

MINUTES
SOUTH CENTRAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
ZOOM CONFERENCE
APRIL 8, 2021

Time & Place of Meeting

The South Central Workforce Development Board meeting was held at 8:30 a.m. via Zoom Conference.

Members Present

Bob Biltz; Chris Boggs; Gretchen Bandy; John Conrad; Rebecca Stone; Robert Akin; Robin Amonett; Ron Wilson; Roxana Robinson; T.J. Shockley-Hunt; and Treva Shirley.

Visitors Present

Regina Jackson; DaRhonda Hawthorne; Leslie Witty; Jon Sowards; Dr. Kim Myers; Amanda Pedigo; Matt Bacon; Chad Spencer; Myra Wilson; Aaron Poynter; Shannon Gottke; Lyndsey Brown; Jessica Calvert; James Moore; Khalid Qazi; Brian Becker; Anthony Terlizzi; and Meredith Hestertianahughes1@yahoo.com.

John Conrad welcomed everyone and advised that a quorum was lacking. As a result, all action items will be considered at the next Board meeting.

President/CEO Report

Jon Sowards welcomed everyone to the meeting and expressed his gratitude to the Board during his first 8 weeks on the job. He has met with many of the board members to listen to ideas and concerns. From those meetings, the Board Meeting format has been slightly re-calibrated to not focus all strategic goals in detail for each meeting.

Board Chair Report

John Conrad took the opportunity to re-introduce himself as the new Chair of the SCWDB.

Executive Committee Update from March 11th

John Conrad stated that the Executive Committee met on March 11th via Zoom. The Board voted to begin securing a new fiscal agent contract which is set to expire on June 30th. Regina Jackson drew up the contract extension for National Able and Jon presented the contract to the LEOs on March 13th for their decision, which was accepted. The WIOA Title I Direct Services will also expire on June 30th. March 10th, the state EDWC approved the Heartland Communications Scope of Work in writing. Heartland will complete this project in time for the Board to vote on the recommendation at the June 10th Board meeting. The Local and Regional Strategic

Plan and the Kentucky Career Center Re-opening were also discussed and will be highlighted in detail during today's meeting.

Kentucky Career Center Re-opening

Jon Sowards stated that on March 5th, the KY Secretary of Labor informed all Workforce Directors that the Kentucky Career Centers would reopen to the public for in person Unemployment Insurance assistance starting on April 15th. During those 5 weeks we have welcomed back our Career Development Office staff which are the UI specialists, received PPE for the center, upgraded internet, developed a customer process flow and prepared all staff. Yesterday the state's centralized appointment website opened for scheduling in-person appointments.

Update on Request for Proposal (RFP) for WIOA Title 1 Direct Services contract

Jon Sowards reported that at the February 11th Board meeting it was approved to pursue a professional service organization that would lead the Request for Proposal process for WIOA Title I Direct Services. On March 18th, a contract was signed with Heartland Communication. Heartland has drafted the RFP and ensured it met state and federal guidelines. On April 7th, the RFP was publicly released to local media and professional workforce development organizations across the US. It has also been posted to our webpage. May 19th is the due date to receive all bids. On May 27th, a Review Committee made up of 3-5 Board members will review, score and recommend the next WIOA Title I Direct Service provider. Jon will need Board members to volunteer to be on the Review Committee. The recommendation of the Review Committee will be brought forth for a vote at the June 10th Board meeting.

One-year Extension of Fiscal Agent Services Contract

Jon Sowards stated that the current Fiscal Agent contract was set to expire on June 30th. On February 12th the KY Education and Workforce Development Cabinet authorized Local Workforce Boards to extend their current Fiscal Agent contracts for one year due to Covid. Regina Jackson drew up the contract extensions and it was presented to the LEOs on March 13th. The LEOs voted unanimously to extend the contract for one year. National Able has also signed the updated contract.

Local and Regional Strategic Plan update

Jon Sowards advised that the state's Education and Workforce Development Cabinet all local workforce areas to update the Local and Regional Strategic Plans. With regard to the Local Strategic Plan, there are not any major changes to the developed plan from two years ago. Will continue with the same four strategic goals as well as the five priority industry sectors and five focus populations. The Regional Strategic Plan, which we have partner with the Cumberland Workforce Development Board since September 2019, also has minor changes. On April 20th

the Local and Regional Strategic Plan will be reviewed with Board members. The Public Comment Period will be May 1-30 and on June 10th it will be presented to the Board for approval.

Financial Report

Khaliz Qazi of National Able provided a financial report to Board Members. He conveyed no concerns with the Board's budget / spending and was confident that we were appropriately spending down the programmatic dollars by the June 30, 2021 deadline.

Strategic Goals

- Strategic Goal 1. Actively engage employers and stakeholders to drive innovative workforce solutions across the region.
 - On-the-Job Training Overview. Jessica Calvert shared the benefits to employers by utilizing on-the-job training (OJT). OJT makes hiring a new employee more affordable by reimbursing 50% of gross wages during the training period. OJT is a program that makes funds available to help businesses hire and train employees. Employers can make referrals to WIOA/Career TEAM, set the qualifications, interview and select the individual. Minimizes the risk of hiring individuals without experience or a desired skill set.
 - National Dislocated Worker Grant. Jon Sowards stated that last year the board was awarded a National Dislocated Worker Grant for \$800k to be used by March 2022. Currently approximately \$600k is still available. This money is to be used for individuals that are dislocated workers or have been unemployed 27 consecutive weeks. The challenge for the entire state has been finding individuals wanting to return to work during the pandemic and due to the UI funds that have been made available to them. Opportunities are available for employers for WIOA programs.
 - Winter/Spring Hiring Activities. Chad Spencer shared that they are planning group hiring events. These events will have multiple employers and sectors available all at one location. Workshops are available to the job seekers to help prepare in advance with resumes and interview skills. Matt Bacon also shared upcoming events. He is working to align resources and personnel to host the SCK Launch virtual hiring event with the BG Chamber on Friday, May 7. Continuing work for internship and degree preferred job postings from local companies for current college students and alumni. The SCWDB continues to support employer led events such as drive thru events and helping recruit and pre-screen

- applicants, track results and connect those who are not hired to other training or employment opportunities.
- Web Development Graduation and Networking Event. The SCWDB and the Cumberlandts partnered to launch a Web Development Training in January 2021. Currently have 28 participants with 3 weeks of training left. The cost per student is \$4500 and the average starting salary for a Junior Web Developer in our region is \$60k. This course teaches coding in HTML, JavaScript, ChromeDev Tools, CSS, Bootstrap and soon will teach React. Completion date for the course is May 7th. A networking opportunity and graduation for graduates to meet with employers will take place on May 14th.
 - 2nd Chance Employer Spotlight. Aaron Poynter has partnered with Kentucky Chrome Works to employ current inmates through the 2nd chance program. They have 20 inmates currently working.
 - Targeted Job Advertisements. Leslie Witty stated that she has been working with Sumitomo and Nova Steel on targeted job advertising. This is a pilot project for the SCWDB. For Nova Steel, the 6 targeted social media ads were viewed by 58,408 unique people and 1,001 links clicked. This project will fall under MyWorkforceFuture. The cost is minimal, and a price structure is currently being created.
- Strategic Goal 2. Align and integrate education to provide career pathways for P-12 youth, post-secondary students and adult job seekers.
 - Jon Sowards shared that Matt Bacon is currently working with the BG Chamber on SCK Launch and internships-college fair. Will be partnering with KY Stats. KY Stats will track pathways in each county high school. This will be useful information for employers to know about upcoming trained individuals.
 - Strategic Goal 3. Increase regional workforce participation by creating opportunities, incenting workforce participation, and removing barriers to employment.
 - Jon Sowards discussed the Boards growing involvement in targeted advertising to help companies attract talent. He highlighted an upcoming Heroes Make America tour of Precision Strip and Champion Pet Food both in Russellville and Virtus Precision Tube in Franklin, scheduled for April 23rd.
 - Strategic Goal 4. Maintain viability of the SCWDB's financial growth, quality delivery system and return on investment (ROI) for job seekers and employers.

- o RFPs, renegotiating contracts, Local and Regional Strategic Plans, re-opening Kentucky Career Center are all currently being completed.

The next Board meeting will take place on June 10, 2021. Location - Zoom.

With no other business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.

Approved: 

Date: 6-11-21