

## PA WDB Quarterly Board Meeting

Wednesday, August 12, 2020

10:00AM to 1:00PM

Skype

### Meeting Minutes

#### Attendance

##### Members:

- Chair Jeff Brown
- Idayat Adewunmi
- Denise Andahazy
- Shannon Austin
- Tim Bean
- Richard Bloomingdale
- Representative Morgan Cephas
- Wendie DiMatteo-Holsinger
- Patrick Eiding
- Chekemma Fulmore-Townsend
- Nick Gilson
- James Harper, Jr.
- Sarah Hollister
- Timothy James
- Marguerite Kline
- Bob McAuliffe
- Secretary Teresa Miller
- Henry Nicholas
- Jodi Pace
- Michael Pipe
- Tom Redden
- Secretary Russell Redding
- Gregg Riefenstahl
- JoAnne Ryan
- Robert Scaer
- Jessica Trybus
- Dionne Wallace-Oakley
- Yvette Watts
- Senator Lindsey Williams
- Matt Yarnell
- Deputy Secretary Allison Jones for Governor Tom Wolf
- Eric Kratz for Senator Camera Bartolotta
- Deputy Secretary Carol Kilko for Secretary Dennis Davin
- Kendra Weiderhold for Representative Ryan Mackenzie
- Deputy Secretary Shelia Ireland for Secretary Jerry Oleksiak
- Julie Kane for Secretary Pedro Rivera
- David Miles for Secretary Robert Torres
- Amy Schwenk for Secretary John Wetzel

##### Presenters:

- Chair Chekemma Fulmore-Townsend, Youth Committee
- Executive Director James Martini, Continuous Improvement and Industry Partnership and Employer Engagement Committees
- Chair Sarah Hollister, One-Stop Service Delivery System Committee
- Chair Rick Bloomingdale, Career Pathways and Apprenticeship Committee
- Dr. Steve Herzenberg, Keystone Research Center
- Chair Matt Yarnell, Healthcare Workforce Ad Hoc Committee

- Jeffrey Abramowitz, Reentry Ad Hoc Committee
- Dr. Blaire Toso
- Kaylynn Hamilton
- Deputy Secretary Allison Jones, Governor's Office
- Amanda Harrison, Division of Adult Basic Education
- Destiny Simpson
- Deputy Secretary Shelia Ireland, PA Department of Labor and Industry
- Ruben Pachay, Bureau of Workforce Partnership Operations
- Dan Kuba, Bureau of Workforce Development Administration
- Julie Kane, PA Department of Education
- Sara Gligora, PA Department of Agriculture
- Deputy Secretary Carol Kilko, PA Department of Community and Economic Development
- Amy Schwenk, PA Department of Corrections
- Secretary Teresa Miller, PA Department of Human Services
- Executive Director Shannon Austin, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

**Staff:** Executive Director James Martini, Deputy Director Tracey Turner, Shuana Davis, Mary Hoskins, Michelle Lengel

### **Welcome and Introductions**

Chair Brown called the meeting to order.

Chair Brown noted that they might have to move items on the agenda around.

He then announced the newest Board member, Tom Redden, from the Steamfitters Local 420. Mr. Redden said that he was a 24 year member of Steamfitters Local 420 operating out of Philadelphia and was born and raised in Chester County. He remarked that he currently oversees the territory of Montgomery County for the union and that he was on the Chester County Workforce Development Board for the last year and a half and with their Apprentice Director, Pete Klein, having to step away from the Board, Mr. Redden was pleased to join the Board.

Chair Brown reminded everyone that the Board meeting was a public session and that it was being recorded.

### **Chair's Updates**

Chair Brown said he was looking for a motion to approve the minutes.

**MOTION:** Henry Nicholas moved to approve the minutes from the May 5, 2020 PA WDB Meeting. Bob Scaer seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Chair Brown then noted that one of the most important parts of the work of the Board was the recommendations that they make to the Governor on policy. He remarked that they divide the work into committees that take a deep dive into different issues.

### **Committee Update- Youth**

Chair Chekemma Fulmore-Townsend remarked that at the last Board meeting, the PA Workforce Development Board approved their recommendation for the definition of outcomes. The committee continued to work in that vein, focused on understanding where the programs across the commonwealth fit into the outcomes definition so that could better plan for training needs and think through capacity building related to services and help programs meet those goals. As a result, their next steps were to establish a survey that would be distributed to youth serving programs across the commonwealth, to better understand the types of evidence that they have and understand what their needs are and how they see the definition and if they could meet it. She said they were hoping the survey would go out in the fall. Additionally, their focus had also been on understanding the impacts of COVID-19 on opportunity youth specifically. She noted that there are about 4.6 million opportunity youth throughout the country. Their first effort was to understand how COVID-19 was impacting different programs across the Commonwealth and what was needed to pursue in person services. The next step for the Board to understand, was to look at the national impacts and compare those to what was happening in the Commonwealth. She remarked that after the Board meeting, the Youth Committee had a presentation from the Aspen Institute to understand what was happening nationally and to get some best practices on policy and investments in supports. Chair Brown asked if there were any questions and there were none.

#### **Committee Update- Continuous Improvement**

James Martini then presented the Continuous Improvement Committee update on behalf of Chair Brian Funkhouser. He noted that they had worked with the Youth Committee to put out a survey to all programs to see where they currently stand with respect to evidence in their ability to evaluate their programs. He noted that they were in the final stages of launching the survey and just had to determine which programs were going to be included. Another project that the committee had actively been engaged on over the last several months was working on ways to improve the system of record to make sure that the state was getting the best information possible from the participants that were signing up to use the PA CareerLink® online system. That is a really good example of an opportunity for a committee to provide feedback to the workforce development system without going through the formal recommendation process. A lot of what the committee learned and shared was incorporated into the work that the state program staff were doing. Mr. Martini said it was a really good opportunity to point out how valuable the contributions of board and committee members were. Mr. Martini also mentioned that they had been on track to get a newsletter out prior to the pandemic and that they were going to pick it back up in the following quarter to get the word out about the good work that was being done in the workforce development system and specially the efforts of the Board.

#### **Committee Update- Industry Partnership and Employer Engagement**

James Martini then presented the Industry Partnership and Employer Engagement Committee update on behalf of Dr. John "Ski" Sygielski. There were a few priorities and the biggest was encouraging the use and increasing awareness of the one-stop program in PA for employers. There were a number of ideas that the committee came up with and those were incorporated into a marketing document that was put together by L&I's communications team and Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations. Mr. Martini said he was more than happy to share the marketing document with everyone. He remarked that he thought it does a good job of speaking to things that would entice employers to become part of the system. Another piece that the committee worked on was the job portal that the Commonwealth created for COVID-19 job postings. He said that the portal was being shut down but they wanted to take the

opportunity and learn what went well and where they can improve. They were hopeful that the feedback that they would get would help inform future improvements to the CWDS/ PA CareerLink® online system. Their priority of focus within the committee was to align resources, policies, and strategies between state, local, and regional systems to raise employer awareness of the One-Stop.

### **Committee Update- One-Stop Service Delivery System**

Chair Sarah Hollister then presented the One-Stop Service Delivery System Committee update. Ms. Hollister noted that one-stop system was already mentioned multiple times during the meetings so it overlaps with other committees as well. She noted that they were working on setting up the best structure for the committee and is part of Pennsylvania's WIOA State Plan. She noted that if anyone wanted to join the committee to let PA WDB staff know. She noted that the committee wanted to involve multiple stakeholders especially those related to customer service like consumers, operators, etc. Ms. Hollister stated that they expected the first part of committee work to be digging into a deeper understanding of how it operates across the state.

### **Committee Update- Career Pathways and Apprenticeship**

Chair Rick Bloomingdale then presented the Career Pathways and Apprenticeship Committee update. He remarked that they had several productive meetings and they had a robust discussion on their second goal but they were moving ahead with their first goal. That goal was establishing career pathways as the primary model for skilled credential and degree attainment and provide all Pennsylvanians with an emphasis on Pennsylvanians with barriers to employment as an opportunity to attain a job that pays. Steve Herzenberg from the Keystone Research Center then presented about the report they compiled on career pathways. The first key finding was that there is a shared broad understanding of career pathways. He remarked that when they first started the project, one of the motivations was to study how people viewed career pathways in different ways. He thinks that there is more common understanding of career pathways are than people recognize. There are distinct applications of career pathways that exist for people for different groups of folks at different ages. K-12 is more about career exploration and when it is adults there are different applications. For people with barriers it is about barrier remediation and getting them skills that will get them to the bottom rung that will lead to family supporting wages. He stated that the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of the report would flesh out examples career pathways exist in the distinct groups. The third finding was that there is almost a bewildering amount of high-quality career pathways that exist in Pennsylvania. He said some of that has to do with the fact of there being 500 school districts and more than 20 local workforce board areas, and a rich post-secondary infrastructure. He said that there are a lot of good examples in high schools like technical schools as well as comprehensive secondary education. He noted that in the last several years there were efforts led by local workforce boards and counties where there was an attempt to develop a common understanding of career pathways in the key industries of those geographical areas. He noted that a lot of the people they interviewed know the world of advancement is not as linear as the phrase "career pathways" conveys. It is also an important concept particularly for people with barriers, people in the current labor market that might be in danger of a low wage job. The notion of career pathways is all about the notion of lifting peoples' aspirations and get them to think in terms of how they might move up over time and what they have to learn and credentials they could get to make that progress. The next observation is that in terms of connecting training and education to the world of work, strong connections with employers are essential. Dr. Herzenberg remarked that exemplary programs at every level tend to be associated where business education

partnerships with industry associations. One way or another the employers are organized enough that they are able to lift up their voice around their workforce needs and their skills requirements. He remarked that there was a lot of great career pathways work going on in the state but the work is by no means universal. There often is there is a challenge around scale and spreading the good practices. He noted that the rest of the report focused around current policy and policies that would get the state to a more universal system of career pathways. He said that there are a series of policies that Pennsylvania has pursued that really helped career pathways spread. Some of it is around the Future Ready PA Index and Career Readiness standards that have been incorporated as goals into Pennsylvania's public schools. Pennsylvania's tradition of industry driven education and training gives Pennsylvania more places and industries where connections to employers are strong. During the Wolf administration, pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship work has been pivotal around strengthening those connections. The restoration of Industry Partnership funding has helped as well as the Teacher in the Workplace program. Through the PAsmart program that deals with STEM education, it is enriching the discussion of how K-12 connects to careers. In terms of looking forward, there is an issue of scale in the employer connections and how they take the good quality of work and experimentation and innovation and make sure it is more universal. The last sector of the reports maps out their recommendations for how to take the good work being done and build on it. Dr. Herzenberg then noted that there was a great deal of overlap between the recommendations of the committee and the recommendations from the report. He noted that there should be a common definition in the state, to scale the sectoral strategies, capacity building, and having a conversation and state-level industry infrastructure being a critical part of spreading career pathways. Chair Bloomingdale thanked Dr. Herzenberg for the thorough review of the work they have been doing.

Chair Bloomingdale then reviewed the recommendation and said that it would be for if funding became available. Chair Brown asked if there were any questions or concerns about the recommendation. Chair Brown asked Dr. Herzenberg if there was anything the committee should consider adding or changing since the recommendation isn't exactly the same as what the report is proposing. Dr. Herzenberg said no, as the recommendation is general enough that it can incorporate what they are talking about. James added that within the recommendation, it does allow space for additional activities recommended by the committee including those in the Keystone Research report. He continued that the recommendation is set up as to involve as they continue to receive more information. Wendie Holsinger stated that they were struggling with having the restaurant industry understand parallel career pathways with many of the people in food production as they have many positions that unemployed people in the restaurant industry can do. She said that the connection for that is people in the restaurant industry can work in the food production industry for competitive pay. She said that that is currently an issue as they are desperately looking for people. Chair Brown said that that is an interesting comment as many restaurant industry people can't imagine that their skills are transferable. Chair Brown asked Mr. Martini how they communicate and educate people that their skills can be transferable to a different industry. Mr. Martini said that within the career and business awareness piece they can add an education around transferable job skills. Chair Bloomingdale said that the addition made a lot of sense. Ms. Holsinger said that they were actually starting and trying to do ads on Indeed to the people in the restaurant industry that are not employed.

Chair Brown asked for a motion to approve the Career Pathways and Apprenticeship recommendation.

**MOTION:** Matt Yarnell made the motion and James Harper seconded it. Motion was unanimous.

Chair Brown thanked Chair Bloomingdale and Dr. Herzenberg for their work. Chair Bloomingdale thanked the committee members and Shuana Davis for putting everything together.

#### **Committee Update: Healthcare Workforce Ad Hoc**

Chair Matt Yarnell then presented the Healthcare Workforce Ad Hoc Committee update. He said during the last meeting they had brought forward a crisis statement that they had started before the pandemic. They then began to work on recommendations to put before the Board and they have two to put before them. The first recommendation is around Temporary Nursing Assistants that came into existence because of COVID and it started with the Center for Medicaid Services' (CMS) emergency declaration. The emergency declaration said that people could work as temporary nurse aids if they took an online 8 hour course. Chair Yarnell commented that there was about 2,300 hundred people temporarily working as nurse aids across the Commonwealth and there was not a path for those people to continue to do that important work at the bedside for folks in need post the expiration of the emergency declaration waiver. The recommendation that the Committee was putting forth on a path to allow those workers into the CNA registry. He said that this is specifically recommending a waiver for these individuals.

Chair Brown asked if the state had the authority to do what the recommendation was asking in creating a waiver. Chair Yarnell said the committee believed so and that it is a recommendation as it is a path and there is also a legislative path. Chair Yarnell commented that they thought that it was important as the workforce board to say that it was important issue and that they should come up with a solution quickly. Chair Brown asked if there were any questions. Sarah Hollister asked if it would be a temporary or permanent solution. Chair Yarnell that people had to go through a nurse aid training program and people that do the work understand that an 8 hour training is not enough and that it is just an emergency waiver. He thinks that there should still be a path for them to be able to work and to demonstrate and test their competencies. Allison Jones commented and thanked Chair Yarnell and the committee for bringing the issue forward. She remarked that the Governor's Office is aware of the challenge and are working closely with multiple departments to try to figure out a solution. She said in general, there had been a lot of work in the healthcare field to make sure that they have adequate workforce to respond to the pandemic.

Chair Brown sought a motion to approve the recommendation.

**MOTION:** Bob McAuliffe made the motion and Wendie DiMatteo-Holsinger seconded it. Motion passed unanimously.

Chair Yarnell commented that they had a lot of ideas on how to modernize the system around CNA training in trying to get digital.

He commented that Recommendation #2 was straight-forward but that given the crisis, they think that it is important to have a strong urging of a living wage for the workforce. He then read the second recommendation and said that it was a statement of concern and while there is a hazard pay type program out there, it speaks to the need that they need to come up with bold solutions to make sure the workforce can get to a living wage. Chair Yarnell noted that the preamble spoke to those ideas.

Chair sought a motion to approve the recommendation.

**MOTION:** Dionne Wallace-Oakley made the motion and Henry Nicholas seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

## **Committee Update: Reentry Ad Hoc**

Chair Brown then asked Jeff Abramowitz to give Reentry Ad Hoc Committee update. Mr. Abramowitz then introduced KayLynn Hamilton to present their research that they conducted for the committee. KayLynn Hamilton began the presentation and noted that Dr. Blaire Toso would be joining her for the presentation. They would be sharing the final results of the Reentry Inventory report that they were contracted to conduct. She began by giving a recap of the processes that they used to conduct the research. Their work plan included three phases of information gathering. Phase 1 was to survey the 22 local workforce development boards, reentry coalitions, chambers of commerce, and parole and probation Offices. Phase 2 was to survey additional reentry stakeholders. Phase 3 was phone interviews. The final phase was to compile all of the information and create a comprehensive report. Survey 1 was sent to 220 respondents; 83 surveys were submitted. Most respondents submitted complete information and were willing to participate in further activities. Survey 2 was sent to 94 respondents with 40 surveys were submitted. Many respondents submitted complete information. The third phase involved reentry interviews, 10 people were invited to be interviewed and they conducted 8 interviews. The participants included people representing local workforce development boards, adult education providers, chambers of commerce, and community based organizations. Service provider organization interviews included educational programs for incarcerated individuals and/or returning citizens and provided workforce development and workforce preparation programs. The interview questions focused on describing the services they provide, essential partnerships to deliver those activities, and identifying their most successful activities. Participants were also asked about gaps in the system and what might facilitate a smoother entry into society with the goal of reducing recidivism. The interview data and analysis substantiated the findings from the first two surveys, however respondents highlighted new areas and provided insights that offered better understanding of the complexities serving reentering citizens given their needs. The overarching findings from the interviews were summarized by saying that returning citizens need coordinated and multipronged and long-term approach to help them reenter society and avoid recidivism. Dr. Blaire Toso then talked about the gaps in service that they had identified. She noted that the gaps in service were problematic as it impacted how they were able to access the needed services to create a stable and supportive base in which they could be able to reconstruct their lives. Partners acknowledged the need for greater coordination between service providers to provide housing, employment training, and other services. Also, participants focused on informing and assuring access for clients as opposed to supporting individualized and isolated needs. Within the facilitated transition theme, they had talked that there needed to be a warm handoff from the inside to the outside. They said the gaps mainly occurred in the bridge from the moment that someone leaves prison until they enter reentry programming. They said that the services are often disorganized and that the reentering citizen usually has to navigate that space. Another theme was characteristics or qualifications needed for staff who are supporting the reentrant. It was talked about that there needed to be a lead staff. The third theme was the essential services needed for reentrants and was confirmed throughout the interviews and surveys. The scope of services needed is everything from training and education, digital literacy classes, health services, supportive services, anything from substance abuse counseling and family support as well as transportation and housing. Another area was helping reentrants figure out how to pay their fines. Part of the work was also identifying best and promising practices in Pennsylvania. She noted that some of the highlighted ones such as the Philadelphia County Workforce Development Area which was highlighted for having a robust and engaged group of stakeholders. The Lancaster County Workforce Development Area which was lauded for innovative reentry programs which reflect of collaborative programs. The McKean County Good Growing

Gardens was highlighted for providing community service hours for offenders to tend gardens. They also looked at national best practices and what they found was that they were supported by what the survey takers and interviewees also discussed. They identified a strong focus on housing, supported transitions, comprehensive suite of services, collaborative activities and partners and a centralized location to access services. The recommendations that they came up with were categorized and have implications cut across categories which stresses that collaborative, intertwined nature of services. The interviewees didn't always agree on who should lead the initiatives. Creating a more consistent and supported reentry process was highly stressed because it would alleviate that crucial period of reentry where reentering citizens need to find housing and other supports so they don't fall through the cracks. Several people commented on the need to create a common measurable definition of reentry service success as well as a set of benchmarks. Another recommendation was to create stronger communications flow across local reentry and state systems. Beginning the reentry process prior to leaving the correctional facility and structure the transitional process with a handoff are also recommendations. Dr. Toso also remarked about working with partners and service providers to offer full services with the final recommendation being boosting the image of reentering citizens.

Chair Brown asked Mr. Abramowitz to go through the recommendations. Mr. Abramowitz thanked Governor Wolf for signing the law that changed the way occupational licensing is looked at, including for reentering citizens and that law had not been looked at since the early 1970s. He also gave a shoutout to James Martini and Mary Hoskins for their work in pushing the committee forward. Mr. Abramowitz noted that the first recommendation from the committee was to assist county jails in working to increase access to government issued IDs when exiting county jail. He then noted that the Department of Corrections was working to create a pilot project to make sure that anyone that a corrections institution at the state level has state identification. The pilot project had been moving forward with the PA Reentry Council and PENNDOT and while it was moving forward somewhat, it really hadn't touched the local jails. He noted that the committee felt it important so that everyone could have an ID to gain lawful employment when they leave. Chair Brown asked if there were any questions on the recommendation. Chair Brown then commented that it made sense.

Chair Brown then said he was looking for a motion to approve the recommendation.

**MOTION:** Sarah Hollister made the motion to approve and Matt Yarnell seconded it. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Abramowitz then moved onto the second recommendation of increasing digital literacy skills for returning citizens so they can succeed in an increasingly virtual world. Instead of state-run facilities, there is little access to technology and the committee wants to see a concerted effort to see digital literacy within the prison walls. He noted that digital literacy and being able to survive in today's world, especially with COVID-19, is extremely important. Chair Brown commented that he knew some usage was restricted because of security concerns and asked if they could get the education without going afoul of security protocols. Mr. Abramowitz said he was doing the work across the country and there are facilities everywhere that were successfully integrating digital literacy and were doing it safely without security risks. He said they don't need internet access necessarily as there are standalone systems that can be used. Amy Schwenk commented that they were in the process of putting out an RFP to combine all of the ideas so she agrees that the tablets is the future for educational and vocational programming inside of the institutions in the future. She noted that the prisons typically are in areas with poor Wi-Fi capability

but they do have a plan in place. She said they were anticipating that RFP in about a year/year and a half. However, that doesn't mean that the inmates currently don't have access to a tablet function but it is typically used to connect to family. Chair Brown asked if she thought that this recommendation was where they needed to go and she replied in the affirmative.

Chair Brown then sought a motion to approve the digital literacy recommendation.

**MOTION:** Senator Lindsey Williams made the motion and Yvette Watts seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Recommendation 3 was supporting reentrants coming home with digital literacy and technology education support as they enter the workforce. One of the things they talked about from the study is the tremendous impact when a reentrant leaves the prison walls and a drop-off from when their next step is and how and when they are going to receive services. The recommendation therefore is that the commonwealth should support reentrants in identifying resources to assist those individuals in acquiring technology devices that will enable their success in the workforce. Chair Brown asked if the "Obamaphone" was in their thinking. Jeff A. said that a smartphone was in their thinking but he wasn't sure if the "Obamaphone" was specifically.

Chair Brown sought a motion to approve the recommendation.

**MOTION:** Bob Scaer made the motion and Matt Yarnell seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Recommendation 4 was stirred in part by the Economy League as they had published regarding investing in pardons as a strategy and came to the conclusion that granting of pardons allowed recipients to earn an estimated \$16 million in additional income and wages. He said they found that the Board of Pardons is really in need of staff to increase their ability to handle the number of pardons within any particular year. The recommendation therefore is to increase the capacity of the Board of Pardons (BOP) to both decrease the amount of time for an application to be considered and to increase the number of individuals who can have their pardons heard within one year. He commented that since Secretary Flood took over, the process had been streamlined. He said they had done an amazing job at making it easier to file one and understand the process but to also obtain one. He said that within the economy, there is a plethora of people that are unemployed but there are also people whose records date back to their teenage years that are serving as an impediment to them getting back in the workforce. Chair Brown asked if there were any questions and there were none.

Chair Brown sought a motion to approve the recommendation.

**MOTION:** Chair Brown made the motion and Matt Yarnell seconded. The motion passed with Timothy Bean being opposed.

Mr. Abramowitz then thanked everyone as they had been working hard over the last few months in coordination with PARC. They also were working on an employer tip sheet for hiring returning citizens.

### **Governor's Office Update**

Deputy Secretary Allison Jones presented the report for the Office of Governor Tom Wolf. She thanked all of the committees including their members and chairs for the updates, work, and recommendations. She

said they are showing that even during a global pandemic the work will continue. The pandemic has created some unique workforce challenges that they are working to address and the healthcare committee was some very specific ones in particular. She noted that many employees are not feeling safe at work and many businesses are struggling. Some of the ongoing long-term and short-term problems had been exacerbated by the pandemic. The Commonwealth is also experiencing less revenue and the economic impact of the pandemic will affect the state budget. She said all of the agencies had been working diligently to try to address the situations. She said she appreciated the Board for being a resource as the state tries to navigate it. The benefit of a business driven board like the PA WDB is that they can hear directly from businesses and stakeholders in understanding the impact of the pandemic.

Chair Brown thanked Dep. Sec. Jones and asked if there was a way to keep a log of the recommendations and the Governor's thoughts on them as well as actions. Deputy Secretary Jones said she would talk to James Martini about it since they were trying to keep a more direct dialogue between the Board and the Governor. Chair Brown said that it would really motivate the Board to see how their work and recommendations turned into actions.

### **Presentation- Department of Education**

Chair Brown then introduced Amanda Harrison for their presentation for the Department of Education. Ms. Harrison noted that she and her team would be talking about the cross-training module. Ms. Harrison noted that she is the chief of the PA Department of Education's Division of Adult Education which oversees adult and family literacy programs funding under Title II of WIOA. Kaylynn Hamilton and Destiny Simpson lead staff on two of their state leadership projects and their goal is to provide a brief overview of a cross training module that they have developed for workforce development system staff. Kaylynn Hamilton said the overarching goal of the module is to ensure that all WIOA staff can make informed referrals to appropriate services that will benefit customers. The activities within the module are interactive. The idea for the work was conceptualized as a result of Pennsylvania's participation in the Operationalizing Co-enrollment Cohort. The final activity of the cohort was to create a statewide action plan that will eventually lead to increased co-enrollments. Destiny Simpson said that she worked with a team of instructional designers at TIU 11 to develop the module. She noted that they worked with subject matter experts across the state provide input and guidance. The module is in an online format which allows consistent training and on-demand access for staff across the state. It introduces each of the WIOA core programs and presents several examples of best practices for co-enrollment when it is appropriate for customers. They designed the module to be interactive so that users can engage with the content as they work through it. The module also shows best practices for referring customers to a different program. The module also provides case studies and shows the benefits of referrals and co-enrollment in actual work situations that the users would be able to relate to. The module also includes opportunities for staff to think about actions that they will take with the new information. Ms. Hamilton then talked about the Companion User Guide and how it was designed to supplement the information presented in the module. Ms. Harrison said that in-line with the cohort's action plan, they see this module as the first in a series on the many one-stop partners and the services they provide. Completion of the series will be a benchmark of Goal 5.3 of the PA WIOA Combined State Plan, which is to increase training to front-line staff. She noted that this first module was developed using Title II funds from the Division of Adult Education. She noted that they do not have the resources to support the whole series however if the Board and other workforce development partners would like to have such a series of such modules, funding will need to be identified

and agencies will need to decide on a learning management system. Chair Brown asked if there were any questions and there were none.

### **Agency Report- Department of Labor and Industry**

Deputy Secretary Sheila Ireland presented for the Department of Labor and Industry. She remarked that she was new to the deputation. She remarked that for the last 25 years she was in the people business and the last 13 years was focused on workforce development. She remarked on some of her history. She noted that she had been charged with running the Philadelphia Mayor's Office of Workforce Development. She joined the Department of Labor and Industry on June 15<sup>th</sup>. She remarked that she has spent almost three decades in the people business, workforce is her passion and she believes that it is a place where they have a rare opportunity to fundamentally change the trajectory of people's lives. She said she believed that work was fundamental to the shared human experience and the ability to provide for one's self and family. She noted how impressed she had been with the leadership and bureau directors in the workforce deputation but she believed there was work that they needed to get done. She said they needed to provide clarity for the people they serve, the services they deliver, the performance that they measure, and the metrics that they use. Wendie Holsinger asked about a temp agency they work with that they had brought in some workers from Nigeria but they were having trouble getting approval for them to begin to work. Shelia said that the H1B and the H2B process wasn't under the workforce deputation at the Department of Labor and Industry and that she would work with James Martini to get her an answer.

Ruben Pachay then began his report. He said he would like to provide an overview of where PA CareerLink<sup>®</sup> was at the moment. He said they had 45 PA CareerLink<sup>®</sup> offices opened and most were by appointment only and some were staff only as they were familiarizing themselves with the layout of PA CareerLink<sup>®</sup>. In the rural area of the North Central/Northern Tier area, they did have one or two PA CareerLink<sup>®</sup> that have morphed into walk-ins. Mr. Pachay noted that back in March when they abruptly closed due to the pandemic they quickly started discussing what reopening looked like. The local partners and local boards provided an array of ideas that speaks to their creativity. Some ideas were drive-throughs, an expansion of capabilities beyond the four walls of a physical PA CareerLink<sup>®</sup>, expansion of virtual services that are available, and continuing to take care of customers whose digital literacy still needs one on one assistance. Those conversations began in late March and bled into April. The department then decided to hold technical assistance calls with every region in Pennsylvania. He remarked that the calls were centered around bringing the PA CareerLink<sup>®</sup> back to homes. The technical assistance calls focused around three main subjects. The first was the eventual reopening of PA CareerLink<sup>®</sup> and taking the precautionary measures like social distancing, planning for possible outbreaks, proper signage, and proper cleaning. The second phase was based on service delivery and the third was communication. That focused around informing internal and external customer of what the PA CareerLink<sup>®</sup> would look like upon return. Because of the collaboration of the partners, they were able to have a robust plan for each of the main subjects. That is one of the main reasons that they were able to open the amount of offices they did. He noted that a PA CareerLink<sup>®</sup> was averaging around 15 appointments per day with the amount increasing with 700 customers being served per day roughly. They continue to increase those numbers and they received word that morning that there would be more offices opening taking the same precautionary measures. Mr. Pachay said there had been risks with reopening as they had several scares with possible exposure but every plan had a breakout of what to do if there was exposure to the virus. The two main things that there were looking at as of the meeting was continued expansion of virtual services but they are cognizant of areas in the commonwealth that don't

have broadband capabilities to engage fully in whatever innovative process they have. He noted that they had had conversations with the PA Department of Education and the PA Department of Human Services on how they could continue to expand broadband capabilities in more rural areas. He noted that they broke records of how many had an active account on PA CareerLink®. He noted that the number of new CWDS registrations was over 62,000 and that was with the job search requirements turned off which was normally a conduit with customers having the obligation to use it. They really want to dive into having a virtual platform that is easy to use and does not require a lot of broadband connectivity. They still do want to serve the customers that need to see them one on one and do not want to cut them off. He said there is a rarity that with chaos and they have an opportunity to look at the processes that had been set for years and look at it with a lens on how to change the processes. He said that a lot of recommendations from the PA WDB going live in October.

Dan Kuba then said that in order to put the Department, the local PA CareerLink®, and local boards in a position to support the reopening of the PA CareerLink®, there were a lot of things that had to happen behind the scenes. In working with the Governor's Office, they were able to identify areas and it was critical that they looked at the health and safety of the employees but also the general public. In a collaborative effort, they made sure that the PPE was purchased at the state level and was distributed but they also advised on purchasing of the equipment as they didn't want a site to open and then run out of cleaning agents. He said they worked with some amazing people at Department of Corrections and their creation of the desk shields and in a partnership with them they were able to buy and distribute 300 desk shields. They wanted to ensure that each PA CareerLink® had at least 5. Mr. Kuba said there was hills and valleys that they went through but every person that participated in the process was fantastic and they were able to get all of the necessary equipment out. Another part was that they brought in a service to clean all of the offices and because of that procurement they were able to piggy back and were able to ensure that every PA CareerLink® was disinfected prior to opening. He said that when they were notified of a possible exposure they were able to have that service go in and disinfect that office within 24 hours. He said that even in the trying times that had people stepping up. Mr. Kuba noted that a little over 2 years ago they had received a \$5 million grant that was a braided fund from Health and Labor on a federal level that focused on opioids pandemic. They had targeted some of the money for an app and noted that agencies stepped up and worked on resources and referral pieces and Mr. Kuba credited the Opioid Taskforce established Governor Wolf. They report out to the committee on the activities of the grant and were really proud of the work that is being done in that neighborhood. He said there is a new project that was created and is called the Penn State Project ECHO which is an extension for community healthcare outcomes. What is interesting about it is that it is an online Zoom based training program that will be done over 10 1-hour sessions and while there is still spots available for it. They are providing lectures about several subjects and launches on in the fall and is a great opportunity to take a look at activities that employers are doing in the world of recovery. He noted that the opioid crisis is ever increasing. He said if anyone had interest to reach out to James Martini. He said there was also a nice write-up about the National Dislocated Worker Grant. The state had submitted a \$21 million request for dislocated worker dollars due to the mass unemployment caused by the pandemic. The received their initial allocation of \$6.9 million which they submitted their new budgetary guidance back to the feds and that was primarily for two areas. One is for contact for temp hires and temp hires of the PA CareerLink®. Those areas were chosen because they will be able to use the money quickly as they get people into the temp program. As they see expenditures rise they will submit their request for the remaining \$14 million. The remaining \$14 million will continue to serve the temp positions but there is also a huge component of dislocated workers

around direct care workers. They are getting an MOU with the Department of Health for part of the \$6.9 million to support the temp jobs in contact tracing and there is about \$1.5 million of that is to support triage folks like security and janitorial staff throughout the PA CareerLink®. He said they were also submitting waivers for the commonwealth's state plan. They also provided some brief updates in the book about some grant activities that were taking place and even in the pandemic environment the staff has been able to work with the local areas.

Chair Brown asked if there were any questions for Labor and Industry and there were none.

#### **Agency Report- Department of Education**

Julie Kane then presented for the Department of Education. She remarked that there is a comprehensive update in the packet. She wanted to applaud Amanda Harrison and the Division of Adult Education for the work they continue to do throughout the pandemic as well as schools and school administrators at every single level. With Adult Education they know it can really be a struggle so the fact that that division could keep that work going she thought was very impressive. She noted how efforts had been continuing with the State Board of Education, PDE has been working with the State Board and educators to revise the academic standards for science and technology, and environment and ecology. Pending approval by the State Board in September, they would be put out for public feedback. She also remarked that because of the CARES Act funding they were able to secure additional funding to extend Teacher in the Workplace grants that were awarded the past year to September 30, 2021. The additional funding gave them a year and a half to finish it. They also had been continuing to provide support to schools at all levels. They began issuing reopening guidance at the beginning of June. She said that they provided instruction that as conditions evolve, guidance from the state would evolve. She said it was important to understand that they were recommendations and not mandates. She also gave a shoutout for the Department of Labor and Industry as they published FAQs related to unemployment compensation for parents as well as school employees. She also said that for those that were not aware, Secretary Rivera announced that he would be leaving the Department of Education in the next several weeks as he had been appointed the new president of Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology. She said they were really excited for him to have that opportunity. The new Secretary is Noe Ortega as he was currently the Deputy Secretary for the Office of Postsecondary and Higher Education which is the office that oversees the Division of Adult Education.

Chair Brown asked if there were any questions and there were none.

#### **Agency Report- Department of Aging**

James Martini noted that the Department of Aging had nothing to add to what was already in the book.

#### **Agency Report- Department of Agriculture**

Sara Gligora then presented for the Department of Agriculture (PDA). She noted that Secretary Redding had to jump off for another call so she would be providing the update. At the last meeting they had discussed the concern with COVID and H2A or the temporary agriculture workforce. Initially there was concern that employers would not be able to secure their usual workforce but fortunately it appeared that it was not an issue for most of the farmers. They switched their focus over to the health and safety of the workers as many were living in farm labor camps where the virus could spread very quickly. They provided enhanced guidance for the farm labor camps to ensure safety for the workers. They would continue to closely monitor the issue and any potential outbreaks but asked that if anyone heard of any

issues to let them know. In May they had another agriculture apprenticeship program registered and approved by the Apprenticeship Training Council and the program was sponsored by PASA and was a two year dairy grazing apprenticeship. That makes it the third agriculture apprenticeship program registered with the state and the other two being with the Northeast Equipment Dealers Association and another program with PASA. The PA Commission for Agriculture Education Excellence approved a 2020 report to the General Assembly. The report recapped the work of the Commission over the past year and the plans for the upcoming year and can be found on the PA Department of Agriculture's website. Additionally, Commission staff had been working to prepare curriculum for K-8 ag literacy and career development which would be put on PDE's Standards Align System. Finally, PDA had been participating with review and revision of the PA standards on science and technology. The Commission's Acting Executive Director, Scott Sheely had been representing ag education on the committee. Other workforce initiatives that the Department of Ag was focused on including continuing to work with the PA Farm Bill grantees to ensure that economic and workforce efforts continue despite the pandemic. PDA is also working to prepare PA Farm Bill programs should they see another round of funding in the final 2020 budget. Finally, PDA is working with Econsult and Team PA on updating the economic impact report.

Chair Brown asked if they had any information on supplemental SNAP that is being paid during the pandemic and whether it will continue. Ms. Gligora said she could look into it if there were any questions and get back him.

#### **Agency Report- Department of Community and Economic Development**

Deputy Secretary Carol Kilko then presented the Department of Community and Economic Development's report. She remarked that at the onset of the COVID pandemic, DCED developed a Manufacturing Call to Action portal which can be found on their website. DCED has been involved in quite a bit of the CARES Act funding distribution. One of the activities they were involved in is the Hazard Pay Program and the program is being run through businesses but is for their employees (those that earn under \$20 an hour) and is \$3 an hour for a 10 week period. They had an overwhelming amount of applications. Over 10,000 applications from business and over \$800 million in requests for the \$50 million amount of money they have. She hoped that they would be announcing those that were awarded. DCED continued to work with Labor and Industry on the WIOA Combined State Plan and are lead agency for Goal 2: Sector Strategies and Employer Engagement and began reconvening in July. DCED's WEDnet program and the state as a whole is working on a 5 month budget and the WEDnet program was taking applications for training. They continue to support Labor and Industry with the Next Generation Industry Partnerships and Gwen Ross had been working with some of the partnerships. A lot of the different companies were using that platform to talk about what was going on at their different companies and how they have been impacted by the pandemic.

Chair Brown asked if they were going to announce the awardees of the Hazard Pay Program on the day of the meeting. Deputy Secretary Kilko responded that if it wasn't that day it would be the next as their plan was to get the email out to all those awarded as soon as possible. Wendie Holsinger asked if there was any possibility to add extra dollars and extend or if it was locked in. Deputy Secretary Kilko said that it would not be expanded. Matt Yarnell commented that he appreciated all of the work that Deputy Secretary Kilko and her team were doing with the issue and that he urged everyone to contact their senators and Congress people for more money that could be brought into states in relief.

#### **Agency Report- Department of Corrections**

Amy Schwenk then presented for the Department of Corrections. She highlighted the potential to expand the amount of resources available to inmates. She said they had struggled for a couple of months trying to give them educational tools and were looking at expanding digital resources within the institutions as long as they are safe and secure. She said they had done a really good job inside allowing students and making resources available so that they could continue with their GEDs and programming in cell and have treatment specialists and educational staff be rovers instead of the inmates going to them. She said they used to do reentry fairs often and with everything going on they had to be cancelled so that is one of their challenges. They were looking at how to do the reentry fairs virtually and provide benefit to the inmates and resources that might be available. In July of 2020, Dorenda Hamarlund was working with the Pike County Reentry Coalition reiterating about the benefits of hiring reentrants and the resources they could bring. The Department was also continuing to waive their parole fee because of COVID through the month of August. Ms. Schwenk commented that COVID had hit many reentrants hard with unemployment and the available jobs that are out there. She said they would make a determination shortly about September and the future months.

Chair Brown asked if there were any questions and there were none.

#### **Agency Report- Department of Human Services**

Secretary Teresa Miller then presented the Department of Human Services' report. Secretary Miller remarked that as the pandemic and economic downturn continues, they have been continuing to work to help people meet their basic needs, including access to food and healthcare, paying their utility bills, and have been working really hard to get the word out about the programs. She said they were seeing an increase in enrollment. Since February they saw a 5% increase in their Medicaid enrollment and nearly a 10% increase in their SNAP enrollment. Secretary Miller commented on Chair Brown's question about SNAP emergency allotments, they have been approved for every month since March. However, it is a month by month decision. They were approved for August's allocations and those would start going out on August 18<sup>th</sup>. They were not able to request the September allotments until August 15<sup>th</sup> but would be submitting a request at that time. She talked about some of the work that they were doing following the murder of George Floyd on May 25<sup>th</sup>. She commented that protests and demonstrations around the world amplified important and long overdue conversations about systemic racism, overt and covert racism, and conscious and unconscious bias. DHS swerves more than 3 million low income Pennsylvanians and because poverty disproportionately impacts non-white people; Black, Latinx, and other non-white people of color are disproportionately served by DHS administered public assistance programs. Only 12.9% of white Pennsylvanians are below 125% of the federal poverty line compared to 32.9% of Black Pennsylvanians. So that is a poverty rate that is more than two and half times higher. While Black Pennsylvanians represent 13% of the general population, they represent 25% of the Medicaid population, 29% of the SNAP population and 53% of the TANF population. As they move forward, they are going to be talking more about their equity initiatives and really focusing on how they can do a better job serving the people who rely on their services. They will talk about where they are now, where they have to grow, and where they will be taking action to make that possible. One of the actions they had talked about previously was their redesign of the Training and Employment programs which serve primarily the TANF population, to really focus on how they can do a better job of truly supporting that population and helping them move out of poverty. In their written update, they noted the redesign was implemented in July and was a really exciting milestone and the redesign started with an acknowledgement that that population had been neglected almost certainly as a result of the demographics of who is served by TANF. They had been

working to change the incentives in the program to provide more opportunities and to get more education credentials and really move away from focusing on getting participants into low wage jobs only for them to lose those jobs months later and return to the program. TANF can be a hot button topic for some but they need to the role that racism plays in animosity towards that program. 53% of the TANF population is black and many participants are single moms of color. Redesigning the program will allow them to shift the focus away from keeping clients in compliance with the work requirements and doing what they can to help people move and stay out of poverty. She also noted in that in the written update they highlighted working to assist TANF recipients accessing technology for education and training purposes. In addition to all of the work they are doing to assist Pennsylvanians who are struggling during the pandemic, they are also focused on the need to be part of the solution and create a more equitable world. Finally, she introduced Elizabeth Tilahun who joined DHS as the Deputy Secretary for the Office of Income Maintenance. Secretary Miller remarked that she came to the state with experience in the private sector, non- profits, and past government experience as an income maintenance caseworker in the Dauphin County Assistance Office. She is a graduate of Indiana University of Pennsylvania with a degree in Sociology with minors in Political Science and Psychology. Her professional work has been focused on leveraging relationships and partnerships between stakeholders and community partners with a goal to achieve cohesive, comprehensive service delivery. Working directly with clients who need DHS' services and knows first hand the incredible and vital assistance that is provided through that work which is the core of DHS' mission. Secretary Miller commented that she was extremely excited to have Deputy Secretary Tilahun lead OIM and bring her experiences to the role. She noted that DHS has been trying to focus on the individual client's needs. She said there is no one size fits all approach so they are trying to keep the individual focus at the center of their work. Secretary Miller thanked Tara Williams for stepping in and helping with the transition to Deputy Secretary Tilahun.

Chair Brown thanked Secretary Miller and said that they should keep moving the Commonwealth forward as part of the regular dialogue of the Board. Chair Brown asked if there were any questions and there were none.

### **Agency Report- Office of Vocational Rehabilitation**

Executive Director Shannon Austin then presented the report for the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. She said they had to adjust and pivot due to COVID. She remarked that they were still open for business and they had about 26,000 individuals that they had a case with. They had recently released another 2,200 individuals off the waiting list of the Order of Selection and since COVID hit they had released about 8,300 individuals from the list. They also spent a lot of time training the staff and providers on policy changes for going virtual. She said it was important to recognize the impact to providers that are implementing services for the state and changing and pivoting to continue services. She noted that they had been able to continue a lot of services virtually. They also signed an MOU with the Office of Long-Term Living and were in the process of signing an MOU to do a toolkit with the Department of Education. The goal is to divide roles so they know who is doing what. There will also be several events that will come with school districts and OVR staff to get into the weeds and see what it looks like moving forward so that families understand the changes. OVR was implementing a job jeopardy. If the customer is deemed eligible, if they would get priority within the system, if they are working within a competitive place setting and are at immediate risk of losing their job due to functional limitations due to their disability. They would be able to be pulled off the order of selection. They also have been focusing on prior to COVID, a disability equitable and inclusion initiative that was launched in January of 2020 and they understood being an

employment first state but there was the impact of implicit bias in the workplace so they did multiple trainings. They also understand the importance of staff connecting with consumers that they are implementing services with. They know that they are not closing them as successfully and they hope that they will begin to turn the tide of those numbers and will be more intentional in their outreach. Chair Brown asked if their implicit bias training was brought in from the outside or was done internally. Executive Director Austin said they partnered with Penn State prior to the initiative and they did focus groups to capture what people were feeling and there were some numbers according to the diversity and inclusion index that is available in fourteen key areas and they covered nine of them. She noted they were doing some of the training internally but they were also reaching out to experts throughout the commonwealth so that they can roll out resources.

### **Public Comments**

Chair Brown asked if there was public comment and there was none.

Chair Brown asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

**MOTION:** Rick Bloomingdale made the motion and Chekemma Townsend seconded.