Lowcountry Workforce Board – Meeting Minutes

WEDNESDAY, November 17, 2021 - 9:30 A.M.
Zoom Call

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Guests: Spencer Rice (DEW) Alison Kitler (SCVR) Juanita Murrell (Beaufort Adult Ed) Debra Young (Telamon) Latoya Evans (Telamon) Robert Crenshaw (Ready SC) Christopher Green (Job Corps) Eric Jones (Job Corps) Mark Williams (Ross)

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

1. Call to Order: Heather Simmons, Board Chair called the meeting to order at 9:32 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 Barbara Entriken to accept the minutes as sent in the meeting pre-reads and seconded by Chris Horvath. All voted in favor with none oppose

New Business:
3. **OJT Reimbursement Policy Update - Shelly Campbell**

Shelly briefly reviewed a draft of the updated OJT reimbursement policy that increased reimbursements from fifty percent to seventy-five percent for small to medium size businesses. South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce has an active policy regarding Business Size Classification. The South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce addresses any business establishment with less than 50 employees a small business. This standard is widely used, including by the South Carolina Department of Commerce and the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce. Businesses with 50-249 employees are considered medium size, and those with 250 or more employees are considered large.

The Lowcountry Workforce Board hereby determines that based on the size of the employer the following reimbursement rate applies:

Business with 1-249 employees (Small and Medium) size business may receive a seventy-five (75%) percent wage reimbursement rate for On-the-Job Training.

Businesses with 250 or more employees (large) may receive a fifty (50%) percent wage reimbursement rate for On-the-Job Training.

Board members received the draft policy in their pre-reads. There were no questions asked about the policy. A motion was made by Barbara Entriken to accept as presented. Kevin Pak seconded the motion, all voted in favor with none opposed. Draft status was officially removed from the document.

4. **SC Works Operator Report - Mark Williams**

Beaufort SC Works

Total of Hiring Events Since September 2021: 27 Total placements: 14, Virtual hiring Events: 5 Placements: 8

SC Works continues to hold Hiring Events weekly, job posting on DEW Website, Facebook and office Hiring Event Board. Beaufort SC Works Hiring Events are still ongoing every week provided no cancellation from employers.

**Activities in the Centers etc.-Resume Workshop-19**

**Outreach:** SC Works, Workforce Specialist and Consultants have traveled to Estill, Jasper and Beaufort counties to present our Employment Readiness program. The Estill High school is the only area that’s ready for re-engaging.

**Library Connection Points** – they were all given SCWORKS/DEW/WIOA and VET information. Beaufort, Hampton and Jasper libraries do not need assistance; however, Colleton County is requesting additional training on the UI Website, SCWORKS and ID Me

Alicia Williams of SCDEW has attempted twice to get in touch with the POC – as of today (11/15/2021) we have not heard back.

Julie Washington of SCDEW is hosting a series of Lunch and Learn Work Shops for a Hilton Head Beach and Tennis Resort Employees – topics include: Team Work and Collaboration and Workplace Conflict and Resolution.

In the process of planning the 2022 Second Chance Employer Event – we plan on having this job fair in person and utilizing the Brazen system for those employers/service providers that would rather attend virtually.
Would like to start a new “welcome” process, when someone walks in the door, they are greeted, signed in via VOS greeter and then a DEW person will see them – this will help with referrals to WIOA and job referrals – a personal experience is what we want them to experience

We continue to reach out to the schools/colleges to participate in events that are coming up

Plans on how to promote SCWORKS are talked about daily and hopefully in 2022 we can put those ideas in to action – some of the ideas are: Free Radio outreach, flyers in both highly populated/and lightly populated areas of the region, information tables outside of other State/Local agencies.

- SC STAY PLUS- Report: This program started back in May 2021, the Representatives had boots on the ground Aug 2021, the number of customers served; 632 Monetarily Finance $ 342,000
  This program helps renters with back rent owed and utilities outstanding. With the assistance of additional 3 months of future rent and utilities.

**Building Maintenance**

Fire Extinguishers have been inspected – no issues found

Lighting outside is being worked on by DEW - Ground lighting has been completed however the street lights require a bucket to replace Bulbs.

Chief Services Security Report: Colleton and Beaufort office have been rotating guards due to the lack of available security staff within the organization. We have experienced multiple days between the two centers where no security officer was onsite.

5. **Business Services Report: Charles Myers**

The past couple of months has been very productive for the Business Services team.

In partnership with the Beaufort County Economic Development, we have built new Employer relationships and are rebuilding some old ones.

The number of employers interested in participating and hiring employees via the On-the Job Training program has increased tremendously. Incumbent Worker Training has been shopped to interested employers as well.

The team has been asked to participate in the Jasper County School District, Career and Technical Education (CATE) Advisory Council to assist with the employer engagements.

- The way that the team has been engaging is proving to be effective.
- Business Services Coordinator Tony Pollen is working on a new project called the Lowcountry Biz Connect!
Lowcountry Biz Connect is designed to help Businesses connect to resources that can help them reboot, grow, and rehire. The Biz Connect will begin piloting a circuit between the Don Ryan Center in Bluffton and the Digital Corridor in Beaufort two days a week from 9-2, starting after the holidays. Employers will find easy access to the public workforce development system through these doors, which provides a wide range of tools, training, and funding through federal programs. The Hub will be staffed with IBST members who can help employers navigate the system and unlock resources that many employers are unaware of.

Business Service Coordinator Tony Pollen is scheduled to participate in an on-air interview with officials of the Don Ryan Center in Bluffton SC which will be aired at a future date for a segment on 843TV. Tony’ will discuss and answer questions about the lack of the workforce labor shed, workforce programs and services and the upcoming 2022 Biz Connect concept and how it will be a game changer for local employers.

6. **Budget Report: Mike Butler**
   The October budget report was sent to the board as a pre-read. Mike compared the spending percentages for Adult/ Dislocated Worker (DW) and Youth for PY21 versus same time PY20. Spending in Adult and Youth are down 50% compared to last year and DW is running the same. Mike attributed the lower spending percents to the SC Technical Schools free scholarship training programs, partner agencies training funding and limited training scheduling, new workforce staff and PY20 discretionary grants that need to be expended first before regular allocation is used.

7. **Director Notes: Mike Butler**

   PY21 monitoring is in progress as we speak, we will share the results of the monitoring as soon as we received it from the state.

   A special thanks to all of you who sent back your board demographic forms for monitoring

   Charles Myers is our new Business Service Specialist here at the Lowcountry Council of Governments (LCOG)

   I had the opportunity to attend the SC State Workforce Symposium in Greenville, SC in October. It was a great event with multiple workforce development subject matter experts across all sectors as presenters during the one-day event.

   We recently submitted a request to the SCDEW/State Workforce Board for $250,000 for possible discretionary grant funding.

   Our request consisted of $150,000 for purchase of seventy new SC Works resource room computers for all three centers for public use. This total includes labor cost for installation/ removing and wiping of hard drives.

   $40,000 to support staff and board training for professional development at various conferences or national workshops. These funds will assist with travel cost, registrations cost hotel/conference and per diem.

   $20,000 additional funding for youth training
$18,000 to secure programmatic consultant services for career specialist training and development and technical assistance and LCOG workforce administration monitoring.

$15,000 for security cameras at our comprehensive center in Beaufort. The cameras would monitor all entrance and exit doors for added security.

We are saddened to say that we are losing two of our most active board members, the first is Sarah Marshall from Beaufort Jasper Economic Opportunity Commission (BJEOC). Sarah has served faithfully for at least the last 5 years being very active in multiple assignments most recently leading the Adult Education grant review committee for the second time. Mr. James Williams Executive Director for BJEOC assured me that he will submit the name of someone who will be as dedicated and committed as Sarah was.

Ms. Barbara Entriken Owner of Net Solutions will be leaving the board as this will be her last official board meeting. Barbara has served on the workforce board since 2004 for a total of seventeen years and has been a voice that will be missed and hard to replace. Barbara oversaw the One-Stop certification process for the workforce board and was leading the efforts once again for the new upcoming standards in 2022.

Barbara has served as Vice-Chair for multiple years, One Stop Committee Chair faithfully for multiple years.

This concludes the Director’s report.

8. Next Meeting January 27, 2022 9:30 am In-person or Virtual, TBD

9. Meeting adjourned at 10:05 am

   Denotes Voting item***