

# FINGER LAKES WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD FINGER LAKES WORKFORCE SYSTEM MEETING

Thursday, February 10, 2022  
via Zoom

**Attendance:** K. Bailey, B. Bentley, A. Bollinger C. Caughey, R. DeVay, J. Davis, J. Geiger, L. Haust, J. Hale, B. Miller, J. Murphy, W. Provan, M. Sykes, J. Vrabel, M. Whirtley, J. Williams-Como, C. Yonge

**Staff:** D. Badger, B. Bilia, L. Freid, J. May, M. Woloson

**Absent:** J. Celso, J. Weaver

**Ms. Murphy requested a change to minutes from the January 13<sup>th</sup> meeting: NYSDOL staff are required to wear masks at all times, unless eating or drinking or in an enclosed room by themselves. A motion to approve minutes from January 13<sup>th</sup> meeting, with update, was made by Ms. Haust and seconded by Ms. Murphy. All in favor, motion carried.**

## COVID-19 Update

Mr. Woloson reported that the governor has allowed the mask mandate to expire as of February 10<sup>th</sup> for private businesses and he asked what that means for the Career Centers.

Mr. Vrabel stated that Seneca County staff was notified at 8:00 a.m. that masks are no longer required. Staff remains on the honor system as far as health/symptom screenings and visitors to the offices are being screened verbally.

Mr. Davis shared that Yates County has received no information on changes to the mask mandate.

Ms. Bailey reported that Ontario County is, as of this morning, following the governor's instruction in that masks are no longer required for employees or visitors to the building.

Mr. Smith shared that he is unaware of any changes in Wayne County.

Ms. Murphy stated that no changes have been made public for NYSDOL.

Ms. Murphy introduced Bill Miller, LSR in Geneva, and he was welcomed by the group.

## Training Team Update

Ms. Haust reported that, for the first year ever, she has no dislocated worker customers. Of her 21 ITAs, none of those customers qualified as dislocated workers. Mr. Smith stated that he is seeing the same in Wayne County and Mr. Davis reported not seeing many customers with an attachment to the workforce in Yates County. Mr. DeVay stated that there are no dislocated workers receiving services in Seneca County and Ms. Williams-Como stated that she has one dislocated worker in the Certified Production Technician program in Yates County. Mr. Davis stated that there seems to be more of a need for upskilling incumbent workers and TANF customers receiving services. Ms. Freid questioned if current policies are meeting needs/trends and if our supports and services are in alignment to best meet needs of customers. Mr. Davis stated that there is a bigger conversation around this local area focusing on dislocated workers when other local areas in the state providing all services through the adult program. Ms. Freid would like to continue that conversation around where the funding dollars are needed. Ms. Murphy shared that the state prefers to spend dislocated worker funds before adult funds and that it would be beneficial to look at the definitions of dislocated worker and adult again, to make sure all the categories are being utilized. A list of the six categories is attached to the Resource page of these minutes.

## BSR Team Update

Mr. Sykes is seeing an interest in trainings from employers and employers are extremely willing to be flexible with trainees and new hires. Businesses are asking what they can do to draw in prospective employees. He also stated that he is seeing the same trend as the Training Team, as in no dislocated worker eligible trainees. Ms. Williams-Como reported that she is reaching out to businesses and is seeing interest in OJT and Customized Training. She is also assisting smaller businesses with recruitment. Mr. Vrabel agreed with Mr. Sykes that businesses are being flexible and job orders are being posted and reposted. He is partnering with NYSDOL to reinforce what the OJT program is and hopes to get positive outcomes. Mr. Smith shared that employers are looking and Optimax had seven interviews scheduled and five of those were no-shows. Mr. Sykes has heard of other employers having the same issue. Mr. Vrabel reported that 457 job seekers registered for NYSDOL's Virtual Career Fair event, 274 attended the preview day on Monday and 200 attended the live event on Tuesday. Ms. Williams-Como stated that she is encouraging her employers to make the hiring process a one-time event, because jobs are plentiful at the moment and multiple interviews are discouraging employees and they could be hired by another business before subsequent interviews can be held.

## Youth Team Update

Ms. Yonge stated that Yates County is struggling to enroll out-of-school youth and making any sort of contact with them has become a major struggle. They are seeing more in-school youth requesting services, mostly 14–15-year-olds who do not have employment skills yet, thus creating a challenge in putting them in a work experience environment. Ms. Provan agreed with Ms. Yonge regarding enrollment challenges, and she is seeing that those youth who are engaging in services have many barriers. Mental health concerns and homelessness are being seen in the youth, but there isn't one overall issue

standing out. Ms. Bollinger also agreed with Ms. Yonge in that there has been more interest in the in-school youth program versus the out-of-school program. She is seeing many homeless youth in the DSS caseload and is trying to push them to WIOA youth, but the barrier complicates enrollment.

### **Managers Update**

Mr. Davis shared that Yates County is trying to engage businesses and will be presenting at the chamber meeting in April about retention and seasonal hiring. They might also do recruitment in high schools before seasonal hiring begins. From the TANF perspective, they are again mandating customers – including all those under 25, which could help the youth program. This may affect outcomes, but it will help bring more customers to the program.

Ms. Bailey reported that things are going well in Ontario County, and although they are down a few staff members the remaining staff are pulling together to accomplish things. They continue to be youth focused and work on enrollments and they have an active marketing campaign going on right now, rolled out on January 1<sup>st</sup>, which includes updated newsletters and job leads, among other things. DSS applications are up and traffic to the office has increased. In early April, Mr. Sykes and Ms. Bollinger will be offering the “Bridges out of Poverty” program again. Mr. Woloson offered “Finger Lakes Hires: Have You Heard” as a means to help market the program.

Mr. Vrabel stated that the Seneca County office has had close to a 50% turnover this past year and they currently have two vacancies. The new HR staff member is looking at how to do business, as the county is not attracting employees. Mr. Vrabel has assisted in reworking job descriptions and putting them on Indeed.com and the NYS Job Bank. Seneca County is also looking at how to better work with TANF customers, as they are the major population coming through the office, as well as outcomes from outreach activities.

Mr. Smith reported that all staff are still in virtual work mode, as far as assisting customers.

Ms. Geiger shared that she is seeing more flexibility on behalf of businesses in relation to accommodations for employees with disabilities.

Ms. Murphy reported that DEWS has a new Deputy Commissioner, Chris White. The chat function on the NYSDOL website, with AI assistance, is now able to assist with missing UI payments and providing proof of payments. As this is a pilot program and more questions may be added to the chat function, Ms. Murphy requested feedback about the function if received. Last week, a webinar was held about 599 and WIOA funded customers and can be reviewed on the website – how to access is available on the Resource page. Work search requirements are also being changed and webinars about the changes are also being held. Ms. Murphy also shared the business breakdown by county for the virtual job fair: 19 job seekers from Ontario; 7 from Seneca; 17 from Wayne; 5 from Yates. Since the January 13<sup>th</sup> meeting, the DOL team completed 115 initial assessments in OSOS, provided subsequent services to 122 people and assisted 280 additional people who called for help.

Ms. Hale stated that TAA has been quiet in the area, no new petitions, or approvals. There have been changes with TAA, though. TAA is currently in a sunset reversion because the new bill hasn't been passed, that would contain new Trade Act information and funding. Hopefully the bill will go through in the near future, as the act is set to expire on June 30<sup>th</sup>. The two main staff members in the central office have left and been replaced. “TAA Specialists” have been given new titles: “Trade Case Managers”.

Mr. Caughey shared that the Veterans caseload is low across the state and he continues to write job postings for businesses.

### **WIOA County Contract Update Process**

Ms. Freid shared that the process began last week and the workforce managers, Ms. Murphy and WIB staff will meet every two weeks to go through the existing contracts to update current contract terms among the County Career Centers and DoL. Meetings will take place through the end of March to have a new contract prepared that all offices, DoL, County Career Centers and FLWIB collaboratively agree on and put before the board for approval.

### **Disabilities Resource Coordinator**

Ms. Freid stated that the final draft has been submitted and the WIB is waiting for a NOA, then a RFP will be sent. The WIB will be working closely with disabilities partners to ensure that they are aware the position is available.

### **Additional OPIOD funding available**

The WIB has been notified that there are additional Opioid grand funds available and there is likely to be a notice regarding those funds released soon.

Ms. Freid also acknowledged the significant staff change over experienced by several of counties and the WIB. The WIB is working with all partners as best as possible and if there are any delinquent payments or concerns that need to be addressed, Ms. Freid asks that they be sent to her directly.

Additionally, Ms. Freid asked all, if there is something they would like to see addressed/discussed at future meetings, to let the WIB know. In the future, a survey will be sent to everyone about possible topics for discussion.

### **Reports**

The Dashboard and Training Outcomes reports will be supplied to all following the meeting and questions pertaining to the reports can be directed to Mr. Woloson.

SkillUp Finger Lakes will be highlighted throughout a weeklong campaign of "Finger Lakes Hires" website and social media posts. Ms. May gave a schedule of the expected posts, including press releases, success stories, and other information. This campaign is expected to begin on February 14<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Freid thanked the BSR Team in their assistance with significantly revamping the OJT flyers and brochures for both job seekers and businesses. Printed copies are available by request to Ms. May. Mr. Woloson thanked the managers and BSR Team for their assistance with updating the OJT policy as well.

### **Youth Update**

Ms. Badger shared that the Youth Team is updating the policy and attachments for the youth program. Some of the existing policies may not include some of the things that have come up throughout Ms. Badger's tenure at the WIB. Also, some of the attachments to be filled out by the youth will also be reworked to make more user friendly. Ms. Badger reiterated statements made by members of the Youth Team regarding youth barriers making the journey to Work Experience difficult. The Youth Team continues to discuss other supports that can be offered to those in the program and Ms. Badger stated that enrollment numbers look good.

### **Fiscal Update**

Ms. Sowards shared PY'21 County Requirement numbers, current as of February 9<sup>th</sup>. \$100,00 of dislocated worker funds has been moved to adult, by direction of the Finance & Audit Committee, but only \$36,279 remains in adult training funds. Funds remain for Customized and Work Try-Out, which would go along way if the funds needed to be transferred back to adult. Ms. Sowards asked for information about trainings in planning stages that would impact the ability to transfer those funds if necessary. Mr. Woloson stated that \$39,000 in Covid relief funds was received by the WIB for training by those impacted by Covid; all but \$15,000 has been spent. If eligible dislocated workers exist, Mr. Woloson asked to be notified so Covid relief funds can be used for those customers. Ms. Sowards reported that regular dislocated worker funds can be moved to adult, but Covid relief funds cannot be moved across programs. The updated obligation spreadsheet will be sent out after the meeting and questions can be directed to Ms. Sowards.

### **Good Jobs Challenge**

As of February 9<sup>th</sup>, all of the county representatives have sent in their letters of support, which was the final task to be completed before sending in the application.

### **FAME – CauseWave**

FAME has started the rapid prioritization process with CauseWave, which should be finalized in March. Updates will be provided as available.

### **Other Business**

"Finger Lakes Works... *with their hands!*" to be held at FLCC Canandaigua on May 25<sup>th</sup>. Please forward registration links, below, to interested businesses, and questions to Ms. Badger.

**The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 10, 2022 at 9:30 a.m., via Zoom.**

**This meeting was adjourned at 10:40 a.m.**

## Resources

Dislocated Worker definitions attached next page

OJT flyers and brochures

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1UB8hxG4T7ONrev3n3uwDeTapOaOvaBhk?usp=sharing> and attached

Meeting notes supplied by Mr. Vrabel - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/12OPzMySSmd3FDhWvz-smIAY067EVeOmM/view?usp=sharing>

ACCES-VR updates - <http://www.acces.nysed.gov/vr>

599 & NYS Career Centers webinar can be viewed at <https://dews.webex.com/> password: DEWSweb123

Workforce Intelligence - <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1wTRitvYahMcynGKdvPILASo9ImWTpoBP?usp=sharing>

"Finger Lakes Works... *with their hands!*":

<https://fingerlakesworks.com/events/flwwth/flwwth-exhibitor-registration/>

<https://fingerlakesworks.com/events/flwwth/flwwth-volunteer-registration/>

## **Dislocated Worker Definitions**

### **Reference WIOA Section 133 (b)(2)(B) as a person who**

#### **Category 1 – DW**

- Has been terminated or laid off, or who has received a notice of termination or layoff, from employment; **and**
- Is eligible for **or** has exhausted entitlement to unemployment compensation; **or** has been employed for a duration sufficient to demonstrate, to the appropriate entity at a one-stop center referred to in section 121(e), attachment to the workforce, but is not eligible for unemployment compensation due to insufficient earnings or having performed services for an employer that were not covered under a State unemployment compensation law; **and**
- Is unlikely to return to a previous industry or occupation. Evidence to support this can include Career Center staff assessment based on LMI, profiling score of 50 or higher, customer has exhausted UI

#### **Category 2 – DW mass layoff or closure**

- Has been terminated or laid off, or has received a notice of termination or layoff, from employment as a result of any permanent closure of, or any substantial layoff at, a plant, facility, or enterprise;
- Is employed at a facility at which the employer has made a general announcement that such facility will close within 180 days; **or**
- For purposes of eligibility to receive services other than training services described in WIOA section 134(c)(3), career services described in section 134(c)(2)(A), or supportive services, is employed at a facility at which the employer has made a general announcement that such facility will close.

#### **Category 3 – DW self-employed**

An individual who was self-employed (including employment as a farmer, a rancher, or a fisherman) but is unemployed as a result of general economic conditions in the community in which the individual resides or because of natural disasters.

#### **Category 4 – DW displaced homemaker**

An individual who has been providing unpaid services to family members in the home and who—

- Has been dependent on the income of another family member but is no longer supported by that income; **or** (ii) is the dependent spouse of a member of the Armed forces on active duty (as defined in section 101(d)(1) of title 10, United States code) and whose family income is significantly reduced because of a deployment, a call or order to active duty pursuant to a provision of law, death or disability of the member **and**
- Is unemployed or underemployed and is experiencing difficulty in obtaining or upgrading employment.

#### **Category 5 – DW dislocated due to foreign trade**

Job lost due to the impact of foreign trade and the phenomenon commonly known as "off shoring" and is part of a worker group covered under a certified trade petition. TAA certified customer.

#### **Category 6 – DW spouse of a member of the Armed Forces**

- An individual who is a spouse of a member of the Armed Forces on active duty (as defined in section 101 (d)(1) of the title 10, United States Code), and who has experienced a loss of employment as a direct result of relocation to accommodate a permanent change in duty station of such member; **or**
- (ii) is the spouse of a member of the Armed Forces on active duty and who meets the criteria described in WIOA Section 3 (16)(B). (Category DW-1)