Lowcountry Workforce Board – Meeting Minutes  
WEDNESDAY, January 26, 2022 - 9:30 A.M.  
Zoom Call

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Guests: Zach Nickerson (DEW) Alison Kitler (SCVR) Juanita Murrell (Beaufort Adult Ed) Latonya Evans (Telamon) Emily Mitchell (Lowcountry Community Action Agency) Nigel Fisher (Job Corps) Kevin Kunkel (IWS) Sheryl Legree (Palmetto Goodwill) Mark Williams (Ross) Emily Mitchell (LCCA) Stephanie Ferguson (Ross) Josephine Mohtassem (Palmetto Goodwill)

Staff: Mike Butler, Shelly Campbell, Tony Pollen, Sabrena Graham, Charles Myers, and Sheree Grant

1. **Call to Order:** Heather Simmons, Board Chair called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. Introduction of Guests. A quorum of board members was present on the call, and the meeting, having been duly convened, was ready to proceed with business.

2. **Minutes:** *** A motion was made by Andy Thorson to accept the minutes as sent in the meeting pre-reads and seconded by Josie Anderson. All voted in favor with none oppose

New Business:
3. **Policy Updates**

Shelly Campbell Basic Skills Deficient, Adult Priority of Service & Sufficient Duration

Shelly informed the board on the needs and an overall purpose of the updated policies. Each policy update was in line with both the State and Federal guidelines. Board members received the draft policies in their pre-reads. Executive Director Sabrena Graham asked one question about the policy. A motion was made by Heyward Horton to accept all three policies as written. Arlene Dunbar seconded the motion, all voted in favor with none opposed. Draft status was officially removed from the documents.

4. **Business Services Report- Charles Myers and Tony Pollen**

Charles Myers reported the following:

We welcomed Sheree Grant as our newest Business Specialist to LCOG.

We are working closely with executive teams of both CVS and Walgreens to support their Pharmacy Technician Needs.

The LCOG team is working with SC Works/Beaufort to hold a hiring event at the Bull Durham Center in Estill. Seeking at least 30 hiring groups and providers to join that day.

We are supporting other hiring events in the area, primarily in Early Branch with Carolina Textiles and Evanesce. We continue to seek out new On Job Training opportunities with Trison Wells in Walterboro being our latest client.

Partnering with SCDEW in onboarding their new Business Consultant as the newest member of the Lowcountry Integrated Business Service Team.

Tony Pollen shared the following:

With our new way of engaging. We have found employer satisfaction is high. Employers are finding the right job seekers through hiring events, direct referrals, and reverse referrals for their organizations.

In PY 20 – PY21 combined, we had a total of 135 hiring events, 80 placements, 24 OJT Contracts at $62,544.51

Here is a breakdown for a little context.

In PY 20
8 OJT contracts with $16,384 obligated and $15,647.76 spent

PY 21
16 OJT contracts and climbing with $46,896.75 obligated and $21,688.50 spent so far.

This concludes the Business Service report.

5. **SC Works Operator Report-Mark Williams**
A focused effort to obtain partnerships with local area chamber of commerce’s to increase promotion of SC Works Centers events and expanding partnerships with additional community-based organizations is an on-going effort.

Veteran Services are now available on-site in the Beaufort SC Works Center for the first time since the pandemic began.

Unemployment Claims filing, WIOA Certifications and general questions concerning SC Works, Federal Bonding, Typing Test, Job Readiness Class, Adult Education (TABE assessment) and career guidance by DSS staff are the majority of services being provided on a daily to weekly basis in the centers.

Number of Hiring Events Since June 2021: 153

Total Placements - 106.

Basic overall traffic counts for all three center totals. 5,976 Patron, Post COVID-19. These counts include repeat customer during a giving week.

Beaufort 3,782, Colleton 1,518 and Hampton 676.

**Planned future events for the Beaufort SC Works Center are as follows:**

Statewide In-Person and Brazen Virtual Second Chance South Coast Job Fair in partnership w/ Parole, Pardon and Probation March 2022, date TBD. Veteran Stand-down w/ DOL Job Fair scheduled for April 2022, date TBD.

Virtual Workshop for WIOA Program

Additional onsite Employer Meet and Greet functions

Become actively involved with Drug Court/Vet Court for WIOA Outreach.

Military Recruitment Events

6. **Youth Committee- Chris Horvath**

The Youth Committee members discussed services offered by Adult Education providers in South Carolina as outlined in the Adult Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) that are of benefit to youth ages 18 through 24 who are seeking services through SC Works and Ross. Topics discussed were Career Pathway, Integrated Education and Training and Workplace Literacy.
A virtual meeting is being scheduled to hear from Lowcountry EMS which is seeking Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) testing/assessment services for reading and reading comprehension classes. Lowcountry EMS focuses on teaching EMS and paramedic courses in rural locations.

This meeting will involve Adult Education providers from the Lowcountry Workforce Area, Trident Workforce Area and the Lower Savannah Workforce Area. In total the initiative is expected to provide services to around 400 adults and qualified youth annually across the counties in the three-workforce areas. We believe this is also an opportunity for increased referrals to ROSS and SC Works partners. There will also be the opportunity for contextualized instruction for post-secondary adult learners as outlined in the first paragraph of the notes.

Prior to the pandemic the LWB Youth Committee discussed a Youth Summit targeting services for 18 through 24-year-old individuals in the Lowcountry. We plan to discuss this topic again in the near future.

7. Disability/Priority Population Committee- Greg Gilbert

Reviewed and discussed Dynamic Developers handout. We used the different activities for a starting point to plan an activity for the local workforce area. We liked the idea that was done in the Worklink Region and decided to plan an Ex-offender Informational Session.

During our February 2022 meeting, the committee will decide on particulars, such as time, date and location.

8. Ross Program Update-Stephanie Ferguson Project Director

Progress being made to solidify and sustain staff for the proper growth of the program.

Being able to communicate effectively with staff members and ensuring that my team members know what's expected of them is key for me and in being able to lead an efficient, successful and happy team. We (Ross) believe that our expectations need to be communicated clearly, so that staff can set realistic, reasonable tasks and meet deadlines. We have staff in all of our locations, we are seeking to complete staff at our Beaufort location. The only way for WIOA to grow, is that staff must be trained and also attend training sessions other than Webinars such as SETA—Local Symposiums that will offer them first and experience of correctly doing our jobs.

Challenges of recruiting clients with all the other programs that are available and how Ross plans to overcome and continue to provide services. Orientation dates and time.

Attracting the right candidates can be a challenge, engaging them, keeping them interested in a target goal of WIOA. Not only is it a challenge because our partners are doing the same thing, but in this pandemic, we have individuals feeling a bit perplexed of how to proceed. To engage a potential client, we must be consistent in making contact with them in selling our product of (WIOA) and that comes by conducting weekly Orientations that are held at each of our Centers-Hampton,
Beaufort, and Colleton on every Thursday at 10:00AM. Also, staff is well aware of conducting what I like to call “On the Spot” orientations in speeding the process along.

**Upcoming training for professional development.**

As we have entered into this new year, it is very important in keeping staff up to date with what’s going on in Workforce and how to properly do our jobs. Staff have been scheduled for upcoming webinars to include Work Habits: Managing Emotions at Work, Tuesday, January 25 at 1pm. Staff is also scheduled for a Career Assessment Toolkit-Webinar scheduled for Tuesday 2/15/2022. This Webinar just like others will give the staff tips that focus on interests, skills, work values, or previous job experience and it will go in-depth on each tool and explore how to use them on a path to career exploration. As we dig more into progressing in our fields of Career Counseling, we must be prepared and that only comes with proper training and being aware with what’s working and what is not.

**WEX Process/Encourage board members to utilize WEX in training Youth within their businesses**

Discuss the highlights of the WEX program, the WEX Contract, and the Company’s organization. We meet with the supervisor and go over the highlights of the supervisor handbook and the WEX Agreement. We discuss hours and hourly pay. We currently work with PakNet and have had over several of our Youth to participate in WEX. The purpose of WEX is to prepare our participants for real life work and to give them hands on experience which will lead to sustainable full-time employment in a selected career field.

I would like to encourage you to share information about WIOA to your partners that you come in contact with especially out of school youth.

9. **Budget Report-Mike Butler**

Mike Butler reviewed the budget report and discussed the expenditure rates on the special grants and the effects that it had on spending on the regular allocated funds. The expectation shared was the allocated funding expenditures percentages will begin to climb as a result of the discretionary funds being spent in full.

10. **Executive Committee Report- Heather Simmons**

On 01/05/2022, the Lowcountry Workforce Board Executive Committee voted electronically on behalf of the board to approve the voluntary Re-Allocation of $20,000 of PY21 Youth Funding from the Greenville Workforce Area. These additional funds will certainly allow the Ross Staff to continue providing Occupational Skills Training and Work Experience opportunities for WIOA Youth.

11. **Directors Notes-Mike Butler**

I want to welcome Sheree Grant, our newest member of the LCOG Business Service Team. Sheree comes to us via the DW Career Grant. Sheree will focus on DW recruitment and employer engagement, bridging the two entities together to increase On the Job Training contracts.
We have yet to receive the report for our State Monitoring that was completed back in November 2021.

State Workforce Board Chair Thomas Freeland and local State Workforce Board member Jay Holloway visited our Workforce Center in Beaufort on Jan 13, 2022. They spent close to three hours meeting workforce staff and partners and sat in on WIOA orientation conducted by Stephanie Ferguson, and a Job Readiness Workshop conducted by Tony Pollen.

They were very impressed with both presenters and the staff overall. Mr. Freeland made the following comment. “I want to thank you for setting up our visit and can’t tell you how impressed Jay and I were on the staff, facility, and energy and passion shown in what your folks are doing. What a good model of how we should be delivering services and please share with everyone “ Job well done and keep up the good work!

Once again, I want to take a moment to thank Sabrena for stepping in an up for both Heather and I. A special thanks to Mark and Michelle for sharing information on all the activities that all the centers are doing and showing the calendar of future events. A super thanks to both Stephanie Ferguson Project Director for Ross and Tony Pollen for providing professional high-level workshops that were well received by both SWB members.

The Business Service Team and I will be participating in the Converge Summit on January 27, 2022, hosted by the Beaufort Economic Commission in Bluffton. Fellow Board member Melanie Gallion will be attending as well for TCL.

We have recently applied for $395,000 in Resiliency Grant funding via the SWB. The SWB has set aside a total of 4.5 million dollars for all 12 local workforce areas to apply for. We are asking for $88,000 in technology improvements in all three centers, $175,000 for Adult OJT funding, $18,000 for program technical assistance, staff training and data validation monitoring, $10,000 for staff professional development and $3000 for security cameras with DVR capabilities for all entrance and exit doors for the Beaufort/Colleton Centers.

The state contract for onsite Security ended on 12/31/2021. We could not afford to maintain the services with our normal allocation nor was it feasible to request it via the Resiliency grant.

Sabrena and I will take part in a state discussion on Regionalism between workforce areas. on March 2, 2021. The model to be discussed is the Greenville/Spartanburg workforce areas who have found ways to leverage services which saves various operational expenses which allows for a greater use of funding for participants.

Volunteer Re-Allocation of PY21 Youth Funds from Greenville Workforce Area breaks down as $18,000 for Participant Cost Services and $2000 for Administration.

PY22 MOU/IFA meeting is scheduled for March 8, 2022 TBD
PY20 was a successful year, we met the states Fund Utilization Rate Requirements and passed all Program Performance Measures.

This concludes my Directors notes

Next meeting March 23, 2022

Denotes Voting item***