

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD, INC.**  
**OF**  
**MAHONING AND COLUMBIANA COUNTIES**  
Executive Committee Meeting  
December 21, 2023  
OhioMeansJobs Mahoning County

Committee Members Present: Kelly Darney, Deann Davis, Ed Emerick, and Brian Eskridge  
Committee Members Absent: Rachel Ketterman, Audrey Morales, Mark Nicaastro, Mark Ragozine, and Susie Wickline  
Board Staff Present: Mary Ann Kochalko and Sharlene Senediak

Deann Davis, WDB Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:00pm after verification of a quorum.

**Approval of Consent Agenda Item**

Motion: To approve the consent agenda item as prepared.  
Motion made by: Ed Emerick  
Seconded by: Kelly Darney  
Discussion: None  
Motion approved.

**WDB Policy Update**

*WDB Program Policy 3 – Individual Training Account:* Given the uncertainty of the circumstance involving WIOA funding, reducing ITA funding from two years to only one year was proposed. The maximum amount for a year will remain \$9500, and the maximum lifetime amount a participant can receive will remain \$19,000. Four-year degree programs will not be considered for funding until the last 12 months, and two-year programs will only be considered when 50% of the class requirements have been completed. Training must be completed successfully with a credential attained. The proposed effective date is January 1, 2024. Language has been updated in the policy to reflect these changes.

Motion: To approve WDB Program Policy 3 as discussed.  
Motion made by: Brian Eskridge  
Seconded by: Kelly Darney  
Discussion: None  
Motion approved.

**Youth Services Contract Modification**

The Counseling Center of Columbiana is requesting to provide their services to Mahoning County residents. The reasons for the request include: youth are more transient between both counties (particularly the homeless), some participants who live in the southern part of Mahoning County prefer to receive services in Columbiana County, and there are more youth services providers in Columbiana County than Mahoning County.

Motion: To approve the youth services contract modification with the Counseling Center of Columbiana County.  
Motion made by: Ed Emerick  
Seconded by: Brian Eskridge  
Discussion: None  
Motion approved.

**Director's Update**

The Education and Workforce Committee in the House of Representatives passed a bipartisan bill (HB 6655 – A Stronger Workforce for America Act) to present to the House of Representative for consideration. If it passes, it will move to the Senate. This bill would serve as a reauthorization for WIOA.

Area 17 requested \$184,5000 for its special project and received the entire amount from the State. The funds will be used to serve individuals who have been a part of the justice system. By receiving these funds, it will allow Area 17 to extend its Adult funding to serve more individuals. Under the special project, Area 17 proposed to do 20 short-term ITAs, 5 OJTs, 10 supportive services for 10 participants, and individualized career services for 20 participants. Budget modifications can be made if necessary.

The State recently shared that special project funding will become scarce due to funding needed for the new Ohio Department of Education and Workforce. Initially, local areas were informed that they would not be impacted, however, discretionary money from OWD may be transferred to the new department. Under HB 6655 that is being proposed, states can retain up to 25% of discretionary funds, compared to the 15% limit currently under WIOA. Efforts are being made among various organizations to inform legislators about some of the challenges and shortcomings being proposed in the new bill.

Area 17 has been involved with the Fresh Start grant since 2022. So far, Area 17 has received a total of \$781,000 for the grant, which is 456,000 more than originally allocated. Additional funds will be requested if the grant is extended.

### **Good of the Order**

No items were reported.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30pm.