

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

Individuals with Disabilities Committee Meeting  
January 18, 2024  
9:00am  
OhioMeansJobs Center Mahoning County

Committee Members Present: Shirley Bowald, Ed Emerick, Brian Eskridge, Dawn Haines for Joe Caruso, Meribeth Noble, Julie Rupert, and Susie Wickline  
Committee Members Absent: Matt Golladay, Brenda Heidinger, Melissa Maiorano, and Marcy Patton  
Adjunct Members: Jack Hile and Ashlee Iannucci  
Board Staff: Mary Ann Kochalko and Sharlene Senediak  
Guests: Davis Raff and Ernest Wiley

Mr. Eskridge, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:05am after verification of a quorum.

**Approval of October 24, 2023 Meeting Minutes**

Motion: To approve the October 24, 2023 meeting minutes as prepared.  
Motion made by: Julie Rupert  
Seconded by: Ed Emerick  
Discussion: None  
Motion approved.

**Guest Speaker – Davis Raff, OOD Career and Credential Consultant**

Davis Raff provided an overview of the extensive number of services OOD can offer to employers. These services include candidate sourcing, services to keep incumbent workers employed, disability etiquette and awareness training, job fairs and hiring events, tax credits, workplace accessibility services, Ohio vocational apprenticeship program, and inclusive employer tool kits. All services are offered at no cost to employers. Each Regional Business Relations Team is responsible for promoting OOD as a workforce development agency through its Business Relations Specialist, Career Development Specialist, Talent Sourcing Coordinator, and Career and Credential Consultant.

The Career and Credential Consultant seeks to connect OOD participants to short-term credentials, apprenticeships, and trades. The consultant will work with the registered apprenticeship programs across the State, as well as career & technical centers and trade schools, to gain information about these programs and share with OOD counselors. The counselors will promote these opportunities to participants and provide funding for them to attain certifications and licensures. Currently, industry-specific hiring needs and career growth outlook are being researched. Information can also be provided to business relations staff about credentialing programs, stackable credentials, and career pathways, to share with employers.

New content is being developed for the career pathways toolkit on the website. The toolkit can assist by showing how an entry-level position can advance within an industry, indicating the skills and credentials required for each position. The toolkit will focus on in-demand industry clusters in Ohio. Currently, the industry clusters will include healthcare, manufacturing, IT, transportation, construction, and administration.

OOD will be hosting an event on November 19, 2024, which is during Apprenticeship Week. The event will be a panel discussion about apprenticeships, short-term credentials, and trades.

A discussion was held about accommodations in the workplace. Although multiple individuals may have the same disability, accommodations will be tailored to meet the individuals' specific needs. If anyone has a general interest in learning about disabilities and accommodations, the Job Accommodation Network ([www.askjan.org](http://www.askjan.org)) is a good resource.

### **Grant Updates: Pathways Grant – Shirley Bowald**

The Pathways to Careers grant is a two-year grant, and it is approximately at its midpoint. Focus remains on meeting the deliverables initially proposed. The main challenge has been with apprenticeships. It was originally proposed that 1-2 apprenticeships would be completed per quarter, however, no one has enrolled into an apprenticeship; this is most likely due to apprenticeships taking a longer time to complete.

As of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter last year, there were 7 participants in Lean Six Sigma, IT, business, and manufacturing offered through YSU's Excellence Training Center.

A request was made to the State to expand the participation criteria beyond 2020-2022 graduates, which have been very difficult find. Efforts have been made to work with high school classes to receive industry-recognized credentials in MS Office, robotics, manufacturing and IBM professional skills. Training was also expanded to include credentials in ServSafe, Rise Up, and additive manufacturing. Partnerships are being made with the Rich Center and various academies to recruit additional participants. Reverse referrals will also be accepted for those who may need some additional training to complete an apprenticeship or to gain/maintain employment.

### **Member Updates**

No partner updates were reported.

### **Guest Invite Ideas – next and future meetings?**

The suggestion was made to invite Davis Raff back to report updates. Additional suggestions can be emailed to Brian Eskridge at [brian.eskridge@ood.ohio.gov](mailto:brian.eskridge@ood.ohio.gov).

### **Other Business – topics for discussion?**

*Future Meetings* – Upcoming meetings will remain on the second Thursday during the months of April, July, and October. If Brian Eskridge is unable to attend the meeting, Julie Rupert has agreed to chair the meeting in his absence.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00am.