

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING  
POCONO COUNTIES WORKFORCE INVESTMENT AREA  
SEPTEMBER 2, 2020**

Members Participating in the Zoom Meeting

Frank Revitt	WDB Member
Garry Wentz	Pocono Counties WIA
Craig Zurn	WDB Member
Susan Storm	WDB Member
Susan Rhoads-Procina	Pocono Counties WIA
Samuel Hellen	Carbon WIOA/CareerLink
Dorinda Getz	Carbon WIOA/CareerLink
Heather Brown	Carbon WIOA/CareerLink
Cynthia DeFebo	Pike County Workforce Development Agency
Chuck Leonard	WDB Member
Fred Mutzek	WDB Member
Bill Blake	WDB Member
Kristi Hammond	Monroe WIOA/CareerLink
Marybeth Ferguson	WDB Member
Matt Connell	WDB Member
Debra Raneri	Northampton Community College
Anthony Manzione	WDB Member
William Cockerill	WDB Member
Richard Parry	WDB Member
Lisa Price	BWPO
Kim Miller	WDB Member
Barbara Green	WDB Member
Brian Smith	Wayne County Commissioner
Selina Winchester	Representative Susan Wild's Office
Ladora Phillips	WDB Member
Donna Sokolowski	Monroe WIOA/CareerLink
Sharon Lavendure	Monroe County Commissioner
Deborah Harrison	Monroe WIOA/CareerLink
Helene Mancuso	Wayne Workforce Alliance
Cindy Matthews	WDB Member
Anthony Herzog	WDB Member
Marybeth Wood	WDB Member
Robert Pisko	BWPA
Barbara Diliberti	WDB Member
Tessa Wright	Wayne Workforce Alliance

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING

### POCONO COUNTIES WORKFORCE INVESTMENT AREA

September 2, 2020

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

A meeting of the Pocono Counties Workforce Development Board was held on Wednesday, September 2, 2020. The Meeting was conducted by a Zoom Conference Call. The Meeting was called to order by Chairman Frank Revitt at 10.00 A.M.

The Chair asked if there are any proxy forms from the membership to be entered into the minutes. A proxy form was submitted by Joseph Ruvane, as a voting member authorizing Frank Revitt to vote on his behalf on topic numbers 1-15 on the Agenda for the September 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting.

#### **REVIEW OF MINUTES**

The Minutes of the June 17, 2020, Workforce Development Board Meeting had been emailed to the membership. A motion was made by Charles Leonard to approve the Minutes of the June 17, 2020, Workforce Development Board Meeting, seconded by Matthew Connell - Board polled – motion carried.

#### **FINANCIAL REPORT**

Susan Rhoads-Procina addressed the Board with a Financial Report. She asked if there were any questions from the Board members. She also noted that we are in the process of switching to a new accounting system and that the report format may be changed once the new system is in place. Garry mentioned that he and Susan were reviewing the Financial Report provided to the Board and considering additional information

that might be helpful to the Board members. He said he didn't want to inundate the Board with too much information, but felt that some additional context would give the Board members insight into how effective the Pocono Counties WDA was in utilizing the resources available to us.

## **PROGRAM/PANDEMIC OPERATIONS STATUS UPDATE**

Mr. Wentz provided an update regarding the status of CareerLink and affiliate sites and the impact on service delivery due to the COVID-19 virus situation. He noted that all of the CareerLink® and affiliate sites had been working with reduced staffing or remotely since mid-March. Both the Monroe and Carbon CareerLinks® had received approval from the Department of Labor to have the BWPO staff to return to the facilities on a rotating basis. Monroe was approved in July, and Carbon was approved in late August. Most of the customers utilizing the services in all 4 counties are being handled on an appointment only basis, although there are some walk in customers starting to come back as well. The anticipated rush of UC customers has not been as great as anticipated, although that is still an ongoing problem for many of our customers. The staff have been doing their best to assist customers with UC issues and other services, and are continuing to provide workshops and provide other services to customers remotely. A question was raised by Anthony Hertzog regarding the status of the Pike and Wayne County affiliate sites. Cindy DeFebo said that the Pike County site had been open to the public for the past few months with reduced staff levels, although most of the customer services were done on an appointment only basis. Helene Mancuso reported that most of the services provided by the Wayne Workforce Alliance staff were still being done remotely, but they did occasionally meet with customers at their office if needed. Mr. Hertzog said he felt that the Wayne County facility should be open to the general

public again as were the other 3 offices.

### **EARN UPDATE**

Mr. Wentz provided the Board with an update on the EARN Program. As discussed at the June meeting, there had been some last-minute major changes to the EARN Program Guidelines made by the Department of Human Services. These changes came with a significant increase in funding. Since the June meeting we had revised the budgets for the 3 EARN Program Providers, Carbon County Workforce Training, Pathstone, and Pike County Workforce Development in light of those changes. He stated that although the referrals were still minimal for new customers in this program, the budgets were increased for all 3 providers in anticipation of an increase in customer levels going forward. He stated that he still believed we would not need all of the funding available this year, but it will take some time to see how the new program requirements change our enrollment levels and costs.

### **MONROE COUNTY CDE SERVICES CONTRACT**

Deborah Harrison requested an extension of the current contract for the current fiscal year with CDE for the Career Foundations and Technology Program for Adult and Dislocated Workers. The program has been very successful over the past 8 years, and the costs would be the same as last year, \$22,500.00. A motion to approve the contract extensions was made by Charles Leonard, and seconded by Ladora Phillips.– Board polled – Motion carried.

### **MONROE COUNTY GED/ABE SERVICES CONTRACT**

Deborah Harrison also requested an extension of the current contract for the current fiscal year with the Monroe Career & Technical Institute for GED/ABE services. Again, this

is a long-standing program and successful service provided to WIOA customers in Monroe County. The costs were the same as last year, \$19,992.00. A motion to approve the contract extensions was made by Charles Leonard, and seconded by William Cockerill.– Board polled – Motion carried.

### **APPOINTMENTS/REAPPOINTMENTS**

Garry Wentz notified the Board that he had received the completed nomination and reappointment letters from the Monroe County Commissioners for Joseph Ruvane and Charles Leonard to serve terms beginning 7/1/20 through 6/30/23. He had received nomination and reappointment letters from the Pike County Commissioners for Ladora Phillips, Derek Bollinger and Deborah Fischer to serve terms beginning 7/1/20 through 6/30/23.

### **INDEPENDENT MONITOR CONTRACT**

Garry Wentz reported that due to the lack of activity in our CareerLink® and affiliate sites our new monitor, Don Langlois could not start his duties. Now that we are operational again, he had started conducting monitoring reviews under our new policy. He was in the process of monitoring Youth Program services in our 4 service sites.

### **CAREERLINK REPORTS**

The following CareerLink® and affiliate site reports were distributed to the Board members prior to this meeting.



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## PA CareerLink<sup>®</sup> Carbon County Overview

**6/10/20 through 8/25/20**

### **A. Administrative/Staffing**

PA CareerLink Carbon County has continued to be closed to the public with limited appointments for WIOA Title I services. On Wednesday, August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020 PA CareerLink Carbon County will be reopening to the public, mainly by appointment only to assist the community with its job seeking needs. During this time, we will continue to follow CDC Guidelines for businesses, and encourage clients to schedule appointments to take advantage of services. It is also encouraged that employees limit in person contact as much as possible, and services are encouraged to be offered virtually or by phone.

WIOA Title I staff continue to work in the office five (5) days a week, and BWPO staff will rotate two (2) days a week in the office and three (3) days a week telecommuting. Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry established guidance for BWPO working in the office, splitting time between telecommuting and in office, as well as limiting the number of employees in the office at one time. Partner staff such as OVR will continue to telecommute for the foreseeable future, and PrimeTech is telecommuting and going into the office on an as needed basis. Bob Pisko will continue to telecommute as well.

The RSAB for Fiscal Year 2020 was approved and the MOU for 2020-2024 has been completed. We are currently in the process of acquiring all signatures, and adjusting the MOU as needed.

PA CareerLink Carbon County is in the process of moving their location from 69 Broadway in Jim Thorpe. The landlord is actively trying to sell the building, and is in the process of a sale with a prospective buyer. Due to these circumstances, our office feels it is best to seek out a new location within Carbon County. Despite the commercial real estate market in Carbon County offering very few viable options, we are optimistic that we have identified a suitable site. We are currently in the process of working with the property management group to review and finalize the lease, and thus commencing with the moving process. Once a lease is signed, we will have more information on the new site and changes that are being made.

### **B. Services/Programs**

As PA CareerLink Carbon County reopens on August 26<sup>th</sup>, a majority of services will be available to the public. This includes, but is not limited to all employer services, career counseling or resume services, WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated, and Youth Services, EARN program, On the Job Training (OJT) services, as well as use of the Computer Resource Room (CRC) for job searching. The main change that will occur with reopening is not only allowing walk ins, but also allowing

clients to use the CRC and tools such as printing and faxing. The Unemployment Compensation courtesy phone will remain off for the indefinite future, and the RSEA program is on hold until it is changed and updated by the Department of Labor and Industry.

WIOA Title I Services continue with Adult, Dislocated, and Youth training tuition assistance. Our office continues to meet with perspective customers both virtually and over the phone. Training providers are continuing to reopen, and due to this, as well as reopening the CareerLink, we are expecting participants and obligations to increase over the coming weeks and months. EARN program is continuing to accept referrals, and we expect an increase in these numbers with EARN, Work-Ready, and WIC requirements that will soon be in our caseload.

WIOA Title I also continue to work Pinebrook Family Answers to establish a Youth Re-Entry Program. Pinebrook has made an offer to a potential caseworker, and will be working with them to establish the program and work within Carbon County prison to get the program off the ground.

All Employer services are continuing and expanding during the pandemic. This includes not only posting jobs and working with employers to help hire job seekers, but also help organize and facilitate virtual job fairs to assist both employers and job seekers. Virtual workshops continue to be offered for individuals.

The CareerLink will offer CRC assistance to individuals on an appointment only basis. This is starting for the first time since the office closed in March. These will be by appointment only, and the Computer Resource Room will be available for self-service.

### **C. Current LMI/Foot Traffic Levels.**

According to PA Workstats, Carbon County's current unemployment rate as of July 2020 is 13.6%, which is 0.6% higher than the state's average, which is at 13%. These are both higher than the national average of 10.2%. This is due to temporary and permanent layoffs due to the COVID-19 pandemic and shutdown. The largest industries affected by this are Trade, Transportation, & Utilities at 25.5% of UC Exhaustees, and Manufacturing with 18.5% of UC Exhaustees.

Foot traffic and calls have steadily increased over the past 4 weeks, mainly due to unemployment compensation claims, as well as CARES Act assistance running out. Below is the number of Foot Traffic and Calls the CareerLink have assisted recently.

#### **Foot Traffic and Calls**

- Total Foot Traffic/Calls Per Day: 40.5
- Total Foot Traffic/Calls Per Week: 167.2
- UC Foot Traffic/Calls Per Day: 15.19
- UC Foot Traffic/Calls Per Week: 74.4
- WIOA Title I Foot Traffic/Calls Per Day: 2.13

- WIOA Title I Foot Traffic/Calls Per Week: 7.4
- Employer Foot Traffic/Calls Per Day: 3.75
- Employer Foot Traffic/Calls Per Week: 18

September 2020

## Pocono Counties Workforce Development Board Meeting

### Monroe County Report

After over 3 months of closure due to the pandemic, the PA CareerLink Monroe County opened its doors to the public on Monday, June 29, 2020. Just as we adapted to the way our services were offered during the closure, reopening the CareerLink has brought a very different look to our operations. The following has been put into place:

1. The **Security** firm Kraye Detective Agency, of Dunmore, PA, has been retained to assign a security guard at the public entrance to the Office starting Monday, June 29<sup>th</sup>. The contractor's responsibilities include:
  - a. Meet the public at the entrance and give direction.
  - b. Enforce the policies of the CareerLink.
  - c. Enforce the states policy on facial coverings at all times as directed-masks worn by public and staff.
  - d. Keep track of the number of customers in the building throughout the day.
  - e. Being alert to those coming and going.
  - f. Quickly responding to any disturbances or loud noises.
  - g. Conducting a security check periodically inside the facility.
2. All customers are seen on an "**Appointment Only**" basis.

This includes any individuals having contact with Case Managers, CRC usage, Training Opportunity requests, UC questions (by filling out the UC questionnaire form to request assistance), and employer services.



- a. Career Guidance has set predetermined processes for each sector they serve (Pre-Applications for WIOA Training, Summer Youth, Reentry Programs). The processes will focus on minimal personal contact using virtual means whenever possible, with sneeze shields at each case managers desk when they meet customers in person.
- b. We continue to provide virtual Seminars and Workshops to fulfill the needs of our customers. When it is determined necessary to provide onsite Seminars/Assessments, we will do so maintaining social distancing guidelines in the Large Conference Room.

### **3. Cleaning**

- a. The Sparks Cleaning Service did an initial deep cleaning and sanitizing fogging of the entire CareerLink premises on Friday, June 26<sup>th</sup> prior to opening to the general public.
- b. Daily -Staff is responsible to clean their workspace area on a daily, and as needed basis, when customers are seen after appointments.
- c. During the day on a regular basis the high touch public areas will be wiped by trainee's and staff when needed.
- d. CRC Computers-keyboards will be cleaned after each use and users will be asked to wear gloves.
- e. Nightly, the public areas (front, kitchen, bathrooms) will be cleaned and disinfected by Spring Hill maintenance.

### **4. Social Distancing**

- a. Customer/Traffic Flow is maintained starting with the security guard directing the customer to the front desk where they will then be directed to the area, they have an appointment for. If no appointment, they will be instructed to make one at that time.
- b. Soft furniture in the waiting area has been removed and replaced with hard surfaced chairs.
- c. Hand Sanitizing station set up at entrance with additional hand sanitizer available at entrance of CRC and employee desks. There is at least a 30-day supply of all required PPE items on site.

### **5. Public Notifications**

- a. Ground signs and sandwich board on property site notify the public that the CareerLink is open "By Appointment Only" and the "UC Phone Line is Not Available" to use as it was previously.

- b. Notices that the CareerLink is Open by Appointment Only and that the UC Phone in Not Available have been placed on our website, in print ads (Pocono Record), constant contact notices).

Since the opening of our office until August 21<sup>st</sup>, 457 customers have physically come through our doors and were served as follows:

- Unemployment Compensation Concerns: 179
- Career Resource Room for Job Search: 157
- WIOA – Job Training Appointments: 116
- Employers: 5

We continue to meet regularly via Zoom with our partners and providers to successfully maintain our contracted programs and community alliances such as:

- The SLIP, contracted through Northampton Community College, has had 6 students in internships this summer at Pocono Mountains United Way, Barton Heights Veterinary Hospital, ARM Lawyers, and Youth Empowerment Services. Since this program has been extended to October 31<sup>st</sup>, the hope is we will be able to recruit more interns and sites.
- Monroe County Career Pathways Internship Program, which utilizes the Business Education Partnership Grant.
- Economic Summit at ESU, which has gone from an in person, socially distanced event to fully virtual and regionally inclusive.
- Met with the Hospitality Instructional Staff of Northampton Community College to discuss the creation of virtual programs and trainings specifically for the Hospitality Industry.

The 2020-2021 Resource Sharing Agreement for the PA CareerLink Monroe County was recently approved by the state and the RSA and Memorandum of Understanding were sent out to all partners for signatures.

With the start of our new program year on July 1st, we saw the retirement of long time Job

Training staff member Nancy McKillop. For almost 3 decades, Nancy was an instrumental part of the team as we navigated the waters from J.T.P.A to WIA to WIOA. We sincerely thank her for her service and extend best wishes for the future.

## **I. Business Services Team (BST)**

- The LVER made the 62 visits and phone calls this quarter.
- There have been no Job Fairs scheduled at the Monroe CareerLink this quarter due to COVID-19, but we have reached out to employers to let them know that we can conduct virtual job fairs. The outreach by the LVER and BST resulted in 133 additional job postings added to the PACareerLink® website.
- The main focus of the state staff has been assisting Monroe County residents get through the red tape of Unemployment. During this quarter over 800 residents have been assisted with an average payment of \$2,100 being released.
- Since July 1, 2020 to August 21, 2020 there have been 1,551 tracked phone calls received for UC compared to 1,169 calls for the entire previous program year that ended on June 30, 2019.

## **II. Career Guidance Team**

- The Career Guidance Team has written 11 ITAs so far this program year.
- The Career Foundations and Technology Program at CDE currently has 6 enrolled.
- The EARN program has enrolled 2 new participants in the program; 7 are currently active, with carry overs.
- The Career Guidance Team & YES is currently enrolling 30 ISY/OSY and 3 supervisors for the Summer Youth Employment Program.
- The Career Guidance Team processed 15 Dislocated, 12 adults and 8 OSY appointments. Over 55 O\*Net assessments were mailed out to participants since COVID.
- Youth Empowerment Service / Career Guidance processed 50 youth for the Summer Employment Program. There were 38 participants enrolled and placed for SYEP.

## **III. Customer Information & Resources Team (CIRT)**

- Since the reopening we have been scheduling appointments for Career Resource Room (CRC). The appointments are being staggered to allow individuals in the room at one time. Appointment times are set for 9:00, 11:00, 1:00 and 3:00 for no longer than 1 hour and 15 minutes to allow for cleaning in between appointments. All individuals must wear their masks and gloves while in the CRC.
- We are still providing virtual seminars to the participants, offering 2-3 seminars a week that average 60 participants a month. Some of the topics are: How To Cope With Job Loss, How To Apply For Government Jobs, Interview Basics (including virtual interviews), Resume Writing, and Careers In The Health Field.
- An On-the-Job training for a dislocated worker was set up and we continue to reach out to employers for more on the job trainings and paid work experiences.

## **Workforce Development Board Report – Pike County**

***September 2020***

**We are open!** Pike WDA staff are assisting job seekers and enrolling persons interested in training. We have also just wrapped up our Internship and Summer Youth Employment and Training Programs. Every effort is made to maintain continuity of services as offered before the Pandemic while following the CDC's recommendations. We continue to have a higher than normal call volume and staff continue to assist individuals with Unemployment Compensation, Pandemic Unemployment Assistance, and Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Assistance. We are able to provide information gathered from the UC website and contact UC and PUA representatives on behalf of the claimant to resolve issues.

Additional staff activities and services available:

- Constant Contact newsletters for sharing information and services
- Job search and resume assistance - to limit the number of people in the building, appointments are made for staff assistance and computer usage in the CRC.
- Employer services – identifying and posting employment opportunities
- Providing information regarding available resources
- Currently accepting and processing applications for training

- Virtual Seminars/Workshops provided by staff at the Monroe County CareerLink

State Staff: We are not sure when state staff will be allowed to return to the Pike County office. Charlie Montalbano from the Monroe County CareerLink continues to assist remotely with CareerLink job postings.

Employer Activity: We are starting to see more employers hiring. Below is a list of some of the employers we have assisted since our June Meeting.

- Insulation and Spray Foam Direct
- Twin Cedars
- Chelbus
- AquaFlow Pump & Supply
- 84 Lumber
- Dutch's Market
- Kittatinny Canoes
- PennDOT
- Kids Play Today
- Pike County Correctional Facility
- Eureka Stone Quarry
- Knapp Associates
- Hampton Inn
- Williams Well Drilling
- Silver Birches
- ERG Staffing
- Wallenpaupack Area School District
- Sovereign Commercial Services
- A Dependable Cleaning
- Pike County Correctional Facility

We are also working with employers to offer future virtual Zoom/Skype recruiting events.

Events and outreach: At this time, all in person events and workshops have been suspended. We are utilizing our social media accounts including, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Constant Contact and Instagram to promote virtual events, employment opportunities, available services, and job search/employment retention tips.

Summer Programs: 3 interns and 12 traditional Summer Employment and Training Program participated this year. Youth were connected with work experiences that align with their career goals. 3 participants returned to college and the others have returned to high school. Some high school students will continue to work after school and on weekends.

WIOA Training: More training options are becoming available with schools reopening and some are offering virtual options. Many participants who were previously enrolled are continuing through distance learning.

PY 2020 (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021) 6 new ITA agreements (5 CDL A Drivers and 1 Nurse Aide)

- \$0.00 On-the-Job Training
- \$24,500.00 Individual Training Accounts (ITA)

Welfare Funded Programs: Clients in these programs are given the option to continue with virtual activities but many are choosing to return to in-person program activities including job search, subsidized or unsubsidized employment, and community service. 1 participant has accepted part-time employment that will hopefully go to full-time this month. We have 3 new participants that began in August. Clients in these programs

require intensive case management as they prepare to enter employment and become self-reliant.

## WORKFORCE ALLIANCE

### WAYNE COUNTY

#### 1. Guest Services

- June
  - Total clients served 446
    - 305 Unemployment Compensation calls/assistance provided
    - 79 Career counselling sessions
    - 31 Business engagements
- July
  - Total clients served 594
    - 369 Unemployment Compensation calls/assistance provided
    - 92 Career counselling sessions
    - 31 Business engagements
- August (to Fri Aug 21<sup>st</sup>)
  - Total clients served 295
    - 154 Unemployment Compensation calls/assistance provided, including 40 Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)
    - 45 Career counselling sessions
    - 44 Business engagements

We continue the *“Pivot and Prosper”* mindset developing innovative ways to serve our partners and guests specifically in response to COVID 19 protocols. We are actively engaging members of the business community, residents, and local elected officials to assist in the rebuilding of our economy. Through our proactive approach, we are able to bring “just in time” services to people more quickly and more efficiently than ever before. Including:

- All enrollment documents all available electronically on our website
- A secure electronic signature process to expedite services
- The creation and implementation of video workshops, and **chats** maintaining customer engagement

We seamlessly collaborate with Monroe County CareerLink<sup>®</sup> to assist in unemployment claims processing. The individualized approach with claimants filing for PUA and **PEUC**, provides the opportunity to pivot the conversation to other services such as re-training, skills transference and re-careering. All Wayne County staff are certified Career Coaches.

- **Career Services**

All WIOA intake forms are available on Wayne Pike Workforce Alliance’s website. This allowed our participants and businesses to continue to seek WIOA services. We adopted an

electronic signature policy for required documentation. Claimants comment on the ease of use and the reduced need to find transportation to the office.

- Individual Training Account/On the Job Training- 7 in progress
  - Schools are beginning the reopening process. We continue online programming.
- Caseload of 41 participants with required case notes, contacts, progress reports, certification documents, licenses, and training/employment status.
- Continuous contact with colleges and other training providers to assist them in transitioning to online.  
The development and implementation of Virtual Career fairs, on-line career exploration workshops and an electronic Re-entry Career Path Program for returning citizens.
- Serve as a partner to identify candidates for internships and employment opportunities specifically for Hospitality/Leisure businesses in Wayne & Pikes Counties. (Training Source: USDA Rural Development.

## **2. 2020 Grant (State/Local Internship Program)**

23 students and 22 employers for our SLIP 2020 Summer Program

We continue to provide support to all the employers in the program to encourage a safe work environment for interns and other staff members.

Program Highlights:

- EverFi Financial Literacy provided by Honesdale National Bank,
- Launch your Career online trainings and
- Build Your Brand - LinkedIn page development including a Wayne County SLIP Intern Group to engage with a myriad of professionals.

## **3. Employer Services**

- Incumbent Worker Training- YTD-5 contracts (some are still pending)
- On the job training- 3
- 67 New Job orders

## **4. Other Workforce Activity (Staff & Participants)**

- Continued participation with Wayne County juvenile justice system for referrals
- Re-affiliation as a Community Based provided for the Pennsylvania Academic, Career & Technical Training Project through the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime Delinquency
- Staff continues to prepare for Certified Workforce Development Professional certification



## **PROGRAM YEAR 19-20 PERFORMANCE REPORT**

Garry Wentz reported to the Board that we had received the final WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Program Performance Reports, along with those for Labor Exchange and Veterans Program services. He was happy to report that once again we have met or exceeded all Federal Department of Labor Performance goals for customers served within our WDA. He commended the effort of all of the partner staff operating in our service delivery system and noted the challenges we will have in the current program year due to the impact of the pandemic on our services.

## **HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY TRAINING WORKGROUP UPDATE**

As discussed at our June meeting, Garry Wentz reported that staff from our service sites, Northampton Community College staff, and Board members involved in the Hospitality Industry had met by Zoom in July to discuss the training needs of the industry and how we might be able to assist this industry with both our current training services and resources as well as other resources that we could identify.

The initial discussion involved short term training programs, certifications, and skills needed by the Hospitality Industry for their workers, as well as training resources needed for the current and future workforce in this industry to work safely with the COVID virus situation and directives issued by the Governor. This has been a topic of discussion for quite some time with our Board. Garry noted that due to eligibility guidelines for customers we service with Department of Labor funding, he felt that identifying other resources without these limitations would be the most helpful approach to employers in this industry. He said he anticipated that this workgroup would continue to meet on a regular basis since it was something that can't be resolved in short order.

## **YOUTH INCENTIVE POLICY**

Garry Wentz reported to the Board that as directed by the Pocono Counties WDB at our June meeting, he, and the Directors for Carbon County Workforce Training, Monroe County Job Training, Pike County Workforce Development, and the Wayne Workforce Alliance had met by Zoom to discuss the Youth Incentive Policy that Wayne County had developed and submitted for consideration. He reported that Helene Mancuso, Director for the Wayne Workforce Alliance services had explained why they felt that the proposed policy would be helpful to achieving youth program goals, helpful to the youth served in our programs, and consistent with WIOA guidelines and Youth Incentive policies that were long established and prevalent in other Workforce Development Areas, including the other WDA's surrounding the Pocono Counties. She pointed out that Pathstone offers Incentives for Youth participants as part of the Youth Offender Program that is starting up in Monroe and Wayne Counties, as well as the EARN Program for public assistance customers operating in the Pocono Counties WDA. She felt it would be helpful and fair to other WIOA Youth participants for us to offer incentives for completion of training and employment benchmarks. Carbon County Workforce Training's Director Sam Hellen had asked what evidence there was that offering incentives had an impact on Youth participant performance, while Cynthia DeFebo and Deborah Harrison, Directors of the Pike and Monroe County Offices said they had discussed it with their program staff and did not feel a Youth Incentive Policy would help in achieving program performance goals and would be difficult and time consuming to administer in relation to any positive benefit to the customers or the program. They pointed out that although Incentives were available under EARN, that was a requirement of the Department of Human Services, not a WDB policy. And their

experience indicated that it was of little or no value to EARN customers in affecting their behavior or achieving any performance benchmarks. They felt it was time consuming and were opposed because it was contrary to their belief that the assistance we provide youth and other program customers with their training needs is of far more importance to the customer's long-term goals than any incentives we offered. Cynthia also mentioned that fiscal controls over incentives that take the form of gift cards or similar ways of distributing incentive payments have been found wanting in other areas, leading to disallowed costs and other financial risks and penalties. They also pointed out that we already meet or exceed our training and employment performance goals for Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth without offering incentives. Although the majority of the Program Directors that participated in the meeting did not support the need for the proposed policy, Helene asked for an opportunity to present Wayne County's case in support of the policy to the Board members at our September meeting.

Helene, along with Tessa Wright from the Wayne Workforce Alliance, presented their arguments in favor of adopting a Youth Incentive Policy to the Board members. Their support and rationale for both the need and the advantages of the policy consistent with the points they made in the meeting with Garry and the other Program Directors. Marybeth Wood, Board member, also spoke in support of the proposed policy. Lori Phillips, Board member, questioned the need for a policy that provided incentives for goals such as completion of a high school diploma or GED that were needed by any youth who hoped to succeed in their employment or post-secondary training goals. She felt that completion of such minimal goals should be their own reward, and something we should be teaching all youth to achieve without the need for incentives. Marybeth Wood asked if it was possible to

allow Wayne County to utilize Youth Incentives even if the other County Directors declined to utilize them in their programs. Garry Wentz advised the Board that any policy we adopt, such as our ITA policy, OJT policy, Work Experience wage, etc. has to be applied consistently to all customers we serve in the Pocono Counties WDA. We cannot selectively pick and choose which services customers are eligible to receive based on county of residence. He also mentioned that some of the needs of Youth customers that the Wayne County Program staff hoped to help with an Incentive Policy might be addressed with our Supportive Service Policy. Frank Revitt felt that unless the majority of the County Program Directors were in favor of the policy, that it should not be supported by the Board. At the conclusion of the discussion, the consensus of the Board was to table the proposed policy for further discussion between the County Directors and WDB staff. The proposed policy is attached as part of the minutes for this meeting.



Draft Youth  
Incentive Policy.docx

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The next meeting will take place Wednesday, December 2, 2020, in Monroe County, with a location to be determined, or by Zoom Conference call if conditions do not allow for in person meetings at that time. With no other Business to be brought before the Board, a motion was made by Craig Zurn to adjourn, and seconded by Tony Hertzog. Board polled-Motion carried. The meeting ended at 11:05 A.M.