

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

Individuals with Disabilities Committee Meeting
April 8, 2021
9:00am
Zoom Meeting

Committee Members Present: Shirley Bowald, Brian Eskridge, Matt Golladay, Jim Klingensmith, Susie Kooser, Joyce Loychik for Joe Caruso, Marcy Patton, and Troy Rhoades
Committee Members Absent: Ed Emerick, Rick Fryda, and Brenda Heidinger
Adjunct Members: Jack Hile, Ashlee Iannucci, Carol Ramsay-Loomis, Jennifer Strank, and Daniel Williams
WDB Members: LaTasha Johnson-Saulsberry and Mark Ragozine
Board Staff: Mary Ann Kochalko and Sharlene Senediak
Guests: Kim Barrell, Jenny Carsone, Lynda Conway, Donald Emerson, Dimitri Liogas, and William Turner

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

Approval of Consent Agenda Items

Motion: To approve the consent agenda items as prepared.
Motion made by: Marcy Patton
Seconded by: Troy Rhoades
Discussion: None
Motion approved.

Committee Membership Changes

Mary Ann Kochalko has become the new Area 17 WDB Director. Susie Kooser is the new MCTA COO and would like to replace Mary Ann Kochalko on the committee.

Motion: To appoint Susie Kooser from MCTA as a committee member.
Motion made by: Matthew Golladay
Seconded by: Shirley Bowald
Discussion: None
Motion approved.

Trumbull-Mahoning Coordinated Transportation Plan Updates

Lynda Conway, Senior Associate with Delta Development Group, Inc., provided an overview of two transportation plans in development – the Trumbull County 5-Year Public Transportation Capital and Operating Plan, and the Mahoning and Trumbull Counties Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan.

The Trumbull County 5-Year Plan is sponsored by WRTA and focuses specifically on public transportation. The draft plan is completed and will be presented to the Trumbull County Commissioners to seek their support of the plan and secure funding. The key components of the plan are to increase mobility options; improve existing and implement new, modern transit services; facilitate economic revitalization, and; improve environmental sustainability. Capital features, such as various facilities, were also highlighted.

The Mahoning and Trumbull Counties Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan is a 4-year plan and sponsored by WRTA and Trumbull County. Although this plan includes everyone in the communities, the primary focus is on seniors, disabled, and low-income individuals in Mahoning and Trumbull Counties. This plan is required to be in place to receive Federal Section 5310 funding. It also takes into consideration both public and private transportation services, and service analysis will be completed

separately for each county. The goals are to identify the needs and gaps in services, develop strategies to address the needs and gaps, and prioritize services for funding implementation.

The coordinated plan is currently in development, and outreach to gain feedback for the plan is in progress. Surveys have been sent to the public and organizations, and surveys for transportation providers will be sent tomorrow. After analyzing the data collected from the surveys, strategies will be developed and prioritized. The strategies will be shared at a focus group meeting for additional feedback. Changes will be made, and the proposed plan will be shared. Previous strategies being considered includes: a mobility management system, a single source for transportation information, collaborative training programs, collaborative agreements between and among transportation providers, collaborative marketing, and accountable transportation services.

Committee members can help by identifying any needs and gaps in public transportation services and offering their vision for an ideal transportation system; participate in the focus group to review the proposed strategies and offer feedback; take time to review the developed plan, and; express the importance of transportation services to local elected officials.

Youngstown OOD - Virtual Hiring Event Updates and Resources

Additional virtual hiring events with employers have been held, and it is anticipated that the use of the virtual platform will continue moving forward. Some efficiencies have been gained through using the virtual platforms, and a lot of positive feedback has been received from employers.

OOD held a virtual hiring event October 22, 2020, with 6 employers and 21 individuals; 26 interviews were completed and 16 individuals were hired. Another event was held on February 10, 2021, with 6 employers and 38 individuals; 49 interviews were completed and 10 individuals were hired. Huntington Bank liked the candidates so much from the previous event, they returned to interview more participants on March 25th; hiring results are not yet available for this event.

Last week, a statewide, week-long virtual hiring event for professional positions took place for the College to Career participants – this is the OOD cooperative program with higher education; in our area, it is with YSU. Many interviewed for internship opportunities.

On April 29th, a hiring event will be held for transition students in Richland and Knox Counties, which is located in the east central region of Ohio.

Meijer has also reached out again for its hiring needs, and a statewide event is scheduled for May 20th.

Preparation materials for virtual hiring events, as well as a resource guide for job seekers, are available on the OOD website under the Individuals with Disabilities tab.

Discussion was held regarding the high demand for human services professionals on all levels and the possibility to hold a virtual hiring event for this field. Information can be sent to OOD to determine if any OOD participants meet the qualifications. Other suggestions offered include more outreach to high school students and to work with the Business Advisory Councils.

DOL Opioid Grant Update

Opioid Grant 3, which can serve dislocated workers and long-term unemployed in Mahoning and Columbiana counties, was supposed to March 31, 2021, but the grant was recently extended for another year. Area 17 received additional to support the grant programs through the extension. This grant can assist individuals impacted by the opioid epidemic, provide funds for training in recovery services occupations, and to encourage employers to become recovery-friendly workplaces. Local goals for the number of individuals and businesses served through the grant have been met. The goal to place 2 individuals in emergency employment positions had to be modified due to COVID-19, however, that goal may be revisited given the extension of the grant.

RETAIN Grant Update

A proposal for Phase 2 of the RETAIN grant was submitted by the State in February, and the State is still waiting to hear if it has been approved. Eight states participated in Phase 1, and 5 will be approved to participate in Phase 2. The return-to-work/stay-at-work strategy for employed individuals who were injured off-the job will remain the same as Phase 1 – a liaison will work with employers on adaptations that can

allow injured workers remain employed. The State set a goal to enroll 3,500 participants, with half being in a control group. The Area 17 WDB and OOD have signed the MOU to continue involvement in Phase 2 if awarded.

Member Updates

Compass – Compass administrative staff have relocated to the Campus of Care in Mineral Ridge.

A collaborative is in place to help with retention rates in the developmental disabilities systems in Mahoning and Trumbull Counties.

Work sites are in place for the summer employment program for transition-age youth. The expectation is to begin receiving referrals during the first week of May. The 5-week program is scheduled to begin June 7th; a second 5-week program will begin July 12th.

First Energy – Fifty scholarships are being offered for First Energy's Power Systems Institute (PSI) program to support the company's diversity and inclusion efforts. Individuals completing the 2-year program can be hired and placed at a First Energy operating company, at a starting salary of \$50,000-60,000, with the potential to reach \$80,000-90,000 in 3 years.

OMJ – During March, customers were being seen by appointment only on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. Beginning April 12th, appointments will be made available Monday-Friday, which will allow each center to have the capacity to schedule 20 customers per day. Approximately 45 customers were seen in March. Three online workshops will be offered, and the first online workshop has been completed and uploaded to OneFlow.

Other Business/Next Steps

Guest Invite Ideas – Guest ideas continue to be requested, and suggestions can be forwarded to Brian for consideration. Guest ideas can be previous participants or representatives from other agencies.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 10:15am.