



Serving as the Workforce Development Board for the Lower Shore of Maryland

The quarterly meeting of the Lower Shore Workforce Development Board was held on Wednesday, March 10, 2021, at 11:00 a.m., hosted via GoToMeeting teleconference service.

Members present: Ruth Baker, Jason Cunha, Bo Duke, Michele Garigliano, Denean Jones-Ward, Whitney Palmer, Jena Paquin, Danny Thompson, Pattie Tingle, Francisco Vega and Ivy Wells.

Absent: Nick Caruso, Mike Corbin, Paula Erdie, Joey Gardner, Tim Howlett, Walter Maizel, Rebecca Maldonado, Freddy Mitchell, Tony Nichols, Mitzi Scott, Jennifer Shahan and Nelson Sheppard.

Staff present: Shannon Alexander, Shelly Brown, Kim Dykes, Wanda Ferguson, Bob Hendricks, Paige Kline, Luis Mercado, Terri Paige, Dione Shaw, Rebecca Snoddy, and Becca Webster.

Guests: Roberta Baldwin, Director, Department of Social Services, Worcester County, Ken Lemberg, Deputy Director, Governor's Workforce Development Board, Amelia Mike, Worcester County Adult Education, and Mark Tyler, Department of Social Services, Wicomico County (representative for Paula Erdie).

Jason Cunha, WDB Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 11:03 a.m. He thanked everyone for participating in today's teleconference. A quorum was not present.

Meeting Format: Workforce Director began the meeting with an overview of virtual meeting protocol: 1) the meeting will be recorded; 2) identify yourself when talking; 3) identify anyone who is present with you during the call; and 4) mute your line unless speaking.

The first item on the agenda was the Consent Agenda. Since there was not a quorum, the Workforce Director tabled this voting item until the June 9th Board meeting.

Presentation: The Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Grant – The Workforce Director introduced Ruth Baker, Dean of Continuing Education and Workforce Development, Wor-Wic Community College. Ruth began with a brief review of the non-credit Career Starter Programs listed on the College Website. Career Starter Programs can be a quick path to a specific job that doesn't require a degree, but may require specific skills or credentials. Financial assistance for the Career Starter Programs can be challenging to find because non-credit courses are not funded by PELL Grant/Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). However, due to the pandemic, there has been a large influx in funding for some workforce training classes that result in industry credentials. The non-credit financial assistance website page (<https://www.worwic.edu/Pay-For-College/Paying-for-Non-Credit-Courses/Financial-Assistance>) was also reviewed. Ruth emphasized The Governor's Emergency Relief Education (GEER) Fund. This is a federal grant that provides assistance to students who are pursuing a continuing education and workforce development course/series of courses that lead to government or industry required certification or licensure. These scholarship funds can be used for both in-person and on-line courses (ed2go/career). This funding comes from the original CARES Act and is an example of the new enhanced funding as a result of the pandemic; it's new money, there's a lot of it, and it has to be spent by a certain time. Please share these resources with anyone seeking to return back to school to pursue workforce training. Another important program offered through a grant at no cost is the Wicomico County Adult Education Program. This program is also offered in Somerset and Worcester Counties.

Time was allotted for the Board to ask questions. The co-Chair thanked Ruth for a very informative presentation.

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LOWER SHORE WORKFORCE ALLIANCE

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Old Business

- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Follow Up: Local Data – The Workforce Director gave a PowerPoint presentation on Data Analysis – Gender, Race, and Poverty. A three year snapshot of WIOA participants (Adult/Dislocated and Youth) was reviewed. Information was provided by JobsEQ; which is essentially census data. In addition to census demographics, it is important to look at other data sources. The United Way publishes an ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) report every two years. These individuals earn above federal poverty limits but not enough to sustain their households. The Board was encouraged to review the ALICE Report (<https://www.unitedforalice.org/maryland>). The Workforce Director asked for questions. Are there areas of concern about the data that was presented today in relation to who we are enrolling? Is there additional information needed that you would like presented about our enrolled population? A discussion ensued. The Workforce Director said that we can't do the job that we do without looking at this type of data and asking questions such as, are we on the right track; are we serving the population that live in our community; and are serving the people who are truly in need.

New Business

- Confirm Youth Committee Membership Appointments – Since there was not a quorum, the Workforce Director tabled this voting item until the June 9th Board meeting.
- Approval Local Plan Draft – The Workforce Director said the draft is posted on the LSWA website, and it's out for Public Comment until March 31st, and the submission deadline to the State is April 1st. Since there is not a quorum, the draft Local Plan cannot be voted on today. The Workforce Director said the State considers the first submission a draft. They will review it and then provide feedback and, in most cases, they will require clarification or changes to the document. The four-year Comprehensive Plan (2020-2024) becomes effective on July 1, 2021. The Workforce Director encouraged anyone interested in having a separate discussion regarding the priority industries listed in the Local Plan to please reach out to her prior to March 31st.

Open Discussion – Time was provided for Board members to share updates.

Adjourn: A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 12:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dione Shaw
Operations Coordinator

Approved June 9, 2021

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Lower Shore American Job Center ■ 31901 Tri-County Way, Suite 215 ■ Salisbury, MD 21804
Phone: (410) 341-3835 ■ Fax: (410) 341-3735
www.lswa.org