

**Workforce Innovation and Performance Committee of the Monroe County/Rochester Workforce Development Board**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, September 12, 2023**  
**8:00 to 9:00 AM**  
**Meeting Scheduled via ZOOM**

**Present:** Jarmani Dozier, Jennifer Geiger, Joe Wesley, Melissa Berrien, Randy Andre, Roosevelt Mareus, Edie Arlauckas, Jane Sullivan, Shawna Gareau-Kurtz

**Staff and Guest:** Lee Koslow, Mary McKeown, Viatta Carter, Antwan Williams, Marisol Young, Laura Seelman, Daniel Donnarumma

**Approval of Minutes:**

A motion to approve the June 6, 2023 meeting minutes was made by Joe Wesley and seconded by Daniel Donnarumma. The motion was carried unanimously.

**WIOA Adult/Dislocated Worker Program Performance, July 2022 through March 2023:**

Lee Koslow began this discussion by reviewing the Adult and Dislocated Worker Performance, 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter, Program Year 2022, on the WIOA primary indicators of performance for Monroe County. Lee reviewed the 5 different Primary Indicators of Performance that we are measured on, which are county-wide measures. Performance is summarized in the Workforce Innovation and Performance Committee slideshow.

**Updates to Business Services Policies:**

Laura Seelman began the discussion with a little background information, along with recommended revisions, to our 2 existing policies: On-the-Job Training Grant (OJT) and Work Experience Tryout (WET).

- History: Policies include required elements outlined in state NYS Dept of Labor guidance & federal Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) legislation
- Purpose: Outline business & job seeker eligibility, occupational & industry requirements, application, monitoring and reimbursement policies
- Revisions: Updates to formatting, removal of elements determined to be internal procedure vs policy, changes to provide flexibility based on feedback from businesses & staff

The Work Experience Tryout Program allows businesses to try out candidates with barriers to employment in short-term, paid work experiences to see if their skills and work habits are a fit for the business and its culture. Candidates with inconsistent work histories or long-term unemployment issues work on-site with a business while employed by a staffing agency partner.

- Wages and staffing agency markup 100% paid by RochesterWorks
- Length of work experience is four weeks (160 hours)
- Candidates establish a work history, demonstrate success and develop skills to lead to unsubsidized employment

Proposed Revisions to the WET Policy include:

- Operations and jobsite should be located within Monroe County.
- WET participants should not represent more than 25% of the business's workforce at any one time.
- Any business who has exhibited a pattern of failure may not be eligible to participate in future WET activities.

- Allows individuals who were previously employed by a business to be considered for WET if re-hired into a new position.
- Positions should ideally be full-time, minimum 35 hours per week.
- Encourages, but does not require, retention of WET participant upon program completion.
- Removes staff procedure information and includes reference to Contract Agreement between RW and staffing agency partner (TalentEdge) to outline responsibilities of partner vs RW.
- Option to extend Tryout period up two (2) additional weeks for a maximum of (6) weeks total in special circumstances to accommodate pay periods, absences of special programs.

The On-the-Job Training Grant Program provides funding for businesses to hire and train unemployed candidates with some, but not all, skills needed for a full-time position. The business directly hires the candidate, and their current staff/supervisor train the new hire on-the-job in the skills they need to succeed in their role.

- 50% reimbursement of wages up to a maximum of \$7,500 per new hire
- Length of training period is minimum four weeks (160 hours) and maximum 16 weeks (640 hours)
- Businesses eligible to receive up to three contracts per program year (July 1 - June 30)

Proposed Revisions to the OJT Policy include:

- Removes two (2) employee requirements and keeps criteria that OJT cannot represent more than 25% of current workforce.
- Individuals who previously used Individual Training Account (ITA) and/or Work Experience Tryout funding who require additional training are eligible for OJT.
- Replaces with references to Priority of Service Policy 101 and local self-sufficiency wage rate.
- Individuals who previously worked for a business may be considered IF they are returning for a job they have not previously performed.
- Expand definition to include those working P/T who will receive an increase in wages, hours or benefits via OJT.
- Skill gaps will be assessed by staff member, documented in Individual Employment Plan, and other assessments may be used to determine skill gap.
- Explicitly define full-time as a minimum of 35 hours of work per week.

Laura also introduced the new Incumbent Worker Training Policy that will provide funding for businesses to train and upskill their existing employees to help increase competitiveness, retain a skilled workforce and avert potential layoffs. The Incumbent Worker Training Policy includes the following:

Training Requirements:

- Training or educational activity that demonstrates a benefit to both the business and employee in terms of retention and layoff aversion, increased wages, productivity, competitiveness and/or skill attainment
- Completed within six (6) months

Reimbursement Policies:

- Maximum award amount \$10,000
- Limit one award per program year
- Reimbursement anywhere from 50%-90% reimbursement to businesses for costs including instructor/course costs and exam fees
- Business must provide matching funds in the form of training costs, employee wages, travel expenses, etc.

Business Eligibility:

- Operations and jobsite located in Monroe County
- In need of assistance training current employees

- Able to contract for customized, short-term training services

**Trainee Eligibility:**

- Must be considered “incumbent workers”
  - Employed
  - Qualify as an employee as defined by FLSA
  - Employed with business for six months or more\*\*
- Reside within 9 county Finger Lakes region
- Work as a full-time employee of the business (35 hrs/wk)\*
- Earn at least NYS minimum wage and up to a maximum of local area self-sufficiency wage rate of \$34.87

A motion to approve the revisions to the On-the-Job Training Grant and Work Experience Tryout Programs and the introduction of the new Incumbent Worker Training Policy as presented was made by Joe Wesley and seconded by Roosevelt Mareus. The motion was passed unanimously.

**Changes to the list of Occupations in Demand in Monroe County:**

Lee Koslow began the discussion by noting that every 2 years or so the Local Workforce Development Board approves an update to our List of Occupations in Demand in Monroe County. Currently, we have a list of 63 different Occupations in Demand. Those 63 are going to automatically go down to 62, because in the Standard Occupational Classification, for this year, two of the occupational titles were combined into one. Software Developers, Applications and Software Developers, System Software have become Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers.

The Occupations in Demand List serves two main purposes, including:

- First, it serves as a signal for job seekers, training providers, businesses, and other stakeholders that these occupations have good hiring potential in Monroe County.
- Second, we use this list when considering approval of WIOA-funded Individual Training Accounts (ITAs). If an occupation is on this list, and an individual wants a WIOA ITA in that occupation, provided they are otherwise eligible, and the training is on the Eligible Training Provider List, it goes a long way toward proving that it is a demand occupation that can be approved for WIOA training. We would not need a waiver or an overabundance of proof that there are jobs for the individual.

The list is organized into occupations in 23 different job families and was summarized in the Workforce Innovation and Performance Committee slideshow.

Discussion resulted in the following proposed additions and deletions to the List of Occupations in Demand for Monroe County:

**Proposed Additions:**

- Industrial Engineers
- Community Health Workers
- Special Education Teachers, Kindergarten and Elementary School
- Phlebotomists
- Ophthalmic Laboratory Technicians

**Proposed Deletions:**

- Paralegals and Legal Assistants
- Graphic Designers

A motion to approve the recommendations so that they go forward to the Workforce Development Board was made by Shawna Gareau-Kurtz and seconded by Randy Andre. The motion was passed unanimously.

Lee thanked everyone for the very good discussion today.

**Next Meeting Scheduled:** December 5, 2023

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 AM

Submitted by: Mary McKeown

Reviewed by:

Lee Koslow 9/25/2023

Laura Seelman 9/26/2023