

Workforce Innovation and Performance Committee of the Monroe County/Rochester Workforce Development Board
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, December 1, 2020
8:00 to 9:00 AM
Meeting Scheduled via ZOOM

Present: Elizabeth O'Brien, Jennifer Geiger, Romanda Gibson-Stevenson, Edie Arlauckas, Richard Turner, Roosevelt Mareus, Sarah Fletcher, Cherie Becker, Patricia Stovall-Lane, Mubarak Bashir, Marion French, Aqua Porter, Melissa Berrien

Staff and Guest: Lee Koslow, Peter Pecor, Viatta Carter, Mary McKeown, John Premo, Antwan Williams

Approval of Minutes:

A motion to approve the September 1, 2020 meeting minutes was made by Richard Turner and seconded by Elizabeth O'Brien. The motion was carried unanimously.

Review of PY2019 Performance and Programmatic Monitoring:

Lee began the discussion by presenting an overview of the last program year's performance and programmatic monitoring. Lee reviewed performance from the program year which ended June 30th. Lee reviewed the comparison between the previous program year, PY2018, and the program year that just ended, which started in 2019 and ended in 2020, referred to as PY2019. He indicated that we're measured on 6 different primary indicators of performance across 3 WIOA funding streams. At this time, Lee looked at the Adult and Dislocated Worker funding streams, including 5 of the indicators. The last indicator is an indicator on Customer Service to Employers, which is only measured statewide and is not measured at the local level. For our Primary Indicators of Performance, it starts with Employment Rate. All those who are employed the 2nd full calendar quarter after they exit the program, you'll notice the percentages have gone up since last year, we made our goal and we're ahead of the statewide average for both Adults and Dislocated Workers. This indicates the economy was good during the time being measured and this is a lagging indicator. It goes back really a full year prior to the program year that's being measured.

The next indicator Lee reviewed is also measured in the 2nd quarter. The cohort here are all of the individuals who were positive for entered employment in the 2nd quarter after exit. We line up all of their earnings, their 3-month quarterly earnings in a line, and the person in the middle is the median. Median Earnings for Q2, if you want to annualize that, you have to multiply it by 4 for an annualized salary, although if an individual was hired or fired midway through the quarter, you may not be looking at a full 3 months of employment for every single person. These numbers look good and are also higher than last year. They are also above the statewide goal and for Adults, a little bit higher than the statewide average and for our Dislocated Workers, a little bit lower. This is typical for Monroe County. Our Dislocated Workers typically are individuals with a lower skill level than the statewide average. These numbers are for both Part-Time and Full-Time employment.

The 3rd measure, Employment Rate 4th quarter after exit, we used to think of this as an employment retention measure because it's 2 quarters further out. It's not actually the same group of people from PY2019, because this one lags 6 months further back than the Q2 measures. It's not strictly a retention measure either under WIOA because it includes both those who were employed in Q2 and those who weren't. This is everybody who's employed the 4th quarter after exit. We again are higher than last year for Adult, a little bit lower for Dislocated Worker, but still quite high and above the goal and the statewide average for both groups.

The next indicator Lee reviewed, Credential Attainment, was a baseline measure, where there is no goal. For PY2019, we were kind of tracking and trying to figure out what drives performance on this at the Career Center level and how we can make improvements in it. Lee noted that there were some marked improvements over PY2018 and that we were a little bit below the statewide average for Adults and a little bit more below the statewide average for Dislocated Workers. Credential Attainment is a lagging indicator. We're actually looking a year back, so the performance that we were working to change, when we were looking at the numbers as they came in, and the lists of people as they came in, was for individuals who've already all completed training and exited and we were just going back and looking to do data entry for them. Three things about this measure that are going to make it very difficult in PY2020, first and most importantly, include that anybody who applies for a work search waiver from Unemployment, is in training, but is not funded by RochesterWorks!, therefore is not engaged by our staff, is counted in this measure. This makes it very challenging for us to follow up with individuals to find out if they got a credential. A credential could be a high school diploma, a post-secondary credential or an industry recognized credential. Secondly, the OSOS database that all of our participants are in, the management reports have been down for us since March, so we can't manage performance this program year until NYS Information Technology Services fixes this. Thirdly, many of the training participants are case managed by NYSDOL staff in our local area at the Waring Road Career Center or at our new College Avenue Career Center once they move in. All of those staff have been tasked to do Unemployment Insurance Claims rather than work on WIOA, so we don't have their help right now, which makes this measure very challenging for this program year. Some of that figured into our 2019 performance. It would have been better and we would have been able to manage performance better if it hadn't been for those 3 factors.

The next measure Lee discussed was Measurable Skill Gains, which is a new measure. For Adults and Dislocated Workers, we are below the statewide average on both of these. We were only able to look at 1 quarter of data before our reports went down, so we haven't been able to do a whole lot with this. It is also impacted by those who are on a work search waiver from Unemployment, by the management reports being down, and by DOL staff not being able to help out because they're being tasked with Unemployment Insurance Claims right now. What this indicator counts, is for everybody who is in a training program, what we're looking for is some type of skill gain. It could be meeting some type of a training benchmark, it could be their grades at the end of the semester, are they making satisfactory progress towards a credential, and for those who are going for a high school equivalency diploma, it could be one educational functioning level of improvement on their TABE Test in either reading or math. This is largely a function of data entry to the extent that there hasn't been performance is because we can't get it from the schools or from the individuals.

Looking at PY2020, just to note about our performance goals that we're looking at, obviously were very challenged because of the pandemic and having the Career Centers physically closed right now, having the DOL staff being tasked with Unemployment, having our reports still being down, we've been in the midst of negotiations on what our goals are going to be for PY2020 and PY2021 and the New York State Department of Labor gave us a set of goals that they proposed. We came back with counter offers on all of them. They came back with a further counter proposal, and we agreed to some of their counter-proposals, but particularly for Credential Attainment and Measurable Skill Gains, we don't think there's any way to make the target that they're proposing. For those indicators and a couple of additional Youth indicators, we sent back a second counteroffer, and we've been waiting for several weeks now to see if NYSDOL schedules a meeting to discuss the negotiations or agrees to our most recent set of counter-offers. Last time around, NYSDOL never did complete negotiations with us; however, they were holding everybody harmless for performance in case we didn't make the numbers, so it wasn't really a big issue at the time.

Lee also reported this time last year, we for the first time showed information on our programmatic File Monitoring that we do. For this committee, it provides some oversight over how customers are being served in the Career Centers. The fiscal monitoring would be looked at by the Executive, Finance and Audit Committee. The Youth monitoring would be looked at by the Youth Committee. The Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Trade

Act participant file monitoring would be looked at by this committee. Each quarter, we do a file monitoring review and a sample of the files/customers that were served under the Adult/Dislocated Worker/Trade Act programs and we monitor against a set of elements that need to be looked at, either for integrity of the data or for allowability of a certain service or cost, or to make sure that the individual is really eligible to be served the way that they're being served. In PY2018, we had a full 4 quarters of monitoring. In PY2019, we only got through 2 quarters of monitoring before our management reports broke and we could no longer pull a random sample. Looking at PY2018 and PY2019, the numbers are very similar. We took some averages, 1st quarter records monitored between Goodman Street and Waring Road; the numbers didn't change very much. Findings per Record went up slightly. They didn't go up a whole lot though, which is kind of a good thing, considering the struggles that we had. With the Unresolved Findings, after 45 days we do a follow-up report to check if any of the Findings that were asked to be corrected, weren't corrected yet. In some cases, it might be that there was an attempt to correct the record, but it just wasn't done fully. In other cases, it might be a finding that can't be corrected because too much time has passed, and a document can't be obtained anymore because they've lost contact with the customer. That hasn't gotten any worse. Lee is looking at PY2018 and PY2019 and is thinking this can kind of be a baseline. Once the pandemic has ended and we're able to start monitoring again, some time after that, that is the point after which we'd like to see, can we improve these findings per record, compared to what we have now and these unresolved findings. There's no evaluation here, good or bad, but it will give us a look at what we're going to be looking for going ahead, whenever things get somewhat back to normal.

Featured Discussion: What practices should one-stop system partners adopt to promote equity and good jobs for our participants, including participants with disabilities?

Lee reported this topic is something that has come up through the Rochester Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative. We were able to sign on to the RMAPI Workforce Provider Organization and Employer Pledges. Particularly as a Workforce Provider Organization, we're kind of in a moment here where the question has come up, what can we do to promote equity? For this committee, particularly our charge is to make sure that all of our participants are being served in a way that really benefits them, especially including those with disabilities. Our featured discussion kind of comes from that effort, what practices should one-stop system partners adopt, and so when we say one-stop system partners, we're talking any partner that has a stake in the system that we might be doing referrals back and forth with. This includes RochesterWorks!, our Youth Navigator partners, our Adult Ed partners, ACCES-VR and NYS Commission for the Blind, Action for a Better Community, Urban League, PathStone and any of the other organizations that serve people and help them get training and get jobs. Lee included this discussion is for everyone to get some ideas on what more should we be doing or what should we be looking at when it comes to promoting both equity and good jobs. Within the context of the pledge, there were 4 Best Practice Categories for the Workforce Provider Organizations, which gives a little bit of framework for discussion.

The 4 Best Practice Categories include:

- 1) Workplace Culture
- 2) Program Design
- 3) Employer Relationships
- 4) Retention and Success

Lee added that with RochesterWorks!, our best practice action commitment that we've chosen is to train all of our staff in cultural competence and trauma informed care best practices.

The following is a summary of our discussion today. Most of the discussion centered around employer relationships. Two questions, four suggestions, one challenge, and one resource emerged from this topic. We received seven suggestions and one question from the other three topics combined.

Workplace Culture:

- Should there be an increase in the diversity of the staff at your Workforce Preparation Organization (WPO)?
- *Suggestion:* Train program staff in cultural competence and trauma-informed care best practices.

Program Design:

- *Suggestion:* Obtain feedback from participants regarding equitable program design. May try focus groups.
- *Suggestion:* Also solicit feedback from program staff.
- *Suggestion:* Outreach materials should portray a diverse customer base. For youth participants, include parents in outreach efforts.

Employer Relationships:

- Should businesses be measured on the diversity of their staff?
- *Suggestion:* Obtain feedback from workers placed/served regarding equitable workplace practices. How does the employer treat them? Are there opportunities for advancement?
- How should a WPO address a business that has demonstrated a need for improvement? How might WPOs prioritize resources toward businesses with good jobs and equitable workplace practices?
- *Suggestion:* On-ramp training for new business customers.
- *Suggestion:* Regular workshops offered to business customers. Bring in experts on various topics.
- *Challenge:* How can business services organizations that provide labor exchange services to a large volume of business customers offer low-cost, less staff-intensive interventions to help businesses adopt equitable workplace practices?
- *Suggestion:* Focus efforts on informing, educating, and training recipients of business grants.
- *Resource:* Employer Engagement Question Bank, attached (from Cleveland)

Retention and Success:

- *Suggestion:* WPOs can educate employers on the supportive services that their employees will need to be successful on the job. They can communicate with employers when providing supportive services.
- *Suggestion:* Provide coaching support (e.g., Employer Resource Networks from which employers buy a share of a coach's time)
- *Suggestion:* Mentoring, including both internal and external (RMAPI's Adult Mentoring Program is an example of an external mentoring program)

Lee Koslow included for next steps, he'll put together a summary of today's discussion and will distribute to everyone who attended the zoom meeting today. He concluded that at RochesterWorks!, our primary focus is going to be on our action item from our pledge, which is staff training in cultural competence and trauma informed care best practices. As we get into that, if we can identify anything additional that looks like it will really be effective from this list, we may look to implement that as well and Lee welcomes continued discussion with the group on these items.

Next Meeting Scheduled: March 2, 2021

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 AM

Submitted by: Mary McKeown

Reviewed by:

Lee Koslow 12/11/2020