance grant that helps Food Finders and Logansport Memorial Hospital.
- **Recovery Grant** - \$305,314 to assists dislocated workers
- **ASE Grant** - \$100,000 to increase apprenticeships, assisted 67 individuals.
- **WRG** - \$50,000 to assist individuals to skill up.
- **Performance Support Grant**
 - **WorkLife** – an employee retention resource benefit available to an employer’s employees to help with life issues and employee retention. It is a pilot program in Indiana. A company has already contacted WorkLife and is interested in the program. Additional information and discussion ensued with Board members. Jim Huh, WorkLife Partnership, has been invited to attend the May 25th WDB meeting.
 - **ITEP** – Youth Career Connect grant working with Ivy Tech Kokomo to assist dual credit students with gaps in funding.
 - **Renewable Energy** – Solar Panel installation projects in Region 4 working with Ivy Tech Kokomo, Ivy Tech Lafayette and IBEW.
 - **Employer Training** - \$1.2 million has been obligated. Companies could get up to \$50,000 for incumbent worker training. Additional funding will be available July 1st.
- **COVID RR-UI Assistance** – Unemployment insurance registration assistance
- **Rural Healthcare Grant** - \$2.5 million grant over a four-year period with a focus on nursing career pathways.

Priority of Service

Department of Labor (DOL) under the WIOA want local areas to serve above 50 percent of those who have the most need and would benefit from employment and training services. Priority of service must be given to recipients of Public Assistance, low-income individuals, and basic skill deficient individuals, along with veterans and spouses of veterans. DOL has established a goal that at least 75 percent of the participants served under WIOA consist of those who have significant barriers to employment. Currently, we serve everyone. If funds became limited, we want to insure we are serving those individuals most in need. Locally the Region 4 Workforce Board can define and set other priorities of service groups to reach the 75 percent. We recommend that the Board consider the following “Locally Established Priority of Service” groups:

- Individuals with Disability
- Single Parent
- Long Term Unemployed
 - Indiana has defined “*long-term unemployed*” as an individual that has not worked for twenty-seven or more weeks in aggregate over the past year.
- 55-year-old and older
- Under Employed
 - Individuals employed less than full-time who are seeking full-time employment.
 - Individuals who are employed in a position that is inadequate with respect to their skills and training.
 - Individuals who are employed who meet the definition of a low-income individual in the WIOA Section 3(36).
 - Individuals who are employed, but whose current job’s earnings are not sufficient compared to their previous job’s earnings from their previous employment, per state and/or local policy.

Board members discussed and asked questions regarding the priority of service groups. Priority of service will be determined by self-attestation.

A quorum was not in attendance to approve the Priority of Service. An attempt was made to reach absent Board members. Discussion was had regarding the holding of a special session.

Other Updates as Needed

WorkOne Office Update – The WorkOne offices are fully open. Effective Monday, March 28th, facemasks will be optional. The offices are seeing more traffic. Lafayette and Kokomo WorkOne offices were open by appointment only and were working on a two-team structure. WorkOne offices in Logansport, Monticello, and Peru were closed and staff worked remotely and assisted customers virtually. Workshops were delivered virtually. We will continue virtual workshops because more individuals were able to engage in the workshops. Offices are getting back to normal, enhanced operations with the technology that is in place. There has been some staff turnover due to the many opportunities available in the local labor market. Also noted: We regularly offer and track customer surveys. We have been pleased to receive so many comments from customers on how much staff members have assisted them. Staff have done their jobs extremely well during this challenging time. Survey comments will be forwarded to the Board.

Board Administration

Upcoming Conversation

Roger Feldhaus will be having a conversation with Todd Hurst, Executive Director of Indiana Chamber’s Institute of Workplace Excellence to learn about their Talent Resource Navigator initiative. Indiana Chamber will be focusing on collecting, organizing, and disseminating proven talent development strategies. They will be a source for information and assistance connecting with other initiatives outside our community that we can engage with.

Discussion with Regina Ashley, DWD, Chief of Staff

Regina Ashley, the newly named Chief of Staff at DWD, is reaching out to every regional director to find out how the Department can establish better partnership/relationship with the regions.

Forthcoming INWBA and DWD Meetings

Mike Barnes’ meeting scheduled in April with Regional Workforce Board executives will focus on funding and how non-formula grants are given out to the regions. Discussions will provide new direction on interaction and support to regions and best communication practices.

Elva James joined the Board meeting virtually and a quorum was present.

Priority of Service

A motion was made to approve the Locally Defined Priority of Services as proposed including the five additional groups of individuals who most need and would benefit from employment and training services.

Motion: Spencer Buchanan

Second: Steve Snyder

Action: Unanimous approval

The Local Plan will need to be modified to include the newly approved Locally defined Priority of Service groups.

Consent Agenda

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

Motion: Randy Holmes

Second: Karen Mellen

Action: Unanimous approval

Board Administration (continued)

Non-Agenda Items

Howard County and the Greater Kokomo Economic Development Alliance have purchased 140 acres for the development of an industrial park.

Charlie Sparks, President and CEO of Greater Kokomo Economic Development Alliance is retiring. Also, Mike McCool, Economic Development Manager retired, and Lori Dukes has been named the new Manager of Economic Development.

Pursuit of National Association of Workforce Board (NAWB) Upcoming Forum 2022

The NAWB Forum will be held in-person April 11-14, 2022. As a Board, we will pass on attending the Forum this year. Roger Feldhaus would like us to consider joining NAWB and attending the Forum in 2023.

Election of Board officers at May meeting

We will hold the election of officers for the next program year at the May 25th meeting.

Draft – WDB Meeting Schedule for July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023

A draft meeting schedule for PY 22, July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023, was shared with Board members. The WDB will continue to meet on the 4th Wednesday of every other month. Meeting invitations will be sent to members for adding to their calendars.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 AM.

Motion: Karen Mellen

Second: Deb Close

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