

**BERKS COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
(WDB)**

7:30 a.m.

September 15, 2017

**PA CareerLink® Berks County, 1920 Kutztown Road, Suite F, Reading, PA 19604
Meeting Summary**

Members Present

Ms. Debra Antol
Ms. Ashley Chambers
Mr. John DeVere (via conference call)
Ms. Marianne Egolf
Mr. Michael Fischetti
Ms. Kristi Gage-Linderman
Mr. Robert Harrop (via conference call)
Mr. Tom Herman
Ms. Carole Homolash
Ms. Joanne Judge
Ms. Peggy Kershner (via conference call)
Mr. John Morahan
Mr. James Nichols
Mr. Randolph Peers
Mr. Mark Pinkasavage
Ms. Jeannine Rohrbach
Mr. Mark Schlott
Mr. Russell Showers (via conference call)
Ms. Connie Skipper (via conference call)
Mr. Pablo Tejada (via conference call)
Ms. Karyn Troxell
Dr. Anna Weitz
Ms. Tammy White

Members Absent

Mr. Thomas Brizek
Mr. Modesto Fiume
Mr. William Hornberger
Mr. Lewis McCoy, Jr.
Mr. Thomas McKeon
Mr. Brian McMahan
Mr. Gregg Riefenstahl
Mr. Michael Rowley
Mr. Barry Unger

Staff and Guests Present

Mr. Daniel Fogarty	Berks County Workforce Development Board Staff
Mr. John Moser	Berks County Workforce Development Board Staff
Mr. Rory Stevenson	Berks County Workforce Development Board Staff
Ms. Patricia Spencer	Berks County Workforce Development Board Staff
Ms. Patricia Adamczyk	PA CareerLink® Berks County Administrator
Mr. Joseph Farrell	Educational Data Systems, Inc.
Ms. Yvelisse Gonzalez	Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Judge at 7:30 a.m. and a quorum was present.

Ms. Judge welcomed Mr. Peers, President and CEO of the Greater Reading Chamber & Economic Development Corporation, to the Board.

All members voted approval of the minutes of the June 16, 2017 meeting.

The Finance Committee report was introduced by Ms. Judge. Mr. Fogarty explained that the Operating Budget for Program Year 2017 which was approved by the Board in June has been adjusted to include a one-time staff retirement expense to be incurred in January 2018 as a result of Mr. Fineman's planned retirement and some adjustments to indirect costs assigned by the County for Calendar Year 2018. Mr. Herman moved to accept the Operating Budget as revised and approved by the Finance Committee; Mr. Fischetti seconded the motion and all members voted their approval.

Mr. Fogarty referred to the Discretionary/Competitive Grants status report and said that the Board has had two good years in being awarded several discretionary grants, mentioning particularly the newly-awarded \$144,231 Apprenticeship USA Expansion Grant to IBEW.

Ms. Judge introduced the Executive Committee's Report. Topics covered in the report were the CareerLink Operator and Title I Program Transition; the PA CareerLink® Berks County Memorandum of Understanding (MOU); PY2016 Statewide Title I Targets; an Update on Local and Regional Plans; the Disconnected Young Adult Study; and Board Membership and Committee Assignments. Ms. Judge noted that the Committee on Increasing Opportunities for Individuals with Disabilities will be chaired by Mr. McKeon and Ms. Homolash will serve as vice-chair. Members of this committee are being recruited and Ms. Judge asked that Board members contact Mr. Fogarty with their interest in serving on this committee. Mr. Fogarty added that several non-Board members have already indicated their interest.

The Policy, Planning and Priorities Committee Report was introduced by Ms. Judge. Mr. Fogarty said that this committee has been quite busy for several months working with staff on the WIOA multi-year local and regional plans. The plan was posted on the Board's website and a public meeting which was advertised in the Reading Eagle was held on August 4, 2017. The meeting was attended by Mr. McCann, retired WDB COO. Mr. Fogarty showed a Power Point presentation to the Board which highlighted an overview of the Berks WDB Multi-year Local Area Plan. Mr. Fogarty pointed out that employment and the labor force indicate strong numbers, but the biggest challenge is the aging workforce referred to in Berks County as the "Silver Tsunami". Mr. Peers asked when this area became a crisis. Mr. Fogarty replied that the crisis is already here. Mr. Morahan said that although the focus is on Berks County, there is also attraction to industries just outside of this county's boundaries. He said that more people leave Berks County to work than those coming to Berks County. Ms. Antol said there are certainly a large number of entry-level and unskilled workers at Sweet Street Desserts who do not receive higher-end wages. Mr. Schlott said that middle-skilled employees and more skilled employees with higher wage expectations may come from other counties. Mr. Peers commented that we are adding more jobs, building on the skills of existing workers and providing housing that appeals to workers. Ms. Egolf said that businesses are being pushed to automate with fewer workers and asked if this factored into the plan. Mr. Fogarty replied that there was a huge decrease in productivity growth, so output will actually outpace staffing needs in many key sectors such as manufacturing. However, average skill levels of workers will also increase with technology.

Referring to the Workforce and Economic Analysis slides:

- Manufacturing (Priority A – Driver Industry)
- Healthcare and Social Assistance (Priority B – Sustaining Industry)
- Construction (Priority B – Recovering Industry)
- Priority C: Watch Industries

- Transportation and Warehousing
- Agriculture

Mr. Harrop said 52% of manufacturing workers are age 45 or older, and that 7,000 replacements will be needed by 2026. He said we are at that crisis point because there are not a sufficient number of employees out there and that manufacturers have been trading employees. Mr. Morahan said there may be a silver lining to the silver tsunami: getting positions filled is now a priority in many sectors.

Mr. Pinkasavage commented that electricians are certainly needed and that IBEW’s apprenticeship program offers earning while learning. Mr. Peers said there is a good concentration on construction in and around Berks County, especially in warehousing.

Strategic Vision and Goals:

- Meeting the needs of employers/the retirements of experienced “baby boomers”
- Ongoing support for Career and Technical Education (CTE) Pathways
- Local industry sector priorities and strategies
- Leading initiatives for disconnected and under-employed young adults
- Promoting work-based experience tied to Career Pathways for young adults and students
- Underemployment: increasing opportunities for individuals with disabilities and individuals with histories of convictions

Mr. Peers moved to approve the plan; Mr. Schlott seconded the motion and all members voted their approval.

The Youth Committee Report was introduced by Ms. White. Ms. White stressed the importance of supporting young people and thanked all the employers who helped contribute to the success of the summer program. Mr. Morahan said the hospital has helped for a number of years and compared the experience to a “gateway” to careers for young folks. A total of 298 youth participated in the summer youth employment programs this year. Written reports were submitted by ResCare and Goodwill and included in the Committee’s report. Ms. White said she continues to be encouraged by the success of these two programs and read some of the participants’ positive comments about their participation.

Ms. Yvelisse Gonzalez, Assistant District Administrator for OVR, has joined the Youth Committee. Mr. Randolph Peers has also joined the committee as his WDB member committee assignment.

A Power Point presentation on the Berks Disconnected Young Adult Study which was prepared by the consultant Thomas P. Miller & Associates was reviewed by Mr. Fogarty. Mr. Fogarty said the study was funded by \$35,000 Youth funds and \$15,000 from United Way.

Methodology Overview:

- Survey
 - 145 qualified respondents (69 friends and family, 76 youth)
 - 381 total surveys collected
- Focus Groups and Interview
 - Total of 9 participants

- Service Provider Feedback
 - 32 interviews with Berks County service providers

Demographic Profile/Basics

- 3,000 – 5,000 Disconnected Young Adults reside in Berks County
- 50.0% Ages 21-24 46.6% Ages 16-20
- Half last attended Reading School District; but half did not
- 53.4% Male 43.9% Female
- The report details differences in the race and ethnicity profile of disconnected young adults versus all Berks County residents ages 16-24.
- Disconnected young adults sometimes have continued education past high school.
- Disconnected young adults are likely to be living with their parents.
- Most disconnected young adults have more than one reason for disconnection.
- Disconnected young adults most commonly spend their time at home.

Findings/Multiple Barriers

- 90% of respondents reported experiencing life circumstances that are common barriers to employment or education:
 - Lack of transportation
 - Family care & immediate employment
 - Barriers to pursuing education
 - Focus on making money vs. investing in a career

Findings/Validity

- Findings from this study mirror national findings about disconnected youth and young adults
 - Care taking and disability status
 - Educational attainment
 - Living situation

Recommendations and Overview

- How to reach disconnected young adults
 - Safe spaces
 - Online outreach
 - Partner with natural allies
- How to assist disconnected young adults in accessing programs
 - Provide transportation
 - Provide or plan for child care
 - Provides services online
 - Ensure services are available for low income families
 - Guide disconnected young adults to available jobs
- How to keep disconnected young adults engaged
 - Connect disconnected young adults to caring adults
 - Provide meaningful and interesting content

The full report is available online: County of Berks—Workforce Development Board > <http://www.co.berks.pa.us/Dept/WDB/Pages/default.aspx>.

The O’Pake Leadership Institute at Alvernia University has selected the Youth Committee’s proposal for a Disconnected Young Adult Public Awareness initiative as a service learning project for the 2017-2018 Leadership Berks Program. Mr. Fogarty will make a project presentation at the opening Leadership Berks Retreat on September 28, 2017.

United Community Services for Working Families was awarded its 4th U. S. Department of Labor YouthBuild Grant. UCS will receive \$902,161 over the next three years to continue its YouthBuild AmeriCorps program, an education and training program for young adults ages 17-24 looking to transform their lives through GED preparation, workforce development, and vocational training. The program will target sixty low-income youth from Berks County and provide opportunities to renovate affordable housing through a partnership with Reading Housing Authority and Habitat for Humanity. UCS YouthBuild is also an AmeriCorps site allowing all students the opportunity to earn scholarships through completing service hours. Board members offered congratulations to Ms. Chambers and her staff. Ms. Chambers commented that UCS has a construction lab on site which will be highly beneficial to the students.

Highlights from the CareerLink Oversight Report were reviewed by Ms. Gage-Linderman. An update on the PA CareerLink® Berks County Operator and Service Provider transition had been provided to the Committee by Mr. Moser and the programs have been operating without interruption. EDSI will be hiring an additional three persons. Two former County staff members were hired by EDSI and have contributed to the continuation of effective customer service during the initial transfer period. All but two required partners have signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreement required by WIOA legislation.

Ms. Adamczyk covered several items on her Administrator’s report: the Workforce System Policy No. 121-06: Local Workforce Delivery System—Common Identifier for PA’s One-Stop Service Delivery System Network required a new and very prescriptive PA CareerLink logo and American Job Center companion logo. Internal materials are being updated and quotes to replace the pylon sign on Kutztown Road are being obtained. Shuman Development Group will replace the signs on the building.

Effective January 1, 2018, ResCare (WIOA Title I Youth services contractor) and EDSI (WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker services contractor) will assume responsibility for processing all ITAs (Individual Training Accounts), OJTs (On-the-Job Training) and TEs (Transitional Employment). Currently the Board enters into agreements with schools and employers for these services and payments are processed through the County of Berks.

The Fall Job Fair is scheduled for October 30 from noon to 5:00 p.m. at the Crowne Plaza and responses have been excellent.

Referring to the PA CareerLink® By the Numbers (July 2016 – June 2017) handout, Ms. Adamczyk reported that 563 individual businesses were served. The quarterly report contains updated figures for foot traffic, unemployment compensation claimants, new training accounts, employer recruitments, new work-based training contracts, and WorkKeys® profiles and career readiness certificates achieved.

Ms. Judge asked Ms. Adamczyk to comment on the UC phone traffic which had previously been a problem. Ms. Adamczyk answered that traffic has been down because the State opened offices with additional staff thereby reducing wait times. Claimants are now able to reach the UC office from home. Mr. Herman added that funding was provided for 200 State staff to

return. He said SEIU worked vigorously with State legislators to restore the budget. Hearings have been held and he urged Board members to contact State Representatives and Senators to move the bill forward.

Ms. Adamczyk stressed the importance of the courtesy phone in the local office because many low income customers can't afford to use their cell phones which use up minutes while waiting to reach the UC office. She added that if a problem with UC exists, claimants must talk to a person to resolve the issue which cannot be resolved when using a computer. Many persons also need interpretation services.

Mr. Fogarty presented the Training and Industry Partnership Committee Report on behalf of Mr. DeVere who participated in the meeting by phone. The Department of Labor and Industry has adopted a new "Next Generation" Industry Partnership vision for PY2017. The focal point of this new Industry Partnership direction will be to promote greater input and a broader alliance of employers, workforce and economic development, and education partners in the advancement of IP activities beyond training that are locally relevant to the industry sectors and are self-sustaining should be addressed. GRECDC has championed this IP transition and Mr. Stevenson assisted Ms. Ellen Albright in preparing a grant application which was submitted in August.

At its August 30, 2017 meeting, the Committee reviewed the 2017-18 RMCTC (Reading Muhlenberg Career and Technology Center) and BCTC (Berks Career and Technology Center) Occupational Advisory Committee (OAC) member lists. By a motion made and seconded, the Committee unanimously endorsed and approved the member lists and recommended that the action be included as an item of Board interest in the minutes of September 15, 2017 meeting of the full Board.

Corrective action for reinstatement of High Priority Occupations (HPOs) through a collective SE PA PREP regional petition initiative has been completed. As a result, 33 locally critical HPOs have been approved by the PA DOLI for reinstatement to the 2017 Berks HPO list.

Updates on four grant initiatives that the Berks WDB has pursued and/or assisted with were covered in the report.

- \$1.2M, three-year grant to Berks Connections/Pre-Trial Services for the development and delivery of a Construction Trades Re-Entry Project targeting ex-offenders returning to the community
- \$117,758 Berks Business-Education Partnership "Young Talent Pipeline for Technical Skills" grant to be shared between Berks Business Education Coalition (BBEC), Greater Reading Chamber and Economic Development Corporation (GRCEDC) and Manufacturers Resource Center (MRC) for the development and promotion of career awareness activities for middle and secondary school students in Berks County including but not limited to the expansion of the "What's So Cool About Manufacturing" video contest
- \$195,000 for a Strategic Innovation Grant II in partnership with Berks, Lancaster and Lehigh Valley WDBs for the purpose of implementing activities that will enhance the High Priority Occupations talent pipeline necessary to support the regional Food/Beverage Manufacturing and Transportation/Warehousing industries.

- \$144,213 for an Apprenticeship USA Expansion Grant to be used for the purchase and upgrade of Electrician Apprentice learning systems and tuition assistance funding. The WDB partnered with IBEW Local Union 743 in the proposal.

A Manufacturing Summit will be held on October 18, 2017 at RACC's Miller Center for the Arts and STTC Center. The event is the result of a well-planned collaboration with Berks County Industrial Development Authority (BCIDA), Greater Reading Chamber and Economic Development Corporation (GRCEDC), Reading Area Community College (RACC), Berks County Workforce Development Board (Berks WDB), Penn State University-Berks and the Manufacturers Resource Center (MRC).

Dr. Weitz encouraged Board members to register early for the event adding that it is a great partnership in a very exciting program.

Mr. Fogarty said that Dr. Weitz has announced her retirement as President of RACC in June of 2018 having served for eleven years. He said this means that the Board will be honored by her presence for three more Board meetings.

The COO report was commented on by Mr. Fogarty:

- The local labor market continues to be quite strong for job seekers with July's local unemployment rate 4.5%. This rate was lower than the State (5.0%) and just slightly above the national rate (4.4%) in July.
- Mr. Fogarty added that his report also included details on the upcoming Manufacturing Summit to be held on October 18, 2017 which was previously mentioned during the Training and Industry Partnership Committee report.
- Outreach meetings and roundtable discussions were held in March and August with several local congressional representatives including Congressman Smucker, Congressman Costello, Congressman Dent and Congressman Meehan for the purpose of discussing workforce development topics. Details of the meetings' topics and attendees for each meeting were included in the COO report.

No market intelligence discussion was offered by Board members.

No public comment was made.

The meeting was adjourned by Ms. Judge at 8:50 a.m. The next quarterly meeting of the Board is scheduled for 7:30 a.m. on Friday, December 8, 2017.