

**Northern Middle Tennessee Workforce Board
Full Board
Meeting Minutes
August 10, 2022, In-Person & via Zoom 11:30 a.m.**

Members Attending	Members Absent	Staff & Guest Attending
Ginger Jarrett	Keith Carnahan	Stacy Books
Shoshana Samuels	James Harper	Rubin Cockrell
Mark Peed	Seth Thurman	Patrick Buford
John Alexander	David Rutledge	George Phillips
Greg Jones		Marla Rye
Tony Adams		Georgena Porter-Wilson
Dan Caldwell		Lane Marks
G.C. Hixson		John Watz
Chris West		Liz McLaughlin
Kristi Spurgeon		Ginger Hausser
Richie Brandon		Freda Herndon
Carol Puryear		Renea Rosson
Tylesha McCray		Mayor Bob Rial
Anne Fugate		Tanya Evrenson
Lynn Seifert		Sherry Maynard
George "Bo" Callis		Ginger Fussell
John Zobl		Richard Nelson
Jessica Largen		Andrea Dillard
Paul Webb		Diana Webb
		Adina Chumley
		Jamila Pettyjohn
		Jame Starnes
		Meagan Dobbins
		Christel Brown
		Cathy Royals
		Ashley Crisp-Randle
		Beverly Watts
		Trish Farmer
		Patricia Malone Smith
		Jimmy Johnston

The Northern Middle, Tennessee Workforce Development Board, met in person at the UT Center for Industrial Services in Nashville and with a virtual option on Wednesday, August 10, 2022, at 11:30 a.m.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Zobl. Attendance was taken, and a quorum was declared. Chairman John Zobl asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Chris West made the motion to approve. John Alexander seconded, and the minutes were unanimously approved. Marla then started the meeting by asking Paul Jennings, Executive Director of the UTCIS, to speak briefly about the training center. Then Marla recognized mayors and board members whose terms had ended and welcomed the

new mayors and board members. She introduced Mayor Bob Rial as the newly elected CLEO. Marla welcomed Shoshana Samuels, Ginger Jarrett, and Jessica Largen as the new board members and then introduced themselves. Marla updated the Board regarding the local workforce area performance and stats.

Election of Officers

The election of board officers occurs every two years and is on the agenda for 2022. John Zobl informed the Board that the vice chairman position is currently vacant, and Kristi Spurgeon is the current secretary. John asked for nominations of new officers. John Alexander nominated John Zobl to continue as chairman and Kristi Spurgeon to continue as secretary. Lynn Seifert seconded the motion. With no discussion, the nomination passed. John asked for a nomination for vice chair. Carol Puryear nominated Chris West. John Alexander seconded the nomination. With no further discussion, the nomination passed.

Advancing Workplace Equity Report

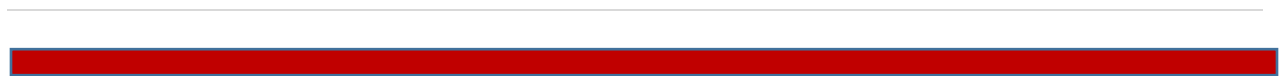
Lane Marks with the Urban League of Middle Tennessee (ULMT) spoke to the Board to educate them about the nonprofit organization. This organization has been in the Nashville community and surrounding areas since 1968, and its mission has been to empower and serve African American communities and others in underserved communities since the Civil Rights Movement. ULMT is part of the National Urban League, which has existed for over 110 years. This organization empowers communities through a variety of services. Lane spoke about various services offered and the Workforce Equity Report. Marla added that she would like the Board to partner with the ULMT to support programs and training that would assist these individuals in increasing their skills and move them to higher-paying jobs to address equity in the workforce.

CSP Performance Review/Extension of Contracts

Next, Andrea reviewed EDSI's Quarterly Benchmarks. By June 30, the end of the fourth quarter, EDSI reached their Adult and Dislocated Worker goal, but they were at about 85% of their goal for the Youth program. Cumulatively they did reach 96% of their total enrollment goal. To reduce the growing caseload, EDSI exited 104 Adult and Dislocated Workers, but only 50 of those went to work, which gives them a 48.1% placement rate. Cumulatively they exited 1010 individuals, and 874 went to work, so they are at 86.5%. For the youth program, EDSI exited 32 Youths, and 21 of them went to work. This gives them an 81.7% placement rate, and they should be at 85%. Cumulative placement wages are \$21 for Adult and Dislocated Workers and \$15.55 for Youth.

Next, Andrea updated the committee regarding MAC's performance. MAC had a goal of serving 100 In-School Youth and exceeded it by serving 103 participants. Cumulatively, MAC had a goal of serving 240 Youths in total and served 245. MAC has good placement rates as well as a placement wage of \$15.24. MAC also met their work experience requirement. Andrea praised MAC for the significant improvements they have made over this year.

Next, Andrea reviewed the WIOA Federal Reporting Score Card. Andrea reminded the Board that the scorecard measures performance from a year ago, and everything is in arrears. The only failing category is Adult Employment Rate 4th quarter after exit. Predictive reports have been run for PY22, and it looks as if this measure won't be met until the second quarter, which ends on December 31, 2022.



Andrea Dillard updated the Board on the new Youth providers. She stated that an RFP was sent out, and three contractors have been brought on Board. All of them have signed the contracts and provided the necessary documentation as requested. JTG services five different counties and is working with high school seniors. Monroe Harding serves Davidson County and focuses on in-school and out-of-school Youth who are foster children and justice-involved. Liberty Station serves Rutherford County and is working with out-of-school Youth with disabilities. Board staff has provided training, and all are moving forward.

John Alexander asked how we can impact federal performance to improve retention rates. Andrea explained that performance is impacted by case managers keeping contact with participants after exiting the program to ensure that they are still working or are placed in a different job if they lose the one they had.

EDSI


Danielle Ellis presented a report to the Board showing how many resignations occurred in each county. Davidson County has the highest staff turnover rate, and Stewart County has the lowest. John Zobl asked Danielle how many people were in each center. Danielle then explained the positions that are housed in each of the centers. Mark Peed asked Danielle to give a number as to how many team members are in each county. She then stated that seven were in Davidson County. Mark then stated that Davidson County had roughly a 175% turnover rate over the last 18 months. Danielle reported that Davidson County is a high-traffic county, and she felt that the turnover was due to the high workload, which causes burnout. She mentioned that EDSI restructured leadership to address issues, and salaries were increased for the career advisors in the comprehensive centers since they have a higher volume of cases. Danielle then reported that they have retained 60% of the workers hired at the beginning of their contract and that the turnover they see is from the new hires. Danielle stated that they hoped the wage raise, the transparency about responsibilities, and other changes in the organization's management structure would promote retention with the new hires.

Marla stated that she felt the retention was better in the smaller counties since there are not many job openings. Turnover is more likely in larger counties where more jobs are available. Marla mentioned that when the contract procurement happened, the Board should have mandated that the contractor keep current staff for a 90 period for a transition of services and employee evaluation. However, Marla offered when EDSI took over the Chattanooga workforce area, and they made job offers to all current employees. Only 50% of them accepted the offer. Danielle stated that when the staff knows a contract is ending, they begin looking for employment and often accept a position before the contract ends.

John Zobl asked if a metric report could be provided to measure if there is an improvement in turnover each quarter. Marla added that there is a concern that the turnover could cause clients to fall through the cracks, which would also affect performance. Mark Peed suggested the turnover rate be presented in percentages.

MAC

Tanya Evrenson reported on MAC's performance over the last quarter. She started by informing the Board that they exceeded their out-of-school and in-school Youth goals for FY21-22. She spoke about various schools and organizations they have partnered with to recruit participants. Thirty-two Power



High School students graduated in May, and 13 students that participated in a paid work experience program continued their employment through the summer months. They are continuing to find more ways to recruit out-of-school Youth participants. Tanya reported they are still fully staffed, and POWER Youth is fully staffed.

Strategic Priorities

Manage Board funds to Support Career Pathways

Ginger Fussell reported that quarter four spending was significantly higher at \$3.7M in expenditures, an increase of \$1.4M compared to the prior quarter. Just over seven million was spent in the first three quarters, then \$3.7M was added to the fourth quarter bringing the total to \$11M, which is 69% of available funding. Core WIOA activities increased over the last year by approximately \$1.5M.


Quarter 4 also had a \$344K increase in other grant activities focused on state-wide initiatives and special populations, such as apprenticeships, layoff aversion, re-entry, and career exploration. The Board approved the re-purposing of \$.5M Dislocated Worker funding for Adult program services effective May 1. Ginger requested approval for another \$500,000 to be transferred to adult funding.

Contractor utilization took a positive turn in quarter four and was paired with several Q4 activities administered by the Board. Despite challenges in previous quarters, Northern Middle was able to fully utilize the expiring WIOA funding and most of the other expiring funding. Note that we did have \$1M remaining of the National Dislocated Worker funding for COVID-19. That funding will be extended for another year under a new grant.

Northern Middle achieved a healthy MPCR at 49.68%, met the work experience requirement, and narrowly met the in-school youth requirement. With 100% of the initial contract period elapsed, EDSI has spent 88% of its contract, and MAC has spent 87%. MCHRA, as the One Stop Operator, has spent 85% of its contract. OSO expenses are considered overhead costs, so less-than-budget expenditures are positive for Northern Middle.

Ginger reported that both contractors aim to spend at least 50% of their funds on participants. For this fiscal year, EDSI has exceeded the 50% MPCR goal at 52% for Youth and 56% for Adult/DW. Contract-to-date, EDSI finished at 49% for Youth and 51% for Adult/DW. MAC is 46% for Davidson County Youth for the fiscal year and 43% for contract-to-date. The contractors' Youth spending is tracked in two additional categories: qualifying work experience activities with a goal of 25% and in-school Youth activities with a goal of 40%. EDSI fell slightly short of the work experience goal at 22% FYTD and increased to 18% contract-to-date. EDSI's in-school Youth jumped two quarters consecutively to 31% in quarter three and 43% in quarter four and is at 25% FYTD. MAC exceeded the work experience goal at 41% FYTD and 36% contract-to-date. MAC exceeded the in-school Youth goal at 44% FYTD and 39% contract-to-date.

Ginger went on to present the budget and requested adjustments. The initial budget presented in May was \$13.4M based on projections. With the fiscal year complete and updated allocations notices from the state, the budget has been updated and adjusted downward by about \$100K to \$13.3M. The difference is the net of less carryover into the new year, more allocation than initially expected, and slightly more National DW COVID funds than expected. One change made on the expense side is that with the finalized guidance related to the National DW funding, we will be requesting permission to pass through \$950K of National DW funding to EDSI to serve Fort Campbell soldiers.



Next, Ginger updated the Board about monitoring. She stated that the biggest concern among the two existing career service providers is EDSI's continuing turnover of field staff. Bi-weekly contractor meetings continue. EDSI provides staffing updates at those meetings. Northern Middle continues desk reviews of EDSI and MAC monthly, analyzing contract progress and performance. Northern Middle program staff reviewed EDSI and MAC direct participant expenditures and performed an additional desktop review of EDSI's enrollments.

Northern Middle fiscal and program staff conducted WIOA Youth training for the three new youth providers. All financial viability proofs were received as requested by the Board. Each provider is limited to \$25K per quarter to manage risk further. There are no areas of concern with the One Stop Operator, but MCHRA was challenged to continue to promote enhanced oversight of partner accountability in supporting KPI goals.

PAR conducted an on-site review, and no findings were reported. TDLWD's Program Integrity Unit performed fiscal monitoring and issued a report without findings. The report acknowledged 21 observed or potential best practices, and the monitoring team noted areas where we requested further guidance and made them aware of concerns. The team made five observations, two specific to an existing fiscal policy about Record Retention. As a result of their recommendation, a proposed update of that policy to address their points has been included. Ginger reviewed the policy to inform the Board of the proposed changes.

The action items requested are to approve the 21-22 Q4 Financial Report, approve the 22-23 Budget Revision at \$13.3M, and approve the 22-23 Flexibility to re-purpose an additional \$500K Dislocated Worker funding to Adult, extend EDSI and MAC's contracts an additional six months, add another six-month pro-ration of the 18-month contract, approve the pass-through program portion of the National DW grant at \$950K, and approve the Fiscal Policy Update.

Marla expressed that she felt the CSP contracts should be extended to June 2023 in order to help stabilize the current staff and reduce turnover.

John Zobl asked for a motion to approve all action items as requested. Mark Peed moved to approve the items. GC Hixson seconded the motion. Mark Peed added that he felt the extension of the contract is a good idea to help reduce staff turnover. The Board voted unanimously to approve all action items.

Connect People with Career Opportunities

George Phillips presented his OSO report to the Board. He prioritized re-entry programs and then praised Adult Education. He noted that Wagner Peyser is down a little bit, but engagement with employers is up. He reported that Vocational Rehabilitation has over 1,700 active cases. The AJC traffic is down compared to one year ago. This is a problem across the state. Staff retention continues to be a challenge. KPIs were included in the report.

Train Workforce to Fill Employer Needs

Freda Herndon presented the ETPL and updated the committee regarding changes to the list. Freda recommended the new programs be approved for one year and stated that the Innovation Committee had approved the programs during its meeting. John Zobl asked for a motion to approve. Tony Adams made the motion. Chris West seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion was approved.



Freda then presented a chart showing grants that were received and how the grants were spent on training as well as supporting businesses. Freda mentioned that state apprenticeship grants would be available this year, and she has applied for \$225,000. Freda stated that more employers are going to the "Grow your Own" model through apprenticeships.

Improve Efficiency & Effectiveness of Programs

Marla reminded the Board of the strategic planning session and reported that work is happening. Improvements to the service delivery model were prioritized, and three options were presented to the state for consideration. The first option is a pay-for-service model where a contractor must obtain certain benchmarks before receiving payment. The second option is to offer a consolidated approach to service delivery, like Texas and Florida. The third option is to allow the board staff to operate services directly in a pilot area to include a comprehensive and an affiliate site. The state is checking into these options. The options will most likely be on hold until new leadership is established.

Marla went on to tell the Board the next discussion in the strategic planning session was regarding outreach and recruitment, and the Board has approved \$100K to be spent for this. Four marketing firms were contacted, and two proposals were submitted from Small Town Startup in Springfield and JJ Strategic Marketing & Communications in Gallatin. After on-site interviews, Small Town Startup was selected.

Finally, Marla mentioned that engaging employers in the AJC was also a goal of the strategic planning session. Marla informed the Board about the CNA training that was recently conducted in Murfreesboro. NHC partnered with the AJC in Rutherford County and The American Red Cross to provide training to individuals interested in pursuing a career as a CNA. It was a two-week program where students did online training, then a week and a half of skill labs. Ten individuals graduated from the program and will soon take their state exams. NHC has made job offers to all. Marla mentioned that the American Prison Data System would soon be working with Rutherford County to put tablets in the jails so the justice-involved could train for employment. Nineteen employers participated in a webinar to learn more about the opportunity.

Adjourn

Marla reminded the Board that the next meeting would be on November 9, 2022. With no other discussion, the meeting was adjourned.

