

**BERKS COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD  
(WDB)**

**7:30 a.m.**

**December 8, 2017**

**PA CareerLink® Berks County, 1920 Kutztown Road, Suite F, Reading, PA 19604**

**Meeting Summary**

**Members Present**

Ms. Debra Antol  
Ms. Ashley Chambers  
Mr. John DeVere  
Ms. Marianne Egolf  
Mr. Michael Fischetti (via conference call)  
Ms. Kristi Gage-Linderman  
Mr. Tom Herman (via conference call)  
Ms. Carole Homolash  
Ms. Joanne Judge (via conference call)  
Mr. Lewis McCoy  
Mr. Thomas McKeon  
Mr. Brian McMahon (via conference call)  
Mr. John Morahan  
Mr. James Nichols (via conference call)  
Mr. Randolph Peers  
Mr. Mark Pinkasavage  
Mr. Michael Rowley  
Mr. Mark Schlott  
Ms. Connie Skipper  
Ms. Karyn Troxell (via conference call)  
Mr. Barry Unger  
Dr. Anna Weitz

**Members Absent**

Mr. Thomas Brizek  
Mr. Modesto Fiume  
Mr. Robert Harrop  
Ms. Peggy Kershner  
Mr. Gregg Riefenstahl  
Ms. Jeannine Rohrbach  
Mr. Russell Showers  
Mr. Pablo Tejada  
Ms. Tammy White

**Staff and Guests Present**

Mr. Daniel Fogarty	Berks County Workforce Development Board Staff
Mr. John Moser	Berks County Workforce Development Board Staff
Mr. Rory Stevenson	Berks County Workforce Development Board Staff
Ms. Patricia Spencer	Berks County Workforce Development Board Staff
Ms. Patricia Adamczyk	PA CareerLink® Berks County Administrator
Ms. Megan Noll	Berks County Staff
Ms. Amber Columbo	ResCare

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Gage-Linderman, Vice Chairperson, at 7:30 a.m. and the Chairperson Ms. Judge participated by conference call. A quorum was present.

Mr. Fogarty commented that Mr. Hornberger retired from his bank position effective December 1, 2017 and therefore could not continue as a Business representative on the Board. Mr. Fogarty added that Mr. Hornberger has been a long-standing member of the Board and a member of the Training and Industry Partnership Committee as well. The Board expressed appreciation for Mr. Hornberger's service.

Items from the consent agenda were introduced by Ms. Gage-Linderman and a motion was made by Mr. Morahan and seconded by Mr. Herman to approve the minutes from the previous Board meeting. Mr. Peers moved and Ms. Chambers seconded a motion to retroactively approve two contracts previously approved by the One-Stop Committee: One-Stop Operator Service Contract to Educational Data Systems, Inv. (EDSI) effective July 1, 2017 and Title I Adult/Dislocated Worker Services Contract to EDSI effective July 1, 2017. A motion was made by Mr. McCoy and seconded by Dr. Weitz to approve the Certification of PA CareerLink® Berks County per the One-Stop Committee's recommendation. All members voted their approval of the motions.

The Executive Committee recommended extending Ms. Judge's term as Chairperson to December 31, 2018 and Ms. Gage-Linderman's Vice-Chairperson's term to December 31, 2019 as allowed by the Board's By-Laws. Dr. Weitz moved to accept the extensions and Mr. Unger seconded the motion. Members voted their approval.

Mr. Fogarty gave an update on the local and regional plans stating that the state level review of the plans is advancing on schedule. As noted in the report, PA Department of Labor & Industry (L&I) staff communicated through the Southeast PA Region's contractor Mike Lawrence that the Berks local plan was the best of all the local WDB plans in the state. At the recommendation of the Chair and the Executive Committee, Mr. Rowley was appointed the Chair of the Policy, Planning and Priorities Committee.

The schedule for the 2018 WDB quarterly meetings is:

- March 16, 2018 at 7:30 a.m.
- June 15, 2018 at 7:30 a.m.
- September 21, 2018 at 7:30 a.m.
- December 14, 2018 at 7:30 a.m.

The schedule for the quarterly Board meetings as well as the schedule for Executive Committee meetings will be advertised under Public Notices in the Reading Eagle early in January in compliance with State law.

The Finance Committee report was reviewed by Mr. Fineman who stated that the 2017 Program Year Budget results for the year-to-date are at or within budget for all programs. Mr. Fineman stated that the Statement of Activities report has been revised to make the presentation more user-friendly. Mr. Fogarty commented that Workforce Boards are faced with challenging concepts with core funding received in two separate increments: Increment #1 covering July through September and then Increment #2 covering October through June with the fiscal year beginning on October 1. According to State policy, funds received through Notices of Obligation may only be spent on designated programs. Mr. Fogarty added that the WDB is managing funds held by the County of Berks for these programs. A lengthy discussion among members ensued regarding the inability to move funds from one program to another with a particular focus on EARN performance funds. Mr. Fogarty said he and other workforce areas have tried to have the PA Department of Human Services (DHS) return to the "old rules" which allowed local WDBs greater flexibility for appropriate uses (such as for low income summer youth employment). So far, DHS has been unwilling to do so.

Mr. Fogarty noted that after 37 years as a County employee, Mr. Alan Fineman will be retiring in January. He thanked Mr. Fineman on behalf of the Board for his outstanding performance on staff and in leading the State Association's Fiscal Committee. Mr. Fogarty introduced Ms. Megan Noll who will begin her employment as the new Fiscal Officer on December 13. Mr. Fineman has agreed to work 10-15 hours per week on a part-time basis for up to six months in order to continue providing support to Ms. Noll in her new and complex position.

The One-Stop Oversight Committee Report was introduced by Ms. Gage-Linderman. EDSI assumed responsibility for Title I Adult/Dislocated Workers services on July 1, 2017. EDSI has made bilingual competency in Spanish a priority for new staff hiring considerations, and this emphasis has resulted in 50% of the current PA CareerLink<sup>®</sup> Berks County staff being bilingually fluent. This has enabled the addition of regularly scheduled Spanish language workshops and a new curriculum for the eight-day "Success Starts Here" workshop to the local public calendar of events. Ms. Adamczyk added that everybody signs in when entering the receptionist area enabling better tracking. She said that Job Gateway tracks those who use that system. Mr. Moser tracks enrollees into the programs. PA CareerLink<sup>®</sup> Berks County now has its own Facebook page.

Executed PACL Berks Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signatures as required by WIOA legislation from each partner have been received.

Beginning January 1, 2018 the responsibility for administration of OJT/ITA contracts will be transferred from the County to the PA CareerLink<sup>®</sup> Berks County contractors.

The By the Numbers report for the period July – October, 2017 was briefly discussed. Visitor foot traffic was 11,664 for the period.

Mr. McKeon introduced the Berks County WDB Committee on Increasing Opportunities for Individuals with Disabilities report. At its first meeting, it was decided that the focus will be on adults with disabilities since the Youth Committee already addresses youth with disabilities. The new Committee will actively participate with OVR in the planning of a September 2018 Employer Symposium. Ms. Homolash and Ms. Troxell expressed their enthusiasm and excitement about the Symposium and the Committee's participation in the event planning. OVR's Job Fair in October will be an obvious tie-in especially since October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM).

The Training and Industry Partnership Committee Report was introduced by Mr. DeVere.

More than 100 business representatives attended the first annual Berks regional Manufacturing Summit held October 18, 2017 in RACC's Miller Center for the Arts and the Schmidt Training and Technology Center. The highly successful event was a collaboration between the Berks County Industrial Development Authority, the Greater Reading Chamber Alliance, RACC, the Berks WDB, PSU-Berks and the Manufacturers Resource Center. Planning for the 2018 event is expected to commence in the Spring. Mr. DeVere thanked Dr. Weitz for the use of RACC's facility.

Two initiatives regarding the Berks Construction Sector were reported:

- A \$1.2 million, three-year U.S. Department of Labor grant was awarded to Berks Connections/Pretrial Services (BCPS) for the development and delivery of a construction trades re-entry project. Participants in the program are ex-offenders returning to the community who are provided with basic skills required for successful entrance into careers in the local construction industry. Relevant classroom training is provided at the Reading-Muhlenberg Career and Technology Center (RMCTC). Participants apply newly learned skills as part of a crew assigned to rehabilitating homes in the City of Reading with Habitat for Humanity. Participants also receive extensive case management support from BCPS for up to one year. BCPS expects to serve 160 participants and all will receive post-graduation job search, placement and retention support. The Reading Eagle's editorial "*Promising effort offers second chance*" was included in the Board's packet.
- An Apprenticeship USA Expansion Grant in the amount of \$144,231 was awarded to IBEW Local 743. To date the grant has funded the tuition and related training materials for 61 electrician apprentices. The number of apprentices is important because electrician occupations have been identified as one of the most critical construction-related High Priority Occupations (HPOs) in Berks County and the SE PA region. The Reading Eagle Business Weekly article "*Apprenticeships help meet labor shortage in construction*" was also included in the Board's printed materials. Mr. Pinkasavage and Mr. Unger were both quoted in the article's favorable reporting of local registered apprenticeship programs.

The Board discussed the ramifications of the requirement of participant background checks for jobs in both of these programs.

Mr. Fogarty briefly discussed items listed in his COO Report.

- The local labor market continues to quite strong for job seekers while continuing to cause headaches for employers. October's seasonally-adjusted local unemployment rate is back down to 4.4%. Mr. Fogarty provided an analysis of the situation in his report on how these figures impact job seekers and employers.
- A progress report on the Disconnected Young Adult Study/Leadership Berks was included in Mr. Fogarty's report. The purpose of this project is to enlist creative leadership from Leadership Berks (LB) to:
  - Publicly promote the results of the study of Disconnected Young Adults in Berks County (July 2017) sponsored by the United Way of Berks County and the WDB;
  - Help develop an action plan to address the many challenging findings from the study; and
  - Help develop leadership, collaborative structures and organizational capacity within Berks County to address this critical economic and human development challenge over the long-term.

- Building Pathways between School and Work Symposium - The WDB was proud to join with the Berks County Intermediate Unit (BCIU), the Berks Business Education Coalition (BBEC), and the Greater Reading Chamber Alliance (GRCA) to co-sponsor the highly successful launch of the *Berks County Career Pathways Alliance*. Nearly 350 representatives from business and education attended the breakfast event held at the Crowne Plaza on November 30. The leadership of WDB members Connie Skipper (BCIU), Randy Peers (GRCA), Mark Schlott (R.M. Palmer), and Dr. Anna Weitz (RACC) has been key to the development of the Career Pathways Framework over the past 18 months. WDB staff member Rory Stevenson has also contributed to the project by providing valuable labor market information to help ensure that the frameworks' pathways remains anchored in the key local industry sectors and high priority occupations that the WDB has identified. WDB Chairperson Joanne Judge offered the event's welcome remarks on behalf of the WDB.

Ms. Gage-Linderman welcomed Market Intelligence Comments. Members continued discussion on the Career Pathways Framework, many noting that the Board is on the right track pursuing the provision of opportunities to students for training, apprenticeships and mentoring at school districts with one of the key factors being to learn the job skills needed for particular jobs. Not only the school districts but also the career and technology centers have critical roles in this very important task. Berks County will continue to be a model for other workforce development areas in the state. Mr. Fogarty said he appreciates the contributions from training providers and educators involved.

Another topic in the market intelligence discussion was the continuing problems created for PA CareerLinks when UC Service Centers cannot handle call volumes from claimants during peak periods. This is an ongoing topic being discussed by the One Stop Oversight Committee.

There being no public comment, the Board adjourned the meeting at 9:00 a.m.