

**Lackawanna County  
Workforce Development Board  
Quarterly Meeting September 14, 2023 8:30 A.M.  
Conducted at the  
Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce, 222 Mulberry Street, Scranton, PA 18503  
And Via Zoom**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Members Attending (verified by voice roll call)**

<b>Maureen Brennan</b>	<b>Amy Luyster</b>
<b>Karla Carlucci</b>	<b>Kelly Ojo</b>
<b>Bill Cockerill</b>	<b>John Pesavento</b>
<b>Thomas Donohue</b>	<b>Drew Simpson</b>
<b>Eric Esoda</b>	<b>George Sweda</b>
<b>Sandy Fasula</b>	<b>Jim Wansacz</b>
<b>Katie Leonard</b>	

**Members Not Attending**

<b>Keith Baker</b>	<b>Michael McDermott</b>
<b>Billy Bott</b>	<b>Anna Rinaldi</b>
<b>William Boyle</b>	<b>Russell Rinaldi</b>
<b>Louis Costanzo</b>	<b>Jaime Ryan</b>
<b>Patrick Fricchione</b>	<b>Brenda Sacco</b>
<b>R. Brian Maloney</b>	

**Staff**

**Virginia Turano**  
**Cathy Gerard**  
**Sharon Catanzaro**  
**Janell Johnson**  
**Roger Sillner**  
**Gina Parise Schilling**  
**Hunter Talipski**

Staff to the WDB

**Larry Melf**  
**Faith Lex**  
**John Loughney**  
**Neola Lynott**  
**Karen Masters**  
**David Genaro**

Services Contractor – EDSI (Adult, DW, EARN)

Services Contractor – EQUUS Workforce Solutions (Youth)

**Others**

**Helene Mancuso - BJJS**  
**Jenelle Osborne - NEPIRC**  
**Patricia Vergnetti - AARP**

**Item #1** – Due to WDB Chair, Tom Donohue’s, unavailability for the in-person session, WDB Vice-Chair, George Sweda, convened the meeting at approximately 8:40 A.M. (due to technical Zoom difficulties). A roll call was then taken and a quorum was achieved.

**Item #2** – To ensure compliance with the Sunshine Law, Mr. Sweda opened the floor for public comments. There were none forthcoming.

**Item #3** – Mr. Sweda referenced minutes from the following previous meetings that had been distributed prior to the meeting and called for questions:

- I. WDB Quarterly Meeting – June 8, 2023
- II. WDB Executive Committee Meeting – September 6, 2023
- III. Youth Advocacy Sub-Committee Meeting – September 7, 2023

With no questions or comments on the minutes, a motion to approve the meeting minutes as presented was made by Amy Luyster and seconded by Drew Simpson. On the motion, there were no questions or abstentions. All members concurred.

**Item #4** - The following Action/Motion Items, as taken by the Executive Committee since the last full-Board Quarterly meeting on June 8, 2023, were presented for ratification:

Via Email Correspondence on or around August 11, 2023:

- Approval of quarterly budget reconciliation for PY 2022 Quarter 4 (4-1-2023 – 6-30-2023) and PY 2023 Initial Budget submission

At WDB Executive Committee meeting (via Zoom) on September 6, 2023:

- Approval of the award of \$4,000 to EDSI as lead entity of the PA CareerLink® Lackawanna County Consortium of Operators for the period of 7-1-2023 through 6-30-2023.
- Approval to release Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for Community Projects under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Business Education Partnership (BEP) grants during the Fall, 2023.
- Certification of the PA CareerLink® Lackawanna County, located at 135 Franklin Avenue, Scranton, PA 18503 as a viable One-Stop Center of Operation for the 3-year period commencing on January 1, 2024, through December 31, 2026.

Ms. Turano presented the completed *PA CareerLink® Lackawanna County Certification Tool* that was utilized to address all required certification components for review prior to the Board’s formal approval. Mr. Sweda called for questions and, with none received, a motion to approve the Ratification items was made by Maureen Brennan and seconded by Bill Cockerill. On the call, there were no questions or abstentions. The motion then carried.

**Item #5** – Mr. Sweda turned the floor over to member Eric Esoda, NEPIRC, who briefly introduced NEPIRC’s Manufacturing Ambassador Dream Team Project, stating that it consists of a select group of approximately 30 young professionals representing 27 companies across northeastern and north central Pennsylvania. Mr. Esoda introduced Ms. Jenelle Osborne, the Dream Team Project Coordinator, who provided a lively overview of the project. She informed that each “Dream Team” member is a select group of HR professionals, process engineers, project managers, quality managers in the manufacturing sector with various skill sets and educational levels. The Dream Team shares his/her unique employment history with high school students across the region in an effort to connect students to young manufacturing professionals to learn about manufacturing careers and personalized experiences. The Ambassador program is 18 months in length and, to-date, has reached over 5,000 students.

**Item #6** – On Mr. Sweda’s call, Ms. Virginia Turano, WDB Executive Director, informed the Board that an initial meeting (via Zoom) of a newly-formed workforce sub-group to facilitate a discussion on the needs of business and industry and the development of workforce solutions to accommodate current as well as projected situations was held on August 10, 2023. She reported that, unfortunately, only one Board member, Mrs. Sandy Fasula, representing Gerrity’s Supermarkets, attended the session that spurred questions regarding the universal need for workers in both entry-level as well as skill-specific positions; problems with worker retention; competition in today’s market; getting today’s youth to work; competitive wages; cross-training of workers; and the availability of using On-The-Job Training (OJT) funds for new hires. A discussion ensued that revolved around State processes regarding these types of issues, how current workforce programs/entities are addressing needs collectively, and how current and future business needs will affect the economy if solutions are not identified. It was decided that a second session of the sub-group was in order. Ms. Turano stated that she will schedule an in-person meeting of the sub-group during the Fall months to continue the discussion.

**Item #7** – Mr. Sweda called on Ms. Turano to provide the Executive Director’s report

**i. PY 2023 Year-to-Date Funding/Operational Update**

Ms. Turano presented the following chart, providing a picture of the current Program Year (PY) funding cycle (7/1/2023 – 6/30/2024) funding levels, including all carry-over funds from the previous cycle:

<b>Funding Stream</b>	<b>Carry-Over from PY 2022 (on 7-1-2023)</b>	<b>PY 2023 Funding Awards</b>	<b>Total Available Funding</b>
Adult	\$168,157	\$642,535	\$810,692
Dislocated Worker (DW)	\$139,604	\$1,664,470	\$1,804,074
Youth	\$144,169	\$709,758	\$853,927
PY 2022 TANF*	\$180,844	\$0	\$180,844
PY 2023 TANF	\$0	\$206,917	\$206,917
Business Education Partnership (BEP) Grant 2022 (competitive)**	\$49,822	\$0	\$49,822
BEP Grant 2023***	\$150,000	\$	\$150,000
Veterans Statewide Activity (competitive)****	\$0	\$136,731	\$136,731
Digital Literacy (competitive)*****	\$0	\$45,000	\$45,000
Clean Energy (competitive)*****	\$411,729	\$0	\$411,729
<b>EARN</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$790,028</b>	<b>\$790,028</b>
			<b>\$5,439,764</b>

\*Extended through 6-30-2024  
\*\*Grant Award from 2-1-2022 through 12-31-2023  
\*\*\*Grant award from 6-1-2023 through 8-31-2024  
\*\*\*\*Grant award from 8-1-2023 through 7-31-2024  
\*\*\*\*\*Grant award from 7-1-2022 through 6-30-2025

She also provided a programmatic report on each of the following special competitive grant projects: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Business Education Partnership (BEP) 4.0, Veterans Employment Grant, Clean Energy Grant, and Digital Literacy Grant.

On the call for questions, there were none.

She also distributed a TANF Summer 2023 pictorial of Interns and work experience enrollees and explained that slots were available for Fall interns. She welcomed referral from the Board. Finally, a recruitment flyer was presented announcing Digital Literacy classes that will commence sometime in early-mid September.

## **ii. PY 2022 Quarter 4 Performance Report**

Ms. Turano provided a chart of PY 2022 Quarter 4 (April 1, 2023 – June 30, 2023) Performance Indicators, stating that all performance requirements had been met.

## **iii. Subcontractor Quarter 4 Performance Report Card**

Ms. Turano deferred to Ms. Cathy Gerard, WDB Contracts Administrator, to discuss prepared Individual Training Account (ITA) reports detailing enrollments, completions, credentials, employment/placements related or non-related to training activities, and wages rates at placement by training institution and further defined by course of study/course enrollments. The only area that may be of some concern is the number of secured employments following the completion of training as well as the length of time that transpires between the completion of training and actual job acquisition. Ms. Gerard stated that she is working with Educational Data Systems Inc. (EDSI) and Equus Workforce Solutions staff in implementing a more aggressive job search process.

## **iv. PA CareerLink® Report**

Ms. Turano called on Ms. Gerard, serving in the capacity of PA CareerLink® Lackawanna County Site Administrator, who discussed the following:

- A Business Services Team (BST) update that included a charting of yearly comparisons of Total Job Orders and New Employer usage of CWDS.
- Outcomes from the PA CareerLink® Lackawanna County's *Workforce Day in Lackawanna County* that was conducted on September 8, 2023, stating that former PA Senator John Blake, now serving as Chief of Staff and representing U. S. Congressman Matt Cartwright, served as the guest speaker and provided an enlightened view of the status of rail travel in northeastern PA and regional economic data and funding opportunities dictating both the current as well as future status of the region. She also reported that additional event activities included workshops on resume' and interviewing skills and informational introductory session on the usage of the Commonwealth of PA's free on-line training opportunities, *SkillUp™ PA*. Local training providers/educational institutions were on-site to provide information on occupational skilled training in high-demand occupations. Finally, the Digital Literacy Instructor was available to provide information on the upcoming Digital Literacy classes that will commence shortly. Updated information on the Statewide Activities Grant (\$70,200 award for PA CareerLink upgrades) that included: the purchase of an outdoor, digital sign for the front of the physical site to promote on-site activities, job fairs, employer recruitment events, etc.; the purchase of 12 new workstations in the Career Resource Center to replace worn and jagged units; the purchase of 4 new lobby chairs to replace fraying and discolored items; a keyless, electronic entry-way system for the staff-used doorways to increase security; an upgraded internal phone system; and the following items to increase on-site accessibility to individuals with disabilities: an updated TTY phone device; an amplified Braille-capable and analog phone line; a portable communication device for deaf or hard-of-hearing individuals; and a computer webcam for the ADA-accessible work station. All items have been procured and installed.
- The roll-out of a new Commonwealth Workforce Digital Intake system that will be implemented locally in mid-October to enable collection of data of PA CareerLink® users.

#### **iv. County Profile**

Ms. Turano referenced the Commonwealth-produced Lackawanna County August, 2023, *County Profile* which was included in the meeting packet for informational purposes.

#### **Item #8 - Other Business**

Amy Luyster informed that a documentary film screening and panel presentation, presented by Outreach Center for Community Resources and the Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce Skills in Scranton entitled *Pardon Me* will be presented at Lackawanna College on October 10, 2023 at 4:30 P.M. *Pardon Me* presents how pardons can help uplift lower-income communities and increase money to states by allowing people with criminal records the opportunity to live as full citizens. She invited all to attend.

**Item #9** - Mr. Sweda noted that the next meeting is scheduled for November 30, 2023, at 8:30 A.M. at the Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce, 222 Mulberry Street, Scranton, PA or via ZOOM. He encouraged everyone's attendance.

**Item #10** – With no further business to discuss, a motion to adjourn was made by Maureen Brennan and seconded by Amy Luyster. The meeting concluded at approximately 9:45 A. M.