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

**Youth Committee Meeting  
Minutes  
November 8, 2021  
1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.**

**Members Present:** Denean Jones-Ward, Chair, Heather Mahler, Vice Chair, Jennifer Bertrand, Michelle Bradley, Alicia Dennis, Anthony Dickerson, Erica Jackson and Ivy Wells.

**LSWA Staff:** Sherri Sigrist, Youth Program Manager, Shelly Brown, Deputy Director, and Dione Shaw, Operations Coordinator

**Guest:** Niccole Oliver, LSWA Youth Program Coordinator

Denean Jones-Ward, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:06 p.m. A quorum was present. She thanked everyone for participating in today's meeting and proceeded with attendee introductions.

**Virtual Meeting Protocol:** The Deputy Workforce Director gave 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.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes:** The Chair asked for a motion to approve the August 9, 2021, minutes. **MOTION:** Jennifer Bertrand motioned to approve the minutes as submitted. Michelle Bradley seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

**Program Updates:**

The Deputy Workforce Director introduced Sherri Sigrist as the new Youth Program Manager. Sherri joined the Lower Shore Workforce Alliance (LSWA) on August 30, 2021. As of today, Sherri will be the main point of contact for this committee and its work.

The Youth Program Manager continued with updates:

- Lower Shore Workforce Director – The Workforce Development Board (WDB) has confirmed Leslie Porter-Cabell as the new Lower Shore Workforce Director. An anticipated start date is early December.
- Youth Program Coordinator – Niccole Oliver joined LSWA on November 1, 2021, as the new Youth Program Coordinator. Niccole will be a liaison between the sub-recipient providers and LSWA, specifically the Youth Data Systems Specialist. The Youth Program Coordinator and the Youth Data Systems Specialist will receive and review all participant WIOA applications, determine eligibility, and ensure all supporting documentation and case notes are up-to-date.

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- Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) – Wicomico, Worcester, and Somerset Counties employed 45 students this summer. Somerset and Worcester Counties spent all of their allocated funding and Wicomico County spent a little over half. The Youth Program Manager shared one success story from each county.
- Out-of-School Youth Program (OSY) – This is the final year of a three-year grant (October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2022). The Request for Proposal (RFP) for the next three-year grant will be announced in the spring of 2022.
- Handbook Training – On November 3, 2021, a sub-recipient handbook training was held at the American Job Center for the sub-recipient providers: Grace Center and Telamon. Topics covered included eligibility requirements, program enrollment, case management, follow-up, grant management, and performance measures. The handbook is available to any committee member upon request.
- Metrix Learning has launched. This is an online educational platform offering over 6,000 courses, many leading to an industry-recognized credential or certificate and it is free to anyone living in Worcester, Wicomico, and Somerset counties. The Deputy Workforce Director said everyone must go through 20 hours of job readiness training, and once that is complete, the entire catalog will become available. The goal is to make the entire Lower Shore work ready.

## **Old Business**

**Youth Advisory Committee Meeting** – The Deputy Workforce Director reminded everyone that the December 2, 2021, Youth Advisory Committee meeting will be held virtually, 2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Committee members are invited to attend these meetings, however, you are particularly encouraged to attend this meeting. The topic of discussion will be the RFP solicitation process for the 2022 grant cycle. The emphasis this year will be to encourage organizations to collaborate and form a consortium to bid on the grant.

**Status of Strategic Goals** – The Deputy Workforce Director provided a review of Goal #1 and the Action Items for that goal.

- Goal #1: To increase employer engagement with workforce development and education systems in order to increase work-based training opportunities for at-risk youth.
  - Action items:
    1. Identify in-demand industries on the Eastern Shore. LSWA took the lead on that and the top five industries were identified. The spreadsheet was shared with the committee.
    2. Identify employers within each industry. Ivy Wells and Alicia Dennis volunteered to work on this Action Item. Ivy has identified employers in the Berlin area. Alicia is currently working on identifying employers for the three Lower Shore Counties.
    3. Interview employers and employees. Interview questions for Employers, Employees, and Educators have been developed.

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4. Video tours of Employers/Businesses. Jennifer Bertrand volunteered to assist with conducting video tours of businesses. LSWA can provide video equipment and assistance once Monique Snyder, Regional Communications Developer, returns from maternity leave in January.
5. Interview Educators that can provide training that leads to industry recognized credentials and career pathways. Denean Jones-Ward will assist with interviewing educators. Denean said, in January, she plans to connect with her peers at Wor-Wic, in Continuing Education, regarding the top five in-demand industries identified. The Deputy Workforce Director reminded the committee that a script of interview questions was completed back in August. **ACTION ITEM:** The Youth Program Manager will email the Video Interview Questions to the committee.

The Deputy Workforce Director provided a review of Goal #2 and the Action Items for that goal.

- **Goal #2:** Increase community awareness to strengthen referral systems for youth provider organizations.
  - Action items:
    1. Solicit guest speakers through the youth committee members and Advisory Committee. Heather Mahler has offered to solicit guest speakers. Jerrona Smith was our first guest speaker at the September 2, 2021, Youth Advisory Committee Meeting, and LSWA will be presenting at the December 2, 2021, Youth Advisory Meeting. A guest speaker is needed for the March 3, 2022, Youth Advisory Committee meeting. Heather said she plans to reach out to potential speakers after the beginning of the New Year.
    2. Research youth programs in the Tri-County area and identify contact person. LSWA staff has completed this task. **ACTION ITEM:** The Youth Program Manager will email the Area Youth Program Directory to the committee.
    3. Review any current community audits for gaps in youth services. Heather has also agreed to review current community audits for gaps in youth services. Heather told the committee that she found community need surveys, but she did not find any that specifically addressed youth gaps and services.

## **New Business**

**Youth Committee Chair** – The Deputy Workforce Director said Denean will conclude her tenure as Youth Committee Chair on December 8, 2021. Denean has agreed to remain on the Youth Committee. Her dedication to this committee and the young adults we serve is greatly appreciated. The Youth Committee Guidelines state that the Chair must be a member of the Workforce Development Board. Since Ivy serves on this committee, as well as the Workforce Development Board, she has accepted the position of Youth Committee Chair. Her appointment will go before the Steering Committee for approval later this month and then to the Board for

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confirmation on December 8, 2021. **ACTION ITEM:** The Deputy Workforce Director will add Ivy Wells' nomination to the Steering Committee agenda.

### **Other Business**

**Youth Committee Meeting Dates** – The Youth Program Manager briefly reviewed the dates and times for the 2022 Youth Committee meetings. Denean inquired about hybrid meetings for January and February, due to inclement weather. The consensus of the committee is to continue with virtual meetings for January and February and reassess the remaining dates in April. In addition, there is not a Youth Committee meeting in October because of Columbus Day. Since this year's last meeting date was August 9, 2021, the Youth Program Manager inquired as to whether the committee wanted to consider a different meeting date for the month of October as opposed to not having a meeting at all? The consensus of the committee is to schedule the October 2022 meeting for Monday, October 17, 2022.

**Membership Invitation to Somerset and Worcester County Adult Education** – The Youth Program Manager said Denean suggested sending a membership invitation to Somerset and Worcester County Adult Education Program Directors. The Guidelines state that the Youth Committee will consist of no less than 5 members and no more than 15 members. Currently there are eight committee members, so there is room for membership expansion. Denean said it would be good to have the tri-county area represented. Our demographics may be a little different but our goals are the same. To ensure that our committee is a well-rounded, well-represented mix of youth stakeholders, the Youth Program Manager and the Deputy Workforce Director will be soliciting board member participation as well. **ACTION ITEM:** The Youth Program Manager will email an invitation to Somerset and Worcester County Adult Education Program Directors to join the Youth Committee.

Committee member's agency announcements/updates

**Adjourn:** Meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dione Shaw  
Operations Coordinator

Approved January 10, 2022

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