

<b>Region 4 Workforce Board</b> <b>Meeting Minutes of March 25, 2020</b> Location: Conference call	<b>NEXT MEETING</b> Wednesday, May 27, 2020 Location: Lafayette - TBD
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**Directors Present:**

Alicia Hanawalt, chair  
 Arden Cramer, treasurer  
 Steve Snyder, secretary  
 Spencer Buchanan  
 Dean McCurdy  
 Karen Mellen

Shannon Polmateer  
 Randy Vernon  
 Larry West  
 Amy Wood

**Excused:**

Mike Smith, vice-chair  
 Mike Barnes  
 Richard Bradshaw  
 Dennis Carson  
 Deb Close  
 Elva James

**Staff and Guests Present:** *Roger Feldhaus, CEO; Tara Bradley, CFO; Deb Waymire, COO; Mellisa Leaming, Director of Operations; Tina Overley-Hilt, Executive Assistant/Financial Assistant; Matt Degolyer, DWD, Regional Director, Office of Work-based Learning & Apprenticeship.*

**Call to Order and Welcome**

The March 25, 2020, WDB meeting was held via conference call as a result of health concerns related to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) and the Governor’s Executive Order. Attendees were welcomed and the meeting was called to order by Chair, Alicia Hanawalt, at 8:30 a.m. Roll call was taken. A quorum was present. A correction was noted on the agenda regarding the date of the last WDB and OSOO meetings. The meetings were held on January 22, 2020, and not January 25, 2020, as shown on the agenda.

**Consent Agenda**

A motion was made to approve the consent agenda items as presented.

**Motion:** Larry West

**Second:** Karen Mellen

**Action:** Unanimous approval

**New Business**

**Fiscal**

**RFP for Audit Services-Update**

A request for proposal was issued for audit services for the Region 4 Workforce Board. Jake Dunton is acting as an expert and consultant for the Finance Committee with respect to the Audit RFP Process. Questions were received from proposers by March 3, 2020, and responses were provided by March 23, 2020. Proposals are due April, 3, 2020. Tara recommends that the Board continue to move forward with the process in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Region 4 WDB does not have an auditor currently; proposals are received electronically and can be reviewed electronically; and the discussion and review can be held by conference call. Questions were received from four firms, three of which are Indiana firms. The new audit firm needs to be selected by July 1, 2020.

**Operations**

**WorkOne System Response to COVID-19 Pandemic**

WorkOne Affiliate Sites in Crawfordsville, Logansport, Monticello, and Peru have been closed as a safety measure for staff and the public. The Kokomo WorkOne Comprehensive Site was also shuttered because one staff person’s spouse was ill and tested for the virus and, unrelatedly, the Inventrek building has been closed to the public.

Our first response was to close offices to the public with staff having the option of working in the office or remotely from home. The Lafayette WorkOne Comprehensive Site was left open and a process was established to limit the number of individuals accessing its public computers to file for UI benefits online. The process was in place for one day before Governor Holcomb's Executive Order closed all WorkOne Sites. Staff are working from home on encrypted laptops performing specific tasks, duties and professional development. Our service provider, JobWorks, is in contact with all staff through virtual meetings.

There are struggles with laid-off workers filing online because not all individuals have access to computers, smart phones, tablets, or the Internet. DWD is working to develop a telephone system so individuals can call in to apply for unemployment benefits. 2,015 initial UI Claims were filed in Indiana for the week ending March 7<sup>th</sup>. For the week ending March 21<sup>st</sup>, the number of initial claims was 53,608. In Region 4, for the week ending March 7<sup>th</sup>, there were 123 initial claims; for the week ending March 21<sup>st</sup>, there were 4,024.

The COVID-19 Unemployment FAQ will be sent to the Board.

### **Board Administration**

#### **Responding to Recession**

We are currently in a shallow recessionary period. For the next 6-10 weeks, we will be in this shut-down phase to protect against the spread of the COVID-19. After the shut-down, we would expect a quick ramping-up period. A significant majority of people who are being laid-off are attached to a job and employer. The role of the workforce development system is uncertain; but we know that we must, at a minimum, facilitate the return of workers to their pre-pandemic jobs or to take advantage of new opportunities. We will work with the state and other regional boards to leverage grant opportunities related to disaster relief and employment recovery. Governor Holcomb has released \$1.4 million to regional workforce boards to assist in adapting technology and making other accommodations in response to this crisis. We will receive \$120,000 to assist with setting up a work from home capability.

#### **Funding Opportunities**

There is a U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) grant opportunity, Pathway Home, which will provide \$65 million nationally, for up to 17 grants for a maximum \$4 million each, to train individuals while incarcerated and connect them to employment when released. We are considering submitting an application for this grant as a joint venture with Conexus Indiana.

#### **Extending OSO/WIOA Service Provider Subgrant**

The WDB subgrants funds to a service provider organization that employs staff to deliver WIOA and other related services in our WorkOne offices. The current subgrant agreement ends on June 30, 2020. The Board was asked for approval to extend the current agreement with JobWorks, Inc. to provide One-Stop Operator and WIOA Service Provider services for an additional one-year period, July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021. It is important to extend this agreement for one more year rather than open the contract for rebidding during a time of crisis and uncertainty.

A motion was made to extend the contract with JobWorks, Inc. for One-Stop Operator and WIOA Service Provider services through June 30, 2021.

**Motion:** Arden Cramer

**Second:** Steve Snyder

**Action:** Unanimous approval

#### **Extending America's Promise Grant**

The America's Promise grant is scheduled to end December 31, 2020. Because of the lack of interest and activity by individuals and employers, we were not considering seeking a one-year extension. With the

COVID-19 pandemic, we believe there will more of a demand for the services provided under the APG grant and are now seeking a one-year, no-cost extension from USDOL. There is over \$1 million left in grant funds; we plan to fully expend the funds over the next year and a half.

Alicia opened the floor for WDB members to share how the Coronavirus is affecting their organizations and communities. If there are needs in any of Region 4's counties or communities that the workforce development system can help with, please direct those needs to Roger or Deb Waymire.

Information about Employer Mass Layoffs and Indiana Unemployment FAQs will be send to Board members following this meeting.

**PY 20 WDB Meeting Schedule**

The meeting schedule for PY 20 (7/1/20 - 6/30/21) was shared with Board members. The meetings are scheduled for the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of every other month. Shannon Polmateer has a conflict with the dates which will limit attendance at the meetings. He will participate when possible.

At the WDB meeting on Wednesday, May 27, 2020, in Lafayette, DWD Commissioner, Fred Payne, is scheduled to attend. Matt Degolyer, DWD Regional Director, Office of Work-based Learning and Apprenticeships, may also be on the agenda to present the State Earn and Learn (SEAL) programs.

**Old Business**

None

**Adjournment**

A motion was made to adjourn.

**Motion:** Larry West

**Second:** Arden Cramer

**Action:** Unanimous approval

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 AM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Tina Overley-Hilt  
Executive Assistant

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Stephen Snyder, Secretary  
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc.  
d/b/a Region 4 Workforce Board