

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD, INC.
OF
MAHONING AND COLUMBIANA COUNTIES**

Individuals with Disabilities Committee Meeting
April 14, 2022
9:00am
OhioMeansJobs Center Mahoning County

Committee Members Present: Shirley Bowald, Ed Emerick, Brian Eskridge, Susie Kooser, Marcy Patton, and Troy Rhoades
Committee Members Absent: Joe Caruso, Rick Fryda, Matt Golladay, Brenda Heidinger, and Erich Offenburg
Adjunct Members: Ashlee Iannucci, Patty Koehnlein, Carol Ramsay-Loomis, and Jennifer Strank
Board Staff: Mary Ann Kochalko and Sharlene Senediak
Guests: Jeff Magada and Karlene Pappada

Mr. Eskridge, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:05am after verification of a quorum. Patty Koehnlein, the new OOD job developer/caseload assistant, was introduced.

Approval of January 13, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Motion: To approve the January 13, 2022 meeting minutes as prepared.
Motion made by: Troy Rhoades
Seconded by: Shirley Bowald
Discussion: None
Motion approved.

Guest Speaker – Jeff Magada, Flying High, Inc.

Jeff Magada provided an overview of services available through Flying High, Inc. The mission of Flying High, Inc. is to help individuals become prepared and qualified to gain a career regardless of barriers.

Through its Professional Development Center (PDC), as a licensed technical school in Ohio, Flying High provides vocational training programs for welding, STNA, and Chemical Dependency Counselor Assistant (CDCA). Flying High also partners with other training providers for LPN, RN, CDL and machining and industrial maintenance training. All programs are accelerated in nature to help those with various employment barriers to gain a skills credential and become more marketable and employable as quickly as possible. The training programs are eligible to be funded through MCTA and other financial aid sources.

In addition to training, Flying High offers workforce development services and has opened job placement welcome centers in Downtown Youngstown and Warren, where customers can receive career counseling and supportive services. Karlene Pappada explained customers are assessed in five main areas: a clean drug screen, a valid driver's license, reliable transportation, a skills credential, and professionalism skills. If a customer is lacking in any of these areas, a career counselor will work with the customer to attain these elements, and once attained, will work with a job developer for full-time employment in one of the vocational trainings offered through the PDC.

Flying High is also a licensed provider of drug and alcohol treatment services and provides recovery housing to those who are eligible.

Through the Working Towards Your Future program, the GROW Urban Farm initiative provides returning citizens and other individuals with barriers the opportunity to work on the farm to gain work experience. Food grown on the farm goes back into the community, and through successful fundraising efforts, a food mobile bus will be launched in May to reach more people and areas where limited mobility still exists.

Orientation dates are available every month for individuals to learn more about Flying High's training programs and services.

Transportation continues to be a major barrier to employment. If a Flying High client is unable to acquire a driver's license due to outstanding court fines, they can complete merit-based employment to earn money that will go towards paying the fines. Employers are also providing innovative ways to offer transportation to work. OOD, MCTA, and Flying High are OMJ partners and may collaborate to leverage resources to assist customers. Some funding sources are available to support recovery. These funds can go towards housing or utilities, allowing an individual to use some of their income to pay fines or other liabilities.

Addressing Workforce Barriers – Trends and Problem-Solving

Information about workforce trends was provided for review and discussion. Given the impact of the pandemic and baby boomers retiring, more jobs are now available than there are individuals to fill the positions. Employers are realizing they must learn more about resources available for jobseekers and employees to meet their recruitment and retention needs. Employers also face the challenge of addressing the different priorities and values of multiple generations in the workplace. The changing trends in the workforce has created a necessity for employers to become more innovative, and workforce development professionals can propose solutions for employers to consider. It is also important for workforce development professionals to help job seekers identify their needs, as well as help them gain realistic expectations of various careers to know if a certain career path would be an appropriate fit.

DOL Opioid Grant Update

To date, 130 customers have been served under the grant, which is 2.5 times more than originally targeted due to the additional funding received from the State. 125 individuals received career services, 87 received training, and 99 received supportive services. 202 employers have also been served under the grant. It was recently announced that the grant will be extended but will be known as Fresh Start. The grant will still require WIOA-eligibility, as well as verifying whether the individual has been impacted directly or indirectly by the opioid crisis.

RETAIN Grant Update

Training for Phase 2 of the RETAIN grant is being planned for the Cincinnati and Toledo areas. Mathematica, the evaluator of the RETAIN grant, will be returning to the area to interview individuals who have participated in the referral process during Phase 1. A panel discussion was held with the Area 17 and 18 business service representatives to share ways representative in the new areas can encourage employers to participate in the project.

Member Updates

CCMHR SB – The Counseling Center is providing its supported employment program to men and women at the county jail, and it has been well-received.

CCBDD – Efforts have been moving forward to establish a joint employment collaborative in Mahoning and Columbiana counties.

Guest Invite Ideas

The suggestion was made to contact Mark Lamoncha to discuss employer culture and employee engagement.

Other Business/Next Steps

No other business was reported.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 10:40am.