



BLUE RIDGE REGION

**Western Virginia Workforce Development Board  
Workforce Center & Services Committee**

November 6, 2019 – 2:00 PM  
Virginia Career Works – Roanoke Center  
3601 Thirlane Road NW, Suite 2, Roanoke, VA 24019

<b>Committee Members</b>	<b>Present</b>
Joseph Brinley	X
Abby Hamilton	
Emmanuel Doss	
Crystal Hall, Chair	X
Mary Ann Gilmer	X
Amanda Decker, Alternate for Dr. Milan Hayward	X
Kathy Hodges	X
Katherine Holcomb	X
Karen Michalski-Karney	
Joyce Kessinger	
Angela Oginz, Alternate for Steve Martin	X
Jessie McKeon, ex-officio	X
Jo Nelson	X

<b>Board Staff</b>	<b>Present</b>
Morgan Romeo	X
Leah Gibson	X
Jill Quinlan	X
Mark Holman	X
Brad Stephens	X

<b>Guests</b>	<b>Present</b>
Michelle Brennan	X

**CALL TO ORDER**

Crystal Hall called the meeting to order at 2:05 PM.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no comments from the public.

**MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL – AUGUST 7, 2019**

The August 7, 2019 Workforce Center & Services Committee Meeting minutes were presented to the committee.

**Workforce Center & Services Committee Action:** A motion was made by Jo Nelson to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Mary Ann Gilmer. The motion was carried.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### GO Virginia Grant(s) Update

Morgan Romeo updated the Committee on the two GO Virginia grants that were currently being administered by the Board. The Regional Career and Technical Education study was progressing as planned and had no major updates until the consultant was hired by the Board. The second project, in partnership with the Central Virginia Workforce Development Board and the New River/Mt. Rogers Workforce Development Board, had some questions arise regarding expenditure levels related to the existing worker training. While the Career Quest event had been successful and other activities related to career pathways are anticipated through June 2020, the other two areas had not been as successful in spending their existing worker training funding. The Central Virginia Workforce Development Board inquired if the Board would be interested in requesting that funding be moved from the existing worker training activities to career pathways activities. Morgan noted that she did not feel comfortable saying that by moving the money it would be spent completely, as the Board had been relatively creative and frugal in developing career pathways activities. The Committee discussed whether funding should be moved but decided to wait until March 2020 to make a final decision on whether the request should be made. The Board staff noted that they would get with training programs and other partner programs to see if any partnerships could be made to spend down the existing worker training funding.

### Pathways to the American Dream Grant Update

Leah Gibson provided an update to the Committee on the Pathways to the American Dream project, a partnership with the New River/Mt. Rogers Workforce Development Board, along with the Southwest Virginia Workforce Development Board and the West Piedmont Workforce Development Board. Leah noted that the project goals were being exceeded for enrollments, credential attainment, and employment. She did note that the goals for the Blue Ridge region were not being met at this time. There were no additional questions about the report.

### WIOA Title I Youth Program Update

Mark Holman gave an update on the WIOA Title I Youth Program and the progress made since the transition on October 1, 2019. Mark informed the Committee that the program had one (1) completed enrollment along with about twelve (12) individuals that were in the pipeline. Mark reported that the first few months of the program had been spent meeting with organizations that had been untapped for referrals in the region including TAP, Virginia Western, Roanoke Redevelopment Housing Authority, Adult Education, the Blue Ridge Independent Living Center, Boys & Girls Club and Goodwill. Mark noted that he was also participating in a lot of events in the community including the Roanoke County Department of Social Services Resource Fair and the Alleghany High School Fall Extravaganza. Mark reported that he was also conducting orientations for the Title I Youth program offsite from the Roanoke Center at Goodwill YouthHQ, Indian Rock Village, Jamestown Place, and the Salvation Army New Day Center. Crystal thanked Mark for his efforts and said that the Committee looked forward to seeing the success of the Title I Youth program this year.

### WIOA Title I Training Funding Limitations

Leah Gibson referenced the packet for the meeting which included a copy of the ITA policy for the region. Leah reminded the Committee that they had requested to revisit the policy on a quarterly basis to ensure that the \$3,500 limit and the 25% limit on expenditures related to Commercial Drivers Licenses (CDL) were still relevant. Leah reported that Ross IES had stated that the 25% limit had already been met for both the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs for the year. Jo Nelson clarified that the 25% limit being reached meant that no additional funding would be provided for CDL training through July 1<sup>st</sup>. Katherine Holcomb asked what the alternative was for job seekers that were interested in receiving their CDL. Amanda said that CDS Tractor Trailer Training was offering students loans if they are not eligible for the statewide funding or WIOA Title I. The Committee discussed whether additional funding should be opened when FastForward funding came to an end in December. Kathy Hodges noted that it may be good for the job seekers to have a small amount of skin in the game so that their success would be more guaranteed. Jo Nelson noted that she was inclined to leave it as is and refer-back to the ITA policy in January/February but for the staff to bring back numbers of individuals that were being turned away due to no funding being available. The Committee suggested that a list of resources for funding for training be developed and provided to CDS Tractor Trailer Training so that they would be aware of additional resources that may be present for financial assistance.

### WIOA TITLE I PROVIDER PERFORMANCE

Leah Gibson referenced the WIOA Title I Program report that was included in the packet for the Committee. Leah noted that there was no report on the Title I Youth program at this time but that data through September 30, 2019 was available for the Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker programs that were being operated by Ross Innovative Employment Solutions. Crystal Hall asked Jessica McKeon, Program Manager for Ross IES, if she would like to note anything. Jessica said that she would be happy to answer any questions regarding the data. Leah pointed out that enrollment goals were being met by the Ross IES at this time, but that expenditures were not where they needed to be. Mary Ann Gilmer asked if the obligations being reported were correct, as most of them were \$0. Leah noted that there were some discrepancies between when the corporate Ross IES office considered them obligations and when they were obligations at the local level. The Committee noted that additional reports would be helpful in reviewing these expenditure levels as the detail and communication regarding the numbers was not consistent.

**Workforce Center and Services Committee Action:** A motion was made by Mary Ann Gilmer that Board staff provide technical assistance and issue an obligation register to Ross IES for their use in documenting obligations on a monthly basis. The motion was seconded by Joe Brinley. The motion was carried.

The Committee asked for the new report to be provided at the meeting in February.

### NEW BUSINESS

#### New & Updated Policies

Leah Gibson reported that in follow up to the third-party consultant work that was done last Program Year with the Board and CLEO, a list of policies had been recommended and staff were working through the list to update current policies or add new ones. Leah noted that the Committee would be seeing policies on each of their agenda for a while until the list was completed.

Leah referenced the packet and noted that several policies were being presented to the Committee for their approval. These included new policies on Assessments, Data Validation, and Individual Employment Plan/Individual Service Strategies and updated the current policies on Eligibility, Follow-Up, and ITA. The Committee discussed the policies and reviewed the changes and additions.

**Workforce Center & Services Committee Action:** A motion was made by Mary Ann Gilmer to approve the policies as presented. The motion was seconded by Jo Nelson. The motion was carried.

#### Economic Equity Grant Application

Leah Gibson updated the Committee on the Economic Equity Initiative. The Board was not awarded during the first round of the awards, but the grant has been reissued for a second round. The Committee asked who was awarded and Leah explained it was Alexandria/Arlington, Northern Virginia, Bay Consortium, New River/Mt. Rogers, and the Shenandoah Valley. Leah noted that the Board staff were working with adult education and other partners to reapply and would be including cohorts like PluggedIn for this application. Leah stated that the first application had included many costs for staffing and expansion of outreach efforts, and the review committee had expressed concerns about not having enough contextualized learning. Leah said that staff would keep the Committee updated on the progress.

#### Workforce System/Center MOU/IFA

Leah Gibson reported that the system Memorandum of Understanding had been distributed to the applicable partners on Monday and the final version would be sent out late this week or early next week. Leah asked if any partners had feedback to please send them to the Board staff prior to the end of the day on Friday.

#### OnRamp Program Update

Michelle Brennan updated the Committee on the OnRamp program through the United Way in partnership with TAP. Michelle shared several success stories with the Committee on how the grant was able to help with additional wrap-around services for job seekers coming into the Roanoke Center. Examples of supportive services that had been provided were transportation, equipment for work or training, and one rental assistance payment. Michelle also noted that they were able to purchase a wheelchair for a job seeker to have at the Roanoke Center in case it was needed. Michelle also reported that the process for intake is going smoothly even though there are still a couple of bumps to work out and partners to “buy-in” to the process.

#### Opportunity Youth Plan

Morgan Romeo reported that the region is required to develop and implement an Opportunity Youth Plan by November 30<sup>th</sup> which will dictate how the region will increase interaction and programmatic activities with youth that are homeless, in the foster care system or are involved with juvenile justice. Morgan reviewed the outline of the plan, which will include definitions of youth that are considered “opportunity youth” to include as many individuals as possible, an engagement and outreach plan, and programmatic/performance goals. Morgan asked the Committee for feedback on the plan and noted that the definitions would be as inclusive as possible. For example, the WIOA Title I definitions of homeless and foster care would be followed, as the homeless definition for WIOA Title I is more expansive than the definition used by the Virginia Department of Education. Jo Nelson noted that the plan should address that 16

and 17-year-old students in Roanoke City were not considered dropouts as long as they were attending an organized session by the schools once a week. Jo referenced that the Youth Build program had received a waiver from the U.S. Department of Labor to include these students and offered to share the definition. Jo Nelson also suggested that the definition of juvenile justice be expanded to add adult justice system, as many youth ages 18-24 are considered adults.

#### **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

Leah noted the meetings for the Board and the next Workforce Center and Services Committee that were detailed on the agenda packet.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Crystal Hall adjourned the meeting at 3:19 PM.