

**North Central Arkansas
Workforce Development Board
December 11, 2019
Minutes**

The North Central Arkansas Workforce Development Board convened on December 11, 2019, beginning at 10:30 a.m. The meeting was conducted at University of Arkansas Community College at Batesville, 2005 White Drive, Batesville, Arkansas. Chair Pam Williams presided with the following members present: Ben Baxter, Regina Burkett, Gayle Cooper, Pat Dunegan, Shayne Gaither, Raye Ann Hager, Garry Lawrence, Chris Lorch, Laura McGuire, and Pam Williams. Trish Miller served as a proxy for Sherry Organ.

Others Present: Elizabeth Smith, Bree DeShazo, Jeff Bookout, Lynn Poff, Greg Miller, Amanda Chapman, Byron Southerland, Jamie Hill, Tonya Crawford, Deborah Spangler, Ronda Ivy, Tamika Speed, Angela Goodwin, Vamilec Orozco-Madrid, Jan Smith, Mitzi Hargan, Carrie McIntosh, Lisa Earls, and Wendy Howard.

Rebecca Edwards and Juan Loaiza from the Arkansas Division of Workforce Services joined the meeting through phone conference.

Board Chair Pam Williams called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. upon seeing a quorum.

Chair Williams called on Elizabeth Smith to introduce a new NCA WDB board member, Laura McGuire, a new business representative from the Batesville area. Ms. Williams then introduced Deborah Spangler of ADWS and Jeff Bookout from ASUN.

Chair Pam Williams asked if there were any corrections or revisions to the September 11, 2019 board meeting minutes. Hearing none, a motion to accept the September 11, 2019 board meeting minutes was made by Ben Baxter and seconded by Regina Burkett. The motion carried unanimously with none opposed.

Chair Williams called Byron Southerland to give a financial report. Mr. Southerland presented a progress report on budgeted and remaining funds by funding stream. He discussed a move of funds between adult and dislocated worker programs. In October, \$225,000 was moved from FY19 DLW to FY19 Adult. He mentioned that more funds will be moved from FY20 DLW to FY20 Adult in March or April of 2020. He explained that the funds could be better utilized in the Adult program due to low Dislocated Worker enrollment.

Elizabeth Smith introduced Jeff Bookout, the Vice Chancellor for Economic and Workforce Development at Arkansas State University at Newport. Mr. Bookout discussed the Arkansas Delta Workforce Opportunities for Rural Communities; ADWORC. He explained that more people are needed to go into the manufacturing environment due to an increase in available jobs. The program he presented is seeking out individuals with special populations, targeting those with certain barriers to employment. He discussed several types of occupations that are expected to benefit due to this consortium.

Ms. Elizabeth Smith discussed the North Central WIOA funds for PY19 program year. She informed the board that funds are less than the previous year. She discussed the need to change the supportive services and ITA policies due to this decrease. She also shared information regarding the new regulation given by the state that will change the way Pell is considered when figuring Individual Training Account allowable amount. Ms. Smith let the board know that even though monetary

services are limited, the career specialists will be offering non-monetary services to the participants to help when appropriate.

Ms. Williams invited Angela Goodwin to further discuss the policy changes.

Ms. Goodwin discussed the changes to the Supportive Services for Adult/DLW. It has been updated to further align with state regulation. The maximum per program year will be reduced from \$8,000 to \$4,000. Also, allowable housing assistance will be reduced from \$800 per month to \$600 per month, based on research findings on local area housing costs. Transportation assistance will be changed to a reimbursement with a maximum of \$30 per week.

Elizabeth Smith informed the board that, because of the reduction in funds, Tamika Speed, the North Central WIOA Program Manager, has created an area-wide resource book that will help individuals locate other services that are available.

Chair Williams asked for a motion to approve the Supportive Services for Adult/DLW policy changes. Regina Burkett motioned to approve the changes and Garry Lawrence seconded. None were opposed and the motion carried.

Ms. Goodwin then discussed the changes in the Work Experience Policy. Additional regulation and wage rates have been updated. The participant will earn \$0.50 above minimum wage. Records Manager title was added to those who could approve the worksite agreement. Regina Burkett motioned to approve the updates to the Work Experience Policy and Ben Baxter seconded. All were in favor with none opposed.

Ms. Goodwin discussed the next policy, Transitional Jobs. She told the board that individuals can be eligible for the program but not necessarily eligible for work experience. She directed them to the transitional jobs checklist and discussed how the individual must qualify for both section 1, barriers to employment, and section 2, chronically unemployed or inconsistent work history. Additional regulation and wage rates have been updated. The participant will earn \$0.50 above minimum wage. Records Manager title was added to those who could approve the worksite agreement. Pam asked for a motion. Garry Lawrence motioned to approve the Transitional Jobs Policy, and Regina Burkett seconded.

The next policy presented was Individual Training Account for A/DLW. Youth references were removed due to the fact the policy now is specifically for A/DLW. The maximum has been changed from \$8,000 to \$4,000 during a program year for A/DLW ITA. Regina Burkett motioned we approve the policy and Gayle Cooper seconded. None were opposed.

Ms. Goodwin then discussed the Supportive Services for Youth Policy. It has been updated to further align with state regulation. The maximum per program year will be reduced from \$8,000 to \$4,000. Also, allowable housing assistance will be reduced from \$800 per month to \$600 per month, based on research findings on local area housing costs. Transportation assistance will be changed to a reimbursement with a maximum of \$30 per week. Chair Williams asked for a motion to approve. Garry Lawrence motioned to approve the updated Supportive Services for Youth Policy and Ben Baxter seconded. None were opposed.

The last policy discussed was Individual Training Account for Youth. The Youth ITA policy will remain at \$8,000 for OSY. Additional regulation was added and references to Adults and Dislocated Workers was removed. Chair Williams asked for a motion to approve the Individual Training Account for Youth. Gayle Cooper motioned to approve and Shayne Gaither seconded. None were opposed.

Ben Baxter asked when the policy updates will take effect. Elizabeth Smith said that the updated policies will go into effect when approved, and that all current and new participants will fall under the updated policies. Ms. Smith went on to explain that even though our funds are obligated for the Adults and Dislocated Workers, new Adults and Dislocated Workers may still be enrolled. Though there is an issue with the lack of monetary assistance available for them at this time, other services are available. Ms. Elizabeth Smith explained that moving DLW to Adult will help with the budget as well.

The board members discussed further ideas that could be implemented so that we can better serve the participants with the limited funding.

Chair Williams called Tamika Speed to discuss the program enrollment. Ms. Speed gave a participant count and discussed work experience. She also went over some handouts that show what schools are being used for ITA's.

Chair Williams called on Vamilec Orozco-Madrid to speak. She discussed how she found out about the WIOA program and the work experience opportunity she has been involved with and what she has learned since she began the program.

Chair Williams asked if there was any other discussion. Seeing there was none, she asked for a motion to adjourn. Ben Baxter motioned to adjourn and Regina Burkett seconded. The meeting was adjourned.



Pam Williams, Board Chair – absent
Garry Lawrence – Board Vice-Chair
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