

Workforce Development Board Meeting Minutes
April 1, 2020

The meeting was called to order at 10:30 am by Craig Harting and introductions were made.

Those in attendance via Conference Call: Craig Harting, Amy Gilbert, Krystle Bristol, Diana Edler, Brad Georgetti, Mark Haas, Kristin Hamilton, Jonah Howe, Allen Hubler, Jackie Johnson, Bruce Jones, Mike Narcavage, Heather Nelson, Breanna Repard, Karen Russell, Linda Walsh, Darlene Wampole, Penne Watkins, Debra Wivell, Donna Yale, Melanie Erb.

NTRPDC Staff in attendance via Conference Call: Frank Thompson, Melissa Fleming, Jody McCarty, Bonnie Warner, Patty Sturzen.

Citizens Comments: None.

February 5, 2020 Meeting Minutes: A motion to approve the February 5, 2020 WDB Meeting Minutes was made by Brad Georgetti and seconded by Mark Haas. The motion passed unanimously.

PA CareerLink Highlights-Remote Services:

Tioga County-Diana Edler:

- ♦ Tioga County Job Fair held March 10, 2020. 156 job seekers, 26 registered employers and 22 Veterans attended. Event went very well with a lot of positive feedback from employers.
- ♦ Tioga CareerLink has outgoing message on main phone line informing customers how to contact UC and letting customers know that Facebook will be the platform of communicating with customers during this shut down time. Staff also going into the office to answer phone messages.
- ♦ Communication through Facebook has been successful with a different CL staff members being assigned to Facebook every day to answer questions.
- ♦ Tioga CL staff are promoting current services and programs available through NTRPDC and DCED.
- ♦ Staff also putting most current information from L&I on Facebook for customers as well as employers concerning information on UC, Workers Compensation and Small Business Loans.
- ♦ WIOA providers having Facebook Live Workshops for their customers.
- ♦ Employers Resources Guide being developed.
- ♦ Post-Pandemic Plan to reopen Tioga CareerLink currently being worked on.

Bradford, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Wyoming Counties-Darlene Wampole:

- ♦ Staff responding to customers, employers and business who are calling/e-mailing Bradford County CareerLink, posting job leads and helping job seekers with websites.
- ♦ Bradford CL staff also sharing information about UC, L&I, SBA, Shared Work Program, Dept. of Health as well as other services/programs that are available.
- ♦ Updated information being shared on Facebook.
- ♦ Available Skills Workshops listed on website.
- ♦ Post-Pandemic Plan to reopen Bradford CareerLink is currently being worked on.
- ♦ Bradford County Job Fair that was scheduled to take place April 29, 2020 has been postponed and is rescheduled for September 30, 2020 at the Wysox Fire Hall.
- ♦ CareerLink Job Postings, New Employers Using CareerLink, New Hires, Jobseekers Visits included in meeting packet for review.

Youth Update-Jody McCarty:

- ♦ Review of the February 2020 WIOA Youth Monthly Report shows recruitment at 28 of 42 which is 67% of goal.
- ♦ Review of March 2020 BEP Report. Four large events had to be cancelled due to COVID-19.
- ♦ BEP grant and Teacher in the Workplace grant have both been extended until December 31, 2020. These extensions allow the grants to be utilized into the next school year.

- ♦ Summer SLIP Program is still on schedule with 11 interns to participate. There are no plans to cancel the program at this time. State submitted a waiver to waive the 35% employer match. Hope to find out the status of this waiver in a month or so.
- ♦ Career Coaches continue to meet virtually with their students, continue to work on projects with their schools and are starting a database of occupations that students will be able to access.

Resources-COVID-19-Melissa Fleming:

CARES Act:

- ♦ Unemployment Compensation has been extended 13 weeks which mean PA applicants will be eligible for 39 weeks of Unemployment.
- ♦ An additional \$600 has been added to weekly benefits and will be available until July 2020. To date, no guidelines for this additional benefit has been released and is not immediately available to applicants.
- ♦ Self-Employed and Independent Contractors are now eligible to collect Unemployment Compensation. Steps not in place yet for these individuals to file, but more information should be released soon.
- ♦ Quickest way for individual to file for Unemployment is online.
- ♦ Eligibility requirements such as job search and registration has temporarily been waived by the State until the end of July for those receiving Unemployment.
- ♦ States sending out 95,000 direct deposit checks which means individuals should start seeing money in their accounts today.

Business Services:

New Business/Discussion:

Dislocated Worker-Melissa Fleming:

- ♦ Rapid Response Program as well as additional in house funds available for Dislocated Worker clients.
- ♦ Help with Incumbent Worker Training or Retraining is available.
- ♦ Shared Work Program available. This program allows employers to temporarily reduce employees work hours. These employees are then eligible to collect a percentage Unemployment.
- ♦ PA Dept. of L&I is applying to a National Dislocated Worker Emergency Grant. If approved, this will also supply additional funding for Dislocated Workers.

EARN Reduction-Melissa Fleming:

- ♦ Notification from DHS that NTRPDC is receiving a reduction in EARN funding for PY20-21.
- ♦ Questions to DHS regarding methodology for reduction submitted with the following response received:
 - TANF population and cost per TANF client in NT Region re-evaluated by the State.
 - Due to re-evaluation, NT Region will see a significant decrease in EARN funding while other areas will see an increase in funding.
 - Due to the EARN Redesign which will take effect July 1, 2020, NT disputing funding cut.
 - Planning underway to figure out a way to provide EARN services with less funding.
 - DHS willing to work with NT if not enough funding for the EARN Program is available for PY20-21.

Proposal Committee Recommendation-Craig Harting:

- ♦ NT received three proposals for WIOA and EARN services. Proposals were received from Bradford County Action, Trehab and Res-Care.
- ♦ RFP Committee was formed consisting of Heather Nelson, Craig Harting, Ron Vogel and Mike Narcavage.
- ♦ Proposals were reviewed/scored independently by each committee member. A conference call was then held with entire committee for open discussion and review.
- ♦ Concerns by the RFP Committee concerning Res-Care proposal included Res-Care not having a physical location in each county and providing the majority of their services remotely. It was also felt that some of the programs were underfunded and the amount of personnel were not adequate to meet the needs of our clients.
- ♦ Recommendation by the RFP Committee to the NT WDB is for Bradford County Action to be awarded the contract for Bradford County and Trehab to be awarded the contract for Sullivan, Susquehanna, Tioga and Wyoming Counties.

- A motion to approve the RFP Committee's recommendation for Bradford County Action to be awarded the contract for Bradford County and Trehab to be awarded the contract for Sullivan, Susquehanna, Tioga and Wyoming Counties was made by Donna Yale and seconded by Amy Gilbert. The motion passed unanimously with Jackie Johnson and Linda Walsh abstaining.
- ♦ NT WDB approved RFP recommendation will now go before the Executive Committee on April 17, 2020 for approval.
- ♦ Thank you extended to those on RFP Committee for their time and effort.

Northern Tier Update-Frank Thompson

- ♦ NTRPDC has been busy working with small businesses who wish to apply for the State's \$60 million COVID-19 Working Capital Access Program that was released last week. Program is a 0% \$100,000.00 loan available to small businesses affected by the virus. Program was closed as of 6 pm 3.31.20 after the State received \$75 million in applications.
- ♦ NTRPDC now starting to focus on the availability of money for small businesses through the Federal CARES Act which is through the SBA. CARES Act offers four different funding options:
 - Paycheck Protection Program-8 week loan based on the businesses payroll with payments that are deferred for 6 months.
 - Economic Disaster Loan-A Working Capital loan for small businesses with 500 employees or less that has a \$2 million max with a \$10,000.00 advance available.
 - Disaster Relief Loan-This is for a small business that has an existing or was in the process of getting a 7A loan through SBA.
 - Express Bridge Loans-\$25,000.00 loans with short turnarounds.
- ♦ Information on all these loans is available on the SBA website in partnership with Certified Lending Banks.
- ♦ Links regarding the CARES Act available on the States Dept. of Community and Economic Development (DCED) website.
- ♦ DCED website also has links regarding COVID-19 and CARES Act.
- ♦ NTRPDC has not received any regulations or procedures regarding UC for the self-employed or additional UC money and will release information as it becomes available.
- ♦ NTRPDC staff working remotely but is available to answer questions and assist small businesses as best as possible.
- ♦ WSCM Program is on hold right now indefinitely and local contest will be held at a later date. Statewide contest may still be held at the end of May using the local contest results that have already taken place.

Old Business: None

Communications/Monitoring

Monitoring-Bonnie Warner:

- ♦ WIOA and EARN Program file monitoring is being conducted. Susquehanna County is completed with Tioga County being worked on now.
- ♦ Fiscal on site monitoring for BCA and Trehab has taken place. Completion of Reports and Monitoring Tool is underway.
- ♦ CareerLink monitoring to take place in the near future.
- ♦ Oversight Services Request for Monitoring will be completed and submitted to the State next week.
- ♦ NTRPDC recently received the new 2 year Monitoring Plan that BWDA will conduct. NTRPDC's Monitoring plan will be adjusted for PY20-21 so it will align with the State's Monitoring Plan. Adjusted NT Monitoring Plan will be reviewed with the NT WDB at their next meeting.
- ♦ BWDA's reason of changing the Oversight Monitoring is in response to a request from USDOL. Goal is for the State to have all information collected and have all documents available when USDOL does the State monitoring.
- ♦ Melanie Erb from Oversight Services with L&I is available to address any questions or concerns regarding the new Oversight Monitoring plans.

Good of the Order:

Labor Market Information:

- ♦ January 2020 Labor Market Reports included in Meeting Packet.

Mark Haas:

- ♦ Would like to have NTRPDC's link to their Facebook page, as well as link to Tioga and Bradford County CareerLink Facebook sites in an effort to guide people and small businesses to places to receive legitimate information regarding services and programs that are available to them due to COVID-19.

Breanna Repard and Penne Watkins:

- ♦ Trehab and BCA staff are working remotely but staff are rotating in and out of the office and responding to e-mails, phone calls and Facebook messages.
- ♦ Trehab and BCA staff are also meeting with clients when needed.

Melissa Fleming:

- ♦ L&I has requested a Post-Pandemic Strategic Plan that will map out how services will continue once CareerLinks are open again.
- ♦ A thank you extended to BCA and Trehab staff for providing the best services they can under the current circumstances.

Bruce Jones:

- ♦ Intent of Post-Pandemic Strategic Plan is to try to come up with innovative ideas as to the best way to safely open CareerLinks because of social distancing.
- ♦ PA UC under tremendous strain at this time and no clear guidance has been received from the State as to how the Stimulus Plan will filter down. Information will be shared as soon as it becomes available.
- ♦ BWPO working with Governor Wolf to create a central website that will list employers, who are considered Life-Sustaining, that are in need of employees. Local CareerLink Supervisors and Administrators have been asked to provide a list of these employers.

Next Meeting Date/Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 11:35 a.m.
The next WDB meeting will be held August 5, 2020 at 10:30am.

Respectfully submitted,

Patty Sturzen