

**Workforce Innovation and Performance Committee of the Monroe County/Rochester Workforce Development Board**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, March 5, 2024**  
**8:00 to 9:00 AM**  
**Meeting Scheduled via ZOOM**

**Present:** Lia Festenstein, Joe Wesley, Chris Rush, Jarmani Dozier, Jane Sullivan, Jennifer Geiger, Patricia Stovall-Lane, Randy Andre, Debra Bell

**Staff and Guest:** Lee Koslow, Mary McKeown, Viatta Carter, Marisol Young, Laura Seelman, Daniel Donnarumma, Kyle McCarthy, Antwan Williams

**Approval of Minutes:**

A motion to approve the December 5, 2023 meeting minutes was made by Joe Wesley and seconded by Laura Seelman. The motion was carried unanimously.

**Review of WIOA Adult/Dislocated Worker Program, Quarter 1 Performance:**

Lee Koslow began this discussion by reviewing the Adult and Dislocated Worker Performance, Program Year 2023, Quarter 1, on the WIOA primary indicators of performance for Monroe County. He noted the Workforce Innovation and Performance Committee is an oversight committee that takes a look at our Adult/Dislocated Worker performance from quarter to quarter, year to year. Lee reviewed the 5 different Primary Indicators of Performance that we are measured on, which are county-wide measures. He added that we now have a Priority of Service Indicator, which is a new State indicator. Performance is summarized in the Workforce Innovation and Performance Committee slideshow.

**Revisions to Policies 101 Priority of Service and 103 Supportive Services:**

Lee Koslow began the discussion by noting that last year in the Spring, RochesterWorks staff had presented to the Board a DEIA (Disability, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility) plan that was worked on by a committee of RW staff members. That plan had four different pillars that we would like to measure and make improvements on as an organization. One of those pillars is Operations, and in the Operations pillar, one of the things that we were looking at is, are the policies and procedures that RochesterWorks operates by, including the Board policies, aligned with our DEIA plan? Last Fall we broke up into work groups. The operations work group came up with a tool that we could use to evaluate policies and procedures against the DEIA plan. That tool examines whether or not the policies and procedures are friendly to a variety of different protected categories. We are looking at certain potential areas of concern, such as communications; how eligibility for the service is evaluated; how we can measure its impact; the equitability of the process itself; whether the process or policy contains unnecessary prohibitions; whether it contains necessary protections; and what supports it offers for protected groups. Lee noted that as a pilot, we started out with our income guidelines procedure and our Policy 101 Priority of Service. We evaluated both documents and came up with some areas where we thought that the policy was doing really well, that we wanted to keep, as well as a few recommendations for improvements, and sent those to management. This was last December, and we did not do anything else with it right away. Since this committee makes recommendations on program policies, although initially we were only doing this as a test, why not just amend the policy now to make it better from a DEIA standpoint?

Lee presented the following Revision to Policy 101 Priority of Service:

- Purpose of the Revision: To implement changes recommended through RochesterWorks' DEIA Committee.
- Change 1: Explicitly add promoting DEIA to the policy's Purpose section.

- Change 2: Add a requirement that career center managers ensure that their procedures for identifying Adult priority populations and Dislocated Workers achieve DEIA goals; and arrange for annual DEIA training to support this objective.
- Change 3: Add a Measurement Section to quantify the application of DEIA practices to priority of service selection.
- Additionally, adds assessments approved by NYSDOL to the list of assessments used to determine that an individual is basic skills deficient.

A motion to advance these changes to Policy 101 Priority of Service to the Board as is was made by Randy Andre and seconded by Debra Bell. The motion was carried unanimously.

Lee also shared a set of revisions to Policy 103 Supportive Services that would accommodate specifically On-the-Job Training Grant (OJT) participants. In line with our strategic policy goal to provide more job retention services to individuals who are employed, OJT is a really good vehicle to serve that employed population. We have been finding that some of our OJT participants need supportive services as well. Under the current policies, there are not a lot of supportive services available to OJT participants, unless they fall into one of the priority populations.

Lee noted what we are proposing. Currently for ITA training they can get bus passes, gas cards, parking assistance and child and dependent care, if it is not available through another source, like DHS. Those services have not been available to anybody getting OJT training. The proposal is to make these same supportive services available to anyone getting OJT training, with one step further than the ITA, and this is where the change to the priority of service comes in, we do not want to exclude any OJT participants from these services if they do not fall into any of the priority populations.

The basic proposal is to make these 4 services available if they are not available from other sources; still keep the priority order of service, but do not exclude OJT participants who do not fall into any of the priority populations, unless funding is limited. In that case, the higher priority populations would get the supportive service first. These 4 services include:

- Bus Passes (31-Day Unlimited bus pass or its equivalent.)
- Gas Cards (\$25 gas card for each 130 miles that you would be traveling during a 31-day period, up to 6 gas cards. As an alternative to the gas cards, a participant could be issued a ridesharing (e.g., Uber or Lyft) gift card if needed to gain access to a training site not on a bus line, in the same amounts as if they had been issued a gas card.)
- Parking (The cap is \$50/month.)
- Child and Dependent Care (We could pay up to \$2K per participant, per year. This is assuming that we do not have it available through either TANF or Childcare Development Block Grant, or some other type of funding.)

A motion to advance these recommendations to the Board was made by Patricia Stovall-Lane and seconded by Laura Seelman. The motion was carried unanimously.

**Featured Discussion: New Incumbent Worker Training Offering:**

Laura Seelman began this discussion by noting that as part of strategic planning, retention has been an increasing focus of our efforts. As part of that process, Business Services was looking to launch an incumbent worker training grant; to support training efforts for existing employees with businesses. Business Services came to this committee and to the Full Board back in September 2023 and had an Incumbent Worker Training Grant Policy approved. We have recently launched this program and this offering for businesses.

Laura noted we have secured \$245K from COMIDA to support one year of funding for incumbent worker training opportunities for businesses. We have the option for a one-year extension of that funding, and we are hopeful that everything goes well enough to be able to extend this program for an additional year.

The Incumbent Worker Training Grant (IWT) includes:

- IWT grant provides funding for businesses to train and upskill existing employees. The goal of this grant is to help businesses retain current team members by providing them with opportunities to stay competitive and well-skilled.
- The grant supports short-term training, completed in six months or less, in in-demand and industry-recognized skill areas.
- Reimburses up to \$10K for training and educational costs. Matching contribution of 10%, 25%, or 50% required based on size of the business.

Laura summarized the eligibility criteria through RochesterWorks as follows:

- Eligible businesses include for-profit or not-for-profit organizations with jobsites in Monroe County.
- Employees to be trained should be full-time employees earning \$40.39 or less. (P/T employees eligible if promoted to F/T upon training completion.)
- Business selects training provider(s) and identifies employee(s) to be trained. Applications can include multiple training programs from different providers for different groups of employees.
- All applications must be approved by RochesterWorks prior to the start date of first training program.
  - Recommended to submit applications 30 days prior to training start date.

As part of the IWT Process, the business will:

- Identify potential employee(s) for training and consult with training provider(s) to identify chosen training programs.
- Submit Business Application and copy of course outline/curriculum(s) from training provider(s), along with invoice/cost quote.
- Provide proof of payment for training costs and any matching funds, and certificates of completion for employees who finished training.

As part of the IWT Process, RochesterWorks will:

- Review application materials for program eligibility and request any additional information needed.
- Submit applications for funding approval and process contracts.
- Check in with business to confirm training is progressing as scheduled.
- Process records provided by the business at the end of the contract period and reimburse up to \$10K.

Laura shared some examples of potential trainings to give an idea of some things we might be able to fund, depending on the needs of the company. We can work with any industry, different types of training options, if it falls into that short-term training scope, and the employee has that skill gap that the business has identified.

Promotion and Marketing for the Incumbent Worker Training Grant program will include (completed and in process):

- Press Release
- Email blasts to business customers
- Social media postings
- Paid advertisements in Greater Rochester Chamber and Rochester Business Journal
- Presentations to business groups
- Outreach to partner organizations, i.e. Small Business Development Center

We welcome your help and your support in sharing this information within your networks.

We continue to offer the Work Experience Tryout Program and the On-the-Job Training Program to support hiring and training existing employees, along with our job fairs and recruiting events, to help serve companies and support retention.

Lee thanked everyone for the very good discussion today.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Viatta Carter and seconded by Antwan Williams. The motion was passed unanimously.

**Next Meeting Scheduled:** June 4, 2024

Meeting adjourned at 9:02 AM  
Submitted by: Mary McKeown

Reviewed by:  
Lee Koslow 3/14/2024  
Laura Seelman 3/18/24