



*Supporting the Development and Retention of a World Class Workforce*

Jeffrey S. Swartz, Executive Director

Robert Weil, Chair

**OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING  
MINUTES, MARCH 12, 2021**

**WDB Office, 1111 Marlkrass Road, Cherry Hill (Zoom Conferencing)**

**ATTENDANCE**

MEMBERS		22-Oct-20	13-Nov-20	11-Dec-20	15-Jan-21	12-Feb-21	12-Mar-21
DeBaere, Gregg T., CHAIR	Atlantic Coast Communications	X	X	X	X	X	X
Cirii, Frank	Camden County One Stop	X			X	X	X
Connors, Kristi	NJ Department of Labor, Business Services	X	X	X	X	X	X
Deitz, Jeff	NJDVRs				X	X	X
McFarland, Salama	Camden County Board of Social Services	X		X	X	X	X
Regensburger, Robert	Lockheed Martin	X	X	X	X		X
Sinclair, Nidia	Camden County Resource Center	X	X	X	X	X	X
Weil, Bob	WDB Chair	X	X	X	X	X	X
Swartz, Jeffrey S.	WDB	X	X	X	X	X	X
Williams, Leslie J	WDB	X	X	X	X	X	X
Varallo, Kathleen	WDB	X	X	X	X	X	X

**WELCOME**

Gregg DeBaere, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:12am. Gregg welcomed attendees and was happy to note that the One-Stop Certification bullet on the agenda was removed because this work product has been fully completed and accepted by the SETC. The Committee reviewed the minutes of the meeting Friday, February 12, 2021. Gregg said he did his thorough review edits for grammar and punctuation with Kathleen Varallo, Administrative Assistant, WDB. He asked if there were any further corrections or additions to the minutes. Hearing none, Gregg asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Leslie Williams made the first motion; Jeffrey Swartz made the second motion. By unanimous vote to the affirmative the motion was carried and minutes February 12, 2021 were approved.

**ONE – STOP & WDB CERTIFICATION**

Gregg asked Leslie Williams, Comptroller, WDB, to report about the technical response from the State Employment and Training Commission (SETC) regarding the WDB Certification documents. Leslie reported she did submit all the WDB Certification documents as stated in the last meeting however when Gregg attended the SETC Governance Committee meeting, it was announced that no local area had yet completed the process. Gregg notified Leslie right after that meeting. Leslie contacted the SETC to inquire and found out that the email they are using to receive the documents is limited to a certain amount of megabytes. Leslie said the SETC did not receive our annual reports so she directed them to the WDB website because the files are too large to send. Leslie also sent a copy of all email correspondence noting attachments and the dates of submitting. She asked for confirmation that all documents were fully received and has not heard back; but they did receive everything.

Gregg asked if there has been any guidance issued regarding the local and regional strategic plans. Leslie said no guidance has yet been received but the committee could begin moving forward with the process of updates and review. She said we can review the plan and decide what changes are going to be made. The regional plan will be addressed in joint effort with the five southern counties. She said Jeff and Kathleen will be scheduling a meeting with the WDB Directors in those counties. Jeffrey S. Swartz, Executive Director, WDB, asked Gregg if he heard at the Governance Meeting whether or not the state received final approval for the State Combined Plan. He recalled they received a conditional approval due to board member ratios. Gregg said the SETC put up a slate of board member candidates in January for approval by the Governor, but have not received full approval. Jeff said he will contact the other local areas in the southern region. Some of the updates are likely to pertain to the transition of services due to current conditions. Gregg said they may follow much of the previous guidance and ask the local areas to share some best practices. Gregg will make further inquiry with the SETC about whether or not to get started with current understanding or wait until new guidance is released. Leslie suggested she could review the current plan and begin to insert updated information. Gregg said he will confirm with SETC and will rather wait until the next meeting to discuss.

#### ONE-STOP AND YOUTH ONE-STOP (YOS) UPDATES

Frank Cirii, Local Area Operations Director, reported One-Stop facility is open and safely coordinating with the County Health Department. There have been no incidences of COVID and no transmission ever recorded within the building. Management is promoting immunization among staff and allowing them certain accommodations in scheduling so they can make and meeting vaccine appointments. Screening and safe entry is being tracked in all departments, while Kristi Connors, Manager, Employment Services, DOL, has been a big help to coordinating with state staff and partners. There has some onboarding of new staff with access cards being issued by IT.

Frank reported the Commissioners and others are still referring UI claim problems to the One-Stop and staff is addressing these concerns as best they can. He said we have seen many customers with a one year anniversary problem in the last ten days.

Frank reported staff is still in the soft practice mode with the QLess scheduling system because there are not many of customer appointments being made. Staff is also participating in any training opportunities that come through. Nidia Sinclair, Director, Resource Center, confirmed that staff did take part in update training to the CASAS testing program on February 18<sup>th</sup>. Frank said there are more modifications to CASAS and there will be another training to be announced.

Frank reported that Camden County College is in the process of research proposals for Incumbent Worker Training Opportunities. As he explained at the last meeting these funds are in the budget for employers who will work with the college to create types of training to up-skill their current workforce. Frank told the college representatives he is more than happy to present any proposals to the WDB for approval but would rather they find a model program shown to have been proven logistically successful. Gregg asked and Frank confirmed that they were open to that idea but has not yet been able to get in touch with other colleges reps able to share such a program. Frank sent the college links to some proven programs in Morris County which he found on their website. It might take some time under current conditions to make the right contacts. He said he will set up a meeting with Jeff and the college once they get back to

him with an application offering. Gregg appreciated Frank's efforts to move the idea forward. He said it is a very good time to utilize incumbent worker funds in the workforce and help local area business.

Frank reported there is a new bi-lingual version of the video orientation of services posted on the county website. The website is continually updated with additional partner information as well. All division leads participated in a meeting to implement DocuSign, an electronic signature platform. He and Nidia are tasking the counselling unit and fiscal office to identify the forms they want to implement with the ability for electronic signature. They are coordination with Scott Stetzer, Manager, Technical Support, to integrate the documents into eligibility and electronic mail formats. Staff is being trained on the process of using the DocuSign. He looks forward to using the signature platform within the next month or so first for customer onboarding and then for vendor and fiscal processing which may be a bit more challenging. He noted that the package does have a one year expiration dates so he is pushing to get it fully integrated into document processing as soon as possible.

The WDB County Business Action Plan is being implemented through outreach with the Business Service and Outreach Team. He said part of the plan will include matching employers to the incumbent worker training. He is coordinating outreach with the county office of communication and outreach to gain the list of employers who applied for loans and paycheck protection grants.

- YOUTH ONE-STOP (YOS) UPDATES:

Frank reported Youth Counselors and coordinating with the WDB to produce a success story video that will be used to promote services of the YOS. This project is moving along and may see a final video produced by April.

Gregg asked for updates about the Learning Link HighSet Testing site application. Frank said the application has been fully reviewed, signed and sent to the state for approval. Gregg asked how long that might take. Frank and Nidia both said they were given no timeframe for approval.

Nidia Sinclair, Director, Resource Center, reported she is still working with a team to review youth and other customer files to make sure that every file is updated with any possible missing information or documentation. This, she noted, in an effort to uncover some possible benchmark achievements that might have been missed and also to preemptively catch any possible future audit findings. She said counselors are reviewing and updating the AOSOS system as well. The review process is taking up to two hours for each file. Gregg asked for an estimate based on number of files and hours of review, how long it might take to complete a full review of all the files. Nidia estimated there may be a little over 100 files, some of which have already been processed and some which were opened but where the customer quickly exited, so there is not much information to review. She said these files are still being reviewed but would not take up much time for processing. The exercise has proven successful in that some missing information such as attendance records, time sheets and training completion documentation were discovered, obtained, and entered into the AOSOS system. All agreed the file review process will become a regular part of recording and completing customer engagement with the One-Stop. Nidia said this will not be a one-time exercise; it will be incorporated into a regular practice. She further explained some of the technical aspects of the file review process.

Gregg asked and Nidia confirmed the Youth One-Stop does have a Financial Literacy component in place ready to go once more youth begin to engage. Jeff said that a new member of the BSR team was introduced by Matt Verney, Vice Chair. He said Ryan Bennett, Truist Bank attended that meeting and offered some of Truist's financial literacy programs for both youth and adults. Jeff will forward her contact information. She seemed very eager to help in any way she could to educate residents in the county. Gregg asked and Nidia confirmed that counselors are following up with training vendors to provide updates to credentialing and she has seen a growth in these outcomes. Gregg said we are seeing the value of follow-up even without the state's direction and it is a great use of this time and effort. Hearing no further questions, he moved on the next item on the Operations Agenda.

- **BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES UPDATE**

It is the mission of the Camden County Board of Social Services to provide timely, efficient, cost-effective delivery of social, medical, and economic programs in a compassionate and financially responsible manner. The Camden County Board of Social Services is accessible to disabled persons. (Follow the link for more information. <http://www.camdencounty.com/service/social-services/>)

Salama McFarland, Case Management Administrator, Board of Social Services (BSS) reported the Board opened its new customer service center at the Surrogate offices on March 8<sup>th</sup>. Customers are entering by way of a designated entrance and all screening measures are in place. The Board is still trying to serve customers by phone or virtually eliminating the need to enter the building as much as possible. Customers are still being encouraged to connect via phone, email or other types of contact. Staff is being trained to use the QLess scheduling system but have not used in for customers yet. They are still trying to get the process in place for transferring customers from one Que to another. Managers are still running test cases to see how it will work and discover any glitches in the system. The system is still not able to interface with the Board's CRM computer system. Gregg asked what the prognosis is for interface to work out. Salama was not able to give an answer for full interface and integration at this time and if so, how long it would take.

Salama reported staff is still participating in the voluntary call program. They are still contacting customers. Staff are facing some challenges with barriers or mental health concerns. Salama said staff will need better training on how to help customers in these types of situations. One Case Manager was very upset about not being able to get help for one customer. She said many customers are facing anxiety and depression challenges and how do we make sure frontline staff are able to deal with those types of situations. Nidia suggested considering someone on staff who is trained to support staff in mental health situations. Bob Weil, Chair, WDB asked if this type of training could be considered under the Incumbent Worker Training Policy. Salama asked her director about getting some type of specialized mental health training. The Committee discussed current challenges customers are facing and the need for more training. All agreed domestic mental health issues are an alarmingly growing trend and further training is needed. Bob encouraged any one on the committee to research more options for getting the One-Stop staff and partners further training to be able to better handle customer mental health concerns.

Salama reported staff will have the Johnson & Johnson vaccine available to them. Staff will be able to make an appointment through the county website. Appointments will be sent to the HR department so they can work out scheduling within the office.

Salama reported the Volunteer Work Activity Campaign that began December with phone calls to clients is continuing. She designated an outreach team to make calls using a phone script with the goal of providing information and awareness to services as well as additional options for facing challenges such as mental health during the pandemic. Child Care, as well as awareness to training and career planning opportunities, are also offered.

She reported calls to 895 SNAP participants, 777 TANF customers 928 GA customers. The latest number of interested customers referred for work activities was 31 SNAP, 21 TANF, and 19 GA. The total numbers currently participating in voluntary work activities is 1 SNAP, 49 TANF, and 100 GA. Nidia asked about what activities General Assistance (GA) participants are being referred to. Salama said most of these GA customers are participating in Drug and Alcohol programs. She is aware that providers are anxiously waiting for referrals. She recommended that these providers look at their programs for improvements and relative content so that customers want to be engaged, especially since these activities are on a voluntary basis. If participants don't see a benefit, they are likely not going to get engaged. Nidia said referrals are scheduled with a counselor, say yes to voluntary activities but once they find out what is involved they schedule and then do not show up. Nidia said she has counselors call the customer again to see if they can reengage them for testing so they can move on to training providers. They are just not getting a response. She instructs counselors to reach out 3 times to the customers and after that if there is no response they close the file. The Committee discussed the frustration regarding state waivers that have eliminated customer's incentives to engage in work activities. All agreed that while many families are facing personal challenges such a school closings and managing home care needs as well as elder care, they are not going to see a benefit to participation. Salama noted that Shani Johnson, Camden County College, Camden City Campus, held an outdoor event that seemed to be very successful. She said creativity is in order to encourage participants to want to be ready for getting back to work once warmer weather comes and thing begin to open up again. Getting kids back to in-person learning is also key to getting adult participants back to work. If more providers are getting as creative as the College then they will see more participation. The college is making more opportunities for individuals to participate in the evening and after regular school hours. This is a more personable approach and its getting good results. Shani is approaching recruitment in a more caring way. Once people know you care they are more likely to listen and get engaged. Nidia said that Shani Johnson and Dr. Lauren Hill, Camden County College, made a presentation to the other providers to give them some more creative ideas about recruiting. She said its up to the providers to review their program and content from soup to nuts and make relevant improvements that attract real participation.

Salama reported there were 1657 new applications filed for service in January and so far, as of February, there have been 614. Jeff asked if there was an update on the volunteer call campaign. He noted he has been praising the campaign, as a best practice, on calls with other WDB Directors and the Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

- DVRS UPDATES & PROJECT SEARCH – JEFFERSON/KENNEDY HOSPITAL

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services provides counseling, training, education,

transportation, job placement, assistive technology, and other support services to people with disabilities. (Follow the link for more information) <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/dvrs>

Jeff Deitz, Manager, DVRS, reported his division continues to service customers remotely and he is taking advantage of the down time to provide more training opportunities for staff. Staff is participating in training and group communication through ZOOM and Teams. Discussions are centering on creating more awareness and approaches that help staff better understand the added stress customers are going through.

Regarding Project Search, Jeff D. reported participants are gaining some successful outcomes through the Jefferson/Kennedy program. The TD Bank program is having more challenges with outcomes and will be looking to convert back to a fully-adult program in the coming program year.

Jeff D. noted staff is still trying to assist their customer base with personal challenges to navigating applications for assistance and unemployment claims. While there is not much that can be done to help, it is often times a caring person to listen and deescalate frustrations that seems to be some of service to customers.

- **EMPLOYMENT SERVICES, DOL**

Employment Services provides Camden County with Career and Employer services including Temporary Disability Benefits, Family Leave Insurance, Maternity Leave, Unemployment Insurance, Social Security Disability and Workers Compensation. Services for employers included job candidate screening and recruitment. (Follow the link for more information) <https://www.nj.gov/labor/aboutlwd/>

Kristi Connors, Manager, Employment Services, DOL, reported she recommended someone to be hired for the employment service trainee position. She has not heard any updates to the status of that hire. She is also conducting interviews for the Supervisor One position vacated by Tom Thorn who retired last year before the pandemic. She will be sending her recommendation for that position to the state, but does not know what the turnaround time will be for processing. She said recommendation go to Human Capital Strategies, then to Civil Service and then back to the state. Each of those departments can approve or promote their own choice and she is also not sure how often they meet over hiring decisions and that is why it may take weeks. She expects the hire to go through; it's a matter of time and process. Gregg asked and Kristi confirmed that Trish MaGowen is still being considered for the Supervisor One position.

Kristi reported her staff completed the Spanish version of the Virtual Services Orientation video and it's not posted the website as Frank mentioned earlier. There is also a written copy of the directory translated to Spanish but she is not sure if that will make to the website but it has been shared with all partners. She said it could be posted as a labeled link so it does not clutter the page.

Kristi reported service check-ins since October 7<sup>th</sup> have numbered 3600 customers for services. She said virtual service request forms are posted to the new NJ website. Kristi said the State

launched a new website [www.careerservices.nj.gov](http://www.careerservices.nj.gov) and the request form drops down as soon as the site is opened. There have been 1258 forms service requests referred by the state. With the old website there may have been 50-70 requests per week and now there are 70-100 requests per week and it is climbing. There is a percentage of UI customers using the form to request assistance with their unanswered claims even though the site clearly states not to fill out the form for that purpose. The site directs those customers to the UI link but obviously people, desperate for help are going to ignore the banner signage. Jeff asked Bob Weil, Chair WDB if he would be amenable to presenting these reported number of requests at the next WDB Quarterly Meeting. He felt it was important to let the members know how many people are requesting services. Bob agreed but Kristi noted that the numbers may be hard to report because they are mixed in with UI requests. She said the real numbers of claimant concerns are spread over and between all departments and partners as Frank and Nidia could confirm. It is a much bigger concern than what's being reported by the check-in and work flow reports. Frank and Nidia agreed. Kristi said she will try to find some kind of report to show what members would need to know in order to understand the vastness of the concern. She said even if the number is 5% of two million that is a huge amount. She will look for and reach out to contacts that might be able to provide more detail about the true number of customers we are serving that is not mixed up with those we cannot serve due to UI concerns. All agreed the data is important.

Kristi reported 580 customers have been referred for training. She will send an updated report as a follow-up to the meeting and going forward. Nidia asked and Kristi confirmed that number is up from 460 last month not in addition to.

Kristi reported her staff is in the process of creating a resume video. She said it will probably be completed in a week to two weeks. This is being created for the Jersey Job Club. Once it is completed it will be shared as a link with the Recourse Center and neighboring counties. Kristi has given the assignment to a new employee services trainee who has great technical skills and has been a great addition to her team. She is also using the newly developed intake form to enroll customers as they meet with career services of the PETS program to start with. She is also using the form to onboard customers who fill out the request form and then forwarded to an interviewer. She also did an online work search presentation for RSEA. She has streamlined the process and it is working out well. The form is successfully replacing a 144 page form that is supposed to translate to a spreadsheet. The form is also easier to upload to the AOSOS system. Nidia asked how many she was able to process. Kristi explained more of the technical details and promised to help Nidia convene training on how to process the form. She said her team worked out most of the glitches that might have arisen from using the process and has been very helpful.

Kristi also reported on a guaranteed income pilot program introduced in California. Residents in a town named in the article received \$500.00 per month for two years to 125 participants with no strings attached. She will share a link to the article that was said to have been successful in that participants in the program were twice as likely to gain full time employment. Most of the money was said to have gone to food and essentials. She said the article is interesting to people in our profession to get a different perspective this type of program that gained a measurable success.

Gregg asked if employment services staff is able to engage more customer participation by way of phone contact and virtual service with customers facing transportation and childcare issues.

He said it was mentioned in the last meeting that it seemed to be increasing participation. Kristi confirmed said RESEA participation has gone up from 35-40% to 50-65% participation. Since using the new form, there is a much better response to work search and obtaining documentation needed to enter in to the system. She said most all of the customer contact has been by phone so WIFI is not a problem. Gregg asked if Kristi has seen an increase in requests for Spanish speaking customer service as a result of posting that video to the county website. Kristi said it was only posted in the last week so she has not noticed any increase yet. She said so far there have been a steady 10% of customers asking for a bi-lingual help. She is not sure if the county has a way to measure or count clicks to the website in these areas of site traffic. The Committee discussed resumption of in-person services and possible directives from the state to maintain a hybrid form of virtual service going forward. All agreed that some form of staggered scheduling will remain in effect for the foreseeable months to come.

- **REGIONAL ACTIVITIES**

Jeff reported Camden County and Atlantic County will be starting the Line School Training in April at the Anthony Canale Training Center in Egg Harbor Township, NJ. He said we are still in the process of finalizing details of the equipment and contract with Atlantic Cape Community College who will be conducting the training. The local area has two cohorts waiting for this training from 2019 and 2020 so it was decided not to run the other program this year until these two cohorts finished their training. Jeff said we will begin recruiting for 2022 later this year in the meantime candidates can be referred other counties who are conducting the WISE and GIE Math Courses this year. ACE approved this action. He reminded the committee that only Atlantic and Camden County are running the line training, the other counties are not. Gregg asked who get the insurance certificate to cover the liability of the line training. Jeff said the College will be covering that in their contract.

Jeff reported he is continuing to participate in the Camden Works Initiative bi-weekly call. The project is seeing many successful job placements. He will be participating in an Advisory Board meeting in the next two weeks and will be able to report new numbers at the next meeting. He reminded the committee that Kris Kolluri, CEO, Coppers Ferry Partnership, will be the featured speaker at the next WDB Quarterly Meeting on Wednesday, March 24<sup>th</sup>. He will be showing a compelling Camden Rising Video and speaking about the Camden Works successes since its inception.

Jeff reported meetings are continuing monthly with the State Employment and Training Commission (SETC) WDB Directors and Garden State Employment and Training Association (GSETA). It was decided at the GSETA Board meeting on Wednesday to cancel the GSETA Employment and Training Conference, October 2021. The Executive team elected to offer multiple trainings through the GSETA Institute during the month of October. It is planned to offer a series of virtual trainings similar to what would have been offered in-person at the live event. A change in location and many uncertain COVID response factors still a concern added to the decision making process. Gregg asked and Jeff confirmed that proposals were considered to host the event through a professional virtual hosting platform. This may be a chosen platform for the series of offerings in 2021 and a future consideration as well for a 2022 conference.

- **CONSORTIUM & INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP UPDATES**



Jeff reported the Prologis Pilot Training Program is going well. The pilot program initiative is being sponsored by Prologis, which is a national leader in transportation, distribution, and logistics. The free online 20-hour pilot training program was created by a company called JFF. The goal of the program was recruit 800 participants in Phila, and New Jersey for jobs with such companies as Amazon, FedEx, Nation Freight and others. The program ran through the end of February 2021. There were over 1400 participants signed on as of the end of the month. Some were completed and some are still going through the online training modules. Gregg asked if the WDB will get credit for individuals referred from local area. Jeff said participants are not able to be entered in the AOSOS system but Philadelphia Works is providing some good reporting that could be used in the regional strategic plan. Kristi said she could provide a short form that participants would fill out so they could be entered into the system as a local office contact. It will not affect common measures. Jeff said participants haven't registered with us directly and they could be from other areas in south jersey.

- **BUSINESS SERVICES (BSR)**

Jeff reported the Business Services and Outreach Team met on Thursday, March 11<sup>th</sup>. Jeanne Page-Soncrant and Ricky O'Hara, Veterans Rep. continue sending their regular reports of employer engagement and continue to work on the Job Matching Initiative. The team discussed the launch of the State's new website. Jeff said Jeanne was happy to announce making a good contact with Virtua and she will be inviting this person to the next BSR meeting. The meeting was also attended by Ryan Bennett, Truist Bank, recommended by Matt Verney, Vice Chair, WDB. Jeanne also hosted a virtual recruitment for Student First Bus Drivers. Kathleen is helped Jeanne with tracking participation in this recruitment.

Jeff also reported on a new program being offered by the state through a company called Metrix SkillUP. Some local areas paid for the licensing to offer free online trainings to customers in their local area. Since the initiative has been successful, the state has decided to pick up the cost for all counties and offer statewide to all residents for a period of eight months. Participants will be able to brush up on office skills and take some online training that may lead to credentialing. Trainings for frontline staff and administrators will be forthcoming and the launch will be announced within the next month. The Committee discussed questions about the program. Jeff encouraged everyone to participant in the training.

Jeff reported the NGO will be announced for the Summer Youth Employment program. The local area will apply and there are employers interested in accepting youth.

### **QUARTERLY BOARD MEETING**

The next WDB Quarterly Board of Trustees meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 24<sup>th</sup> @8:30am via Zoom Conferencing. Kris Kolluri, CEO, Coppers Ferry Partnership, will be speaking about the Camden Works Initiative.

### **NEXT MEETING**

Hearing no further questions, Gregg thanked the committee. The next Operations Committee will be scheduled on Friday, April 9, at 9:00am via Zoom Conferencing.

Submitted by:

*Kathleen Varallo*  
Administrative Assistant