

Region 4 Workforce Board Meeting Minutes of May 27, 2020 Location: Conference call	NEXT MEETING Wednesday, September 23, 2020 Location: Lafayette - TBD
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Directors Present:

Mike Smith, vice-chair
Arden Cramer, treasurer
Steve Snyder, secretary
Mike Barnes
Richard Bradshaw
Spencer Buchanan
Elva James

Dean McCurdy
Karen Mellen
Shannon Polmateer
Randy Vernon
Larry West
Amy Wood

Excused:

Alicia Hanawalt, chair
Dennis Carson
Deb Close

Staff and Guests Present: *Roger Feldhaus, CEO; Tara Bradley, CFO; Deb Waymire, COO; Mellisa Leaming, Director of Operations; Tina Overlay-Hilt, Executive Assistant/Financial Assistant; and Commissioner Fred Payne, Commissioner Fred Payne, DWD*

Call to Order and Welcome

The May 27, 2020, WDB meeting was held via conference call as a result of health concerns related to Covid-19 and the Governor’s Executive Order. Attendees were welcomed and the meeting was called to order by Vice Chair, Mike Smith, at 8:30 a.m. Roll call was taken. A quorum was present.

Consent Agenda

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

Motion: Richard Bradshaw

Second: Larry West

Action: Unanimous approval

DWD Commissioner Fred Payne Comments/Board Comments

Commissioner Payne provided an update on the effects of Covid-19 on unemployment in Indiana since March 2020. In March, prior to the pandemic, the unemployment rate was 3.2%. The current unemployment rate is 16.9%.

- Initial unemployment claims peaked on March 28, 2020.
- Initial claims are decreasing and the number of people requesting unemployment and presenting vouchers is decreasing. This is an indication that some regions of Indiana and some industries are ramping back up and returning to work.
- On average, 80-85% of new claims are paid within 21 days from the date of filing, thanks in part to auto-adjudication and the hiring of more staff. The UI team now handles 280,000 adjudication issues per week, compared to 68,000 per week pre-pandemic. DWD will continue to move forward with automation and staff development.
- DWD embraces its responsibility to make sure every eligible person receives their benefits.
- Funding allocations for PY20 have been forwarded to each region. DWD and other state agencies were requested to reduce their state-funded budgets by 15%. Fortunately, this request does not refer to federal funds such as WIOA.
- DWD will pursue any additional funding opportunities available to support the regions and are in conversation with USDOL to identify various sources of funding.

The Governor’s Workforce Cabinet, along with other partners, is working on a *Rapid Recovery Plan for a Better Future*. This is people-focused initiative to provide comprehensive resources and support for Hoosiers to

secure education and training, skill and career coaching, and access to quality jobs. The *Plan* has five objectives: 1) online job help to connect people to job resources, education and training, and financial support; 2) leveraging a comprehensive outreach network including community and faith based organization; 3) focus on career coaching and mentoring; 4) develop assessment tools for employers and individuals; and 5) consolidated resources for employers. All of these will complement what regions are doing already.

The floor was opened for Board members to ask questions to Commissioner Payne:

- What thoughts are being shared with lawmakers regarding unemployment benefits?
 - The additional \$600 weekly benefit will make it hard for employees to want to return to work.
 - Incentivize employees to go back to work by reducing and/or phasing out the additional benefit.
 - Make sure a new system does not have to be created and implemented.
 - Congress should talk with small businesses because they will be most impacted with people having difficulty coming back to work.
 - People, by-in-large, do want to get back to work and to establish a “new normal”.
- After July 4th are there any workforce-related restrictions being planned by the Governor?
 - Based on the Governor’s *Back on Track Plan* we should see a full reopening on July 4th, but that will depend on the data provided to the Governor on a daily basis. To view a list of what is open or will open, go to www.backontrack.in.gov.
- Address the issue of not returning to work and the expectation to continue to receive benefits.
 - Indiana’s unemployment system was not designed for individuals to make a choice to between available work and not working. Failure to return to work under certain situations may jeopardize benefits. Individuals are encouraged to have a dialogue with their employer. Provisions covered by the *CARES Act* will be evaluated on a case by case instance.
- 380,000 jobs were lost in April. The hardest-hit industries were manufacturing and leisure/hospitality with a combined 194,000 jobs.

New Business

Fiscal

Audit Services RFP Results

A request for proposal was issued for audit services for the Region 4 Workforce Board. Sixteen RFP notices were sent out. Four proposals were received. Jake Dunton, Arden Cramer, Roger Feldhaus, Tara Bradley and Blake Sempstrott reviewed and scored the submitted proposals based on the following criteria: 1) Understanding of our organization, 2) Audit firm’s size and structure, 3) Qualifications of audit firm staff to be assigned to the audits performed, 4) Audit firm’s approach to the engagement, and 5) Price. Virtual interviews were held with two firms. The audit selection committee recommends to the full Board that Huth Thompson, LLC be selected as the new audit firm for Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. d/b/a/ Region 4 Workforce Board.

Board Action to approve the Audit Firm Recommendation

A motion was made to approve Huth Thompson as the new audit firm for Region 4 Workforce Board

Motion: Richard Bradshaw

Second: Larry West

Action: Unanimous approval

Projected PY20 Funding

Region 4 received its new allocation for PY20 WIOA. In PY19 our WIOA allocation was decreased by 14%, or \$305,000 less than PY18. For PY20 our WIOA allocation decreased by 1.7%, or \$32,000 less than PY19. The projected carry-in for PY20 will be about 30% of the allocation we received in PY19, which is more than the 20% we budgeted. The overall budget will decrease significantly due to the end of the Ready to Work grant October 2019. There will be additional funding opportunities through Disaster Recovery funding.

Operations

Disaster Recovery Grant Application

The Disaster Recovery Grant is an opportunity through the USDOL that DWD applied for on behalf of all workforce development regions, and through which we expect a \$131,500 subgrant for Region 4. These funds will help us deal with the impact of the rise in unemployment insurance claims, provide limited humanitarian services, and implement health and safety measures. Funds will help employers create temporary employment opportunities. We received over \$2 million dollars in requests to help schools, hospitals, food banks and child care centers. The proposal we submitted will assist Food Finders employ more warehouse workers and drivers for mobile food pantries as they deliver food across our 12-county region. We will assist Logansport Memorial Hospital's need to hire more temporary workers to carry out hygienic and disinfectant processes in response to the rise in Covid-19 cases in their community. We should hear if our proposal was accepted by end of May 2020.

General Motors Manufacturing Ventilators

We connected with GM and DWD to cohost a virtual job fair to assist with hiring for temporary positions to manufacture ventilators. It was very successful and many individuals were hired from the event. GM's employment flyer is posted on Facebook and on the WorkOne West Central website. We used Engage by Cell to notify customers of the job order via text message. Information was sent to school superintendents and principals, guidance counselors, CTE directors and other partners. GM was appreciative of all the assistance Region 4 was able to provide.

Chancellor Dean McCurdy shared that Ivy Tech has been hosting Workforce Wednesday with employers, holding Virtual Job Fairs and promoting job opportunities in the community. CARES Act funds have been used to assist students with technology needs and other expenses. Ivy Tech received a generous donation to assist students. Over \$80,000 has been raised to help students in the Kokomo and Lafayette areas. Both the Lafayette and Kokomo campuses have produced and donated over 10,000 face shields. Staff will return to campus mid-June and early July to bring back students to complete out work from spring and do to training on campus. Partners may return to campuses prior to Ivy Tech reopening. Ivy Tech will plan to reopen for the fall semester with several options available to the students. Here is the link provided by Chancellor McCurdy:

<https://www.ivytech.edu/RapidRecovery/>.

WorkOne Center Reopening Plans

Beginning June 1st, small teams of staff will be working in the Lafayette and Kokomo WorkOne Centers to assist customers by appointment only. CDC protocols will be in place. PPE has been acquired to keep staff and customers safe. Customers will be able to go online and schedule appointments. There is a direct communication line and computer in the offices to assist individuals who have been struggling to receive unemployment benefits. The affiliate WorkOne offices will not open at this time. Beginning July 6th, staff will return to the comprehensive offices with walk-in traffic using a numbering system and appointment scheduling. Affiliate offices may open by appointment only and walk-in traffic in August.

PY 19 WIOA Performance

Deb Waymire presented the PY19 WIOA performance data for the period ending March 31, 2020. For adult and youth measures, Region 4 is on target to meet all performance measures. For dislocated workers, we are on target to meet all performance measures except employment at the end of the 2nd quarter after completion. For adults, Region 4 served 881 individuals, which was 10% of the total number of participants served statewide, utilizing only 6% of all statewide allocations. For dislocated workers, we served 896 individuals, which was 18% of the total number of participants served statewide, utilizing 7% of all statewide allocations. Region 4 received 6% of the total adult and dislocated worker WIOA statewide allocation and served 13% of the total adult and dislocated worker participant population statewide. For youth, we received 7% of the statewide allocation of youth funding and served 7% of the youth participant population statewide.

Board Administration

Ready to Partner for Economic Recovery

We are prioritizing partnership leveraging opportunities that will help us meet needs as people return to work and WorkOne offices reopen. There are categories of workers we expect to have contact with at the WorkOne Centers. The categories are: 1) Individuals connected to a job. These individuals will be recalled and may not need assistance; 2) Individuals that have an attachment to an industry such as the Hospitality or Retail that may not return to the employer they were released from in the future. For these individuals, our role is helping with training and/or refiguring a career plan; and 3) Individuals that want to change career paths and will take advantage of training opportunities.

Board Membership Renewal

The following WDB member's terms expire on June 30, 2020, Alicia Hanawalt, Richard Bradshaw, Dennis Carson and Mike Smith. Roger will be reaching out to each member to see if they are interested in serving another two-year term.

Executive Council Meeting Due (summer)

The Executive Council meeting is a required meeting that will be called by the Regional Chief Elected Official, Mayor Tony Roswarski. The Executive Council is comprised of the chief elected officials from the 12 counties in Region 4. Membership needs to be updated and a new agreement between the Board and the Council needs to be signed. We hope this meeting will be scheduled within the next six weeks.

Lunch with Legislators Due (fall)

It is still on the WDB agenda to connect with the Region 4 legislators and share with them what is happening in Region 4 and with their constituencies.

Mike Smith opened the floor for WDB members to provide an update on how the Covid-19 is affecting their organizations and communities as Indiana gets "Back on Track". 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.

Old Business/Good of the Order

None

Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn.

Motion: Richard Bradshaw

Second: Arden Cramer

Action: Unanimous approval

The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Tina Overley-Hilt

Executive Assistant

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