



APPROVED
August 4, 2023

**Northern Middle Tennessee Workforce Board
 Innovation Committee
 Meeting Minutes
 May 4, 2023, via Zoom 10:30 AM**

Members Attending	Members Absent	Staff & Guests Attending
Tony Adams	Richie Brandon	Meagan Dobbins
Sellittia Johnson	Anne Fugate	Andrea Dillard
Jessica Largen	Seth Thurman	Sherry Maynard
John Alexander		Kim Rye
Greg Jones		

The Northern Middle Innovation Committee met via Zoom on May 4, 2023. Attendance was taken, and a quorum was declared. Greg Jones, acting committee chair, called the meeting to order.

Greg called for review and approval of the minutes. Tony Adams motioned, and John Alexander seconded. With no other discussion, the minutes were approved unanimously. He turned the meeting over to Andrea Dillard.

Contract Service Provider Update

Andrea Dillard began her report by updating the Board about the Career Service Providers' performance. EDSI met its Adult/Dislocated Worker enrollment goal but did not meet the youth enrollment goal. Andrea explained that they have a high number of cases that were carried over from the previous year and are consistently enrolling new participants, so their caseloads are higher than they should be. They were given an exit goal of 80% to relieve these high caseloads, but that goal isn't being met. While their staffing issue is improving, they now have new staff still in training and need to catch up on the case management work. The exited participants are placed in employment with the placement wage goal being exceeded. Meagan Dobbins, Performance Director, is working with them to identify participants that need to be exited.

MAC is the in-school and out-of-school youth contractor for the Davidson County Area. They did not meet their in-school youth goal this quarter but exceeded it last quarter, making their cumulative score passing. They exceeded their out-of-school youth goal for this quarter and last quarter. Compared to EDSI, MAC is doing a better job of exiting its participants, but they have not met its exit rate goal. This is easier for them to accomplish since they have fewer participants and a smaller area to service. They have not met their positive placement rate. Andrea expressed that she felt MAC was on track to meet its goals.

Andrea then updated the Board about the three smaller youth contractors. Jobs for Tennessee Graduates serves in-school youth and have met their enrollment goals. Monroe Harding serves foster youth and has almost met their enrollment. They could possibly meet it by the end of their contract time. Liberty Station serves young people with disabilities and have not met their enrollment goals. Since the youth have disabilities, learning the skills to be placed at another worksite takes longer. Liberty Station will probably not meet its exit goals. Andrea then informed the Board that the youth program is taking a 17-18% reduction in funds in Program Year 23-24 and funding is uncertain for these contracts.

Andrea reviewed the WIOA Federal Reporting Score Card. Quarter 2 has been finalized, and we received a passing score in all measures. Quarter 3 shows the estimated progress, and we are projected to pass all performance measures. The predictive report for Quarter 4 shows that all measures are passing except for Measurable Skills Gains. This measure is the only measure that is a real time score. This score increases during the quarter as career advisors make additions. Andrea stated that she felt confident this score would rise to passing by the end of the fourth quarter. This performance year is going much better than the previous year.

Greg Jones noticed on EDSI's report there is a trend of their performance declining over the last year. He asked if all of the EDSI locations contributed to the score. Andrea stated that the scores come from data from all of the EDSI locations. Greg then asked if four or five locations contributed to the low score or whether it was performance across the board. Andrea and Meagan Dobbins reported that all locations are causing this trend. Andrea added that the offices in the smaller counties do have smaller percentage goals that are easier to meet than what is expected of the larger counties.

Eligible Training Provider Requests

Andrea started by explaining the state had been working on additional guidance and policies to be approved by the state Workforce Board. She informed the committee that their packet includes a draft copy of the State Workforce Services Policy Eligible Training Provider List that had not been approved yet. This new policy would allow the Board to approve or disapprove providers based on whether their courses are in our six needed training sectors. Andrea presented the new provider requesting to be added to the list and then presented the list of providers requesting additional programs to be added and made eligible for WIOA funding. Then Andrea presented the list of providers who were previously on the list due to no enrollments or missing their renewal deadline and are requesting to be added to the list again.

Greg inquired about the Nossi College of Arts and the high cost of their programs. Andrea explained that according to policy, WIOA would only spend \$6,000 per program. It would be up to the student to find funding for the remaining cost. Since their programs are so costly, it would be unlikely a WIOA participant could secure funding for the remaining amount. Greg then asked if costly programs like these are usually approved, knowing that a participant may not be able to afford them. Andrea stated that they have been approved in the past and likely will not have an enrollment and fall off the list in two years. Tony then asked if approving the costly programs takes away funding from other programs. Andrea responded that it doesn't. Approval only means a WIOA participant could enroll in the program and receive up to \$6,000 in assistance, but the full cost of the program isn't funded if it's more than \$6,000. Greg asked if the programs are in one of the six needed sectors in our area. Andrea assured him that most of the programs are in the six sectors, but the fine art programs are not. Greg then asked if a good explanation of the funding cap be presented with the ETPL at the full board meeting. Greg Jones asked for a motion to approve the ETPL with the addendum that a full explanation of training costs and funding caps would be given. Tony Adams made the motion, and John Alexander seconded. The committee approved the motion.

Procurement Policy Revisions

Andrea then presented the revised edition of the Procurement Policy to the committee. The policy verbiage hasn't changed, but policy reference numbers have changed. Domestic Preference for Procurements has been added. With no questions asked, Greg asked for a motion to approve the changes as listed. Tony Adams made the motion, and John Alexander seconded. The committee voted to approve the changes.

Innovation-Programs and Grants

Andrea shared with the committee that WE applied for the Adult Education program again. The RFP outlined that only six locations could be bid on. We bid on Cheatham, Dickson, Montgomery, Humphreys, Stewart, and Wilson and were awarded the grant. We are also partners with other providers in other counties. The only county without a provider is Houston. They may request we provide services to them.

Andrea then informed the committee of the grants for which we have applied. We have requested to be the service provider for the Senior Community Service Employment Program. It services 14 counties (six are not in our workforce

area); we should know by May 12 if we were awarded the contract. If awarded, the grant is over \$1.4M. NCOA is currently a non-paying partner in the American Job Centers, and some of their participants also work in the AJCs. The governor has provided funding for a Summer Youth Employment Program to serve 3,750 youth statewide. The funding announcement is included in the packet, but the full actual guidance isn't available at this time. If awarded, the program will need to be kicked off very quickly. The first phase has \$3M to be disbursed amongst the local workforce development boards across Tennessee, and boards propose how many youth they will put to work by August 31. The tight timeline is challenging, and the youth in phase 1 must be WIOA eligible. The second phase has \$15M available to be disbursed from July 1, 2023-August 2024. Other entities can bid on the second phase, and the participants do not have to be WIOA eligible.

Finally, Andrea presented Ginger's Allocation Notices. The Notices showed allocations for the prior year, the current year, and the upcoming fiscal year and how the reductions will affect the current programs.

Adjourn

With no other questions, Greg Jones adjourned the meeting.