



State of Tennessee

State Workforce Development Board Meeting

MEETING MINUTES

Friday May 19, 2023 - 10:00 AM – 12:33 PM CDT

Board Members Present

Martha Axford	Rick Isaacson
Assistant Commissioner Jay Baker	Designee: Director Charita Allen for Commissioner Stuart McWhorter
Joe Baker	Mike Pogreba
Jason Bates	Stuart Price
Tim Berry	Jason Schmitt
Designee: Deputy Commissioner Cherrell Campbell-Street for Commissioner Clarence Carter	Jeff Vance
Billy Dycus	Kevin Vaughn
Michelle Falcon	Ron Wade (Greater Memphis)
Bill Godwin	Assistant Commissioner Kevin Wright
Marshall Graves (Southeast)	

Board Members Present by Proxy

Ben Ferguson – Jason Bates, Proxy

Mayor Tim Kelly – Jermaine Freeman,
Proxy

Assistant Commissioner Deborah Knoll for
Commissioner Penny Schwinn – Matthew
Spinella, Proxy

Commissioner Deniece Thomas – Deputy
Commissioner Dewayne Scott, Proxy

Members Absent

Natalie Alvarez

State Senator Paul
Bailey

State Representative
Clark Boyd

Ann Hatcher

J. Paul Jackson

Designee Policy
Director Tony Niknejad
for Governor Bill Lee

Barry Ray

Ruste Via

Location in parenthesis represents the state board member's membership on a local workforce board.

Call to Order and Welcome

Chairman Berry opened the meeting at 10:00 AM and after preliminary welcome remarks, he announced that the board would receive an email after this meeting to sign up for optional task force groups mentioned at the last meeting. He noted today's agenda would be rearranged based on requests he received from some of the presenters. Chairman Berry also introduced new board member Joe Baker who is from East TN and currently lives in the Nashville area.

Roll Call

Iler Bradley conducted the roll call and established the presence of a quorum.

Workforce Update

Dewayne Scott, Deputy Commissioner – TN Department of Labor and Workforce Development (TDLWD)

Deputy Commissioner Scott gave the workforce update in Commissioner Thomas' absence, beginning with TDLWD staffing updates: Briana Moore has been added to the team as their Chief Strategy Officer; Holly Free-Ollard, State Apprenticeship Director, is leaving to take a position at Northeast State Community College as the Vice President of Workforce; Jessica Barnett will be the new Director of Office of Apprenticeship; Shalondria Shaw will be the Deputy Director of the Office of Apprenticeship; Katherine Rinkenberger is their new Governor's Management Fellow; Steve

Playl, Assistant Commissioner for the Workforce Services (WFS) Division is temporarily going to the TN Army National Guard for 10 weeks of basic training; James Roberson will serve as interim WFS Assistant Commissioner.

The department continues to participate in a workforce initiative that the Governor established between TDLWD and the Department of Economic and Community Development (ECD). Commissioner Thomas and Commissioner McWhorter co-chair this task force, and the shared goal is to raise the labor force participation rate within the state. Commissioner Thomas will be sharing information in the months ahead, and she is also participating in a National WIOA Convening in D.C. representing Tennessee. In July, TDLWD plans to begin a comprehensive assessment of their American Job Centers. In August, there will be a convening around the infrastructure funding the TN Department of Transportation (TDOT) will receive and the significant amount of workforce tied to this funding.

Employment Security Update

Rusty Felts, Employment Security Assistant Commissioner – TN Department of Labor and Workforce Development (TDLWD)

This morning, prior to our board meeting, the Employment Security Division provided a demonstration of their new benefits project that is coming in February 2024. Mr. Felts noted their excitement about this project which is currently on schedule.

Assistant Commissioner Felts gave the following updates:

1. An RFP was released and awarded for their tax project to replace their 45-year-old mainframe system used by their Employer Accounts unit. They are finalizing the award to announce the vendor.
2. A TN law recently passed which addresses the indexing of unemployment benefits. Benefits will no longer be a certain amount for 26 weeks but will be based on the unemployment rate at the time. There are a lot of questions about how Mr. Felts' division will handle this.
3. A national program of interest is the Shared Work Program. TN needs to learn about this program to administer it here.
4. The Employment Security Division will apply for a national grant that could possibly give them \$5 million to continue to combat fraud.

An Unemployment Insurance Advisory Council meets twice a year. Representatives convene from workforce/employees and their employer base. Their first 2023 meeting was this morning, and it was a good meeting.

Childcare and TANF Updates

Cherrell Campbell-Street, Deputy Commissioner - Tennessee Department of Human Services

TN Department of Human Services (DHS) Deputy Commissioner Cherrell Campbell-Street gave an update on the TANF Opportunity Act and what DHS is doing as a department around workforce and childcare.

TANF Opportunity Act

The TANF Opportunity Act not only looks at how DHS serves their customers but how they engage in workforce and with people from the community, non-profits, and state and federal partners. This engagement is to develop better strategies to serve those who may be experiencing poverty at different and varying levels. Through this legislation, DHS established a Families First Advisory Council consisting of people who have transitioned off of public assistance, legislators, state department heads, and community leaders. Seven grants were selected to transform Tennessee through pilots that touch all 95 counties. Each pilot was awarded \$25 million based on their proposal to the council to look at the human condition for their particular areas to help people move past their cycle of poverty. Community grants were also awarded that do the same thing but on a smaller scale, and another round of community grants are getting ready to open. DHS also has their own pilot. In seven counties, the goal is to be working with 900 families to move them beyond the benefits cliff by the end of the year.

Workforce and Childcare

DHS hired their Governor's Management Fellow, Destiny Brown, who has been instrumental along with their childcare staff in working to identify a childcare workforce model. Research demonstrates that employers who invest in a childcare benefit for their employees gain the upper hand in talent recruitment and retention efforts while also boosting productivity and profits.

Childcare partnerships between the public and private sectors can take many forms to best meet the needs of employers and employees in the community. DHS now markets what they can do for businesses around childcare as

a complementary service to an employer through their pre-licensure unit. DHS can help the childcare center with wages, and they are looking at tax breaks for employers who set up childcare either on site or in the vicinity of their business to help defray costs of employees utilizing these centers. Their Smart Steps program qualifications have been modified for those with slightly higher income or those who are actively engaged in going to school.

Tyson Foods in Gibson County, West Tennessee is a prime example of how private and public partnerships can make a difference for a community, a county, and a state. Tyson was referred to DHS by the Department of Economic and Community Development (ECD). There was a childcare desert in this area, and they wanted to know how DHS could support them. DHS worked with Tyson, and Tyson Tykes Childcare Center will open in 2023 right across the street from Tyson's factory. There will be slots for 104 children. Those who work for Tyson will have priority, and this has also allowed Tyson to look at alternative childcare schedules geared toward what Tyson needs for second or third shift workers. Deputy Commissioner Campbell-Street thanked this board for helping to create an atmosphere of partnership by approving the WIOA State Plan. DHS is working with the TN Department of Correction (TDOC) to provide childcare for corrections officers, and with Morgan County for their employees.

[Extension of Foster Care and Independent Living](#)

[Courtney Matthews, Director of Independent Living - Tennessee Department of Children's Services](#)

TN Department of Children's Services Director Courtney Matthews gave an update on the extension of foster care and independent living. Her division of DCS supports teenagers and youth who age out of foster care. As young people in foster care get closer to age 18, the likelihood that they will be able to exit foster care before 18 is slim and the likelihood that they will age out of foster care into adulthood is high. Independent Living Specialists work for DCS across the state to support the youth and frontline case managers who work with this population. These specialists help youth develop independent living plans when they're between the ages of 14 and 16, and a specific transition plan if they're still in foster care at the age of 17. If they age out of foster care and accept the extension of foster care services, that transition plan follows them up to the age of 21.

Ms. Matthews discussed the history of the extension of foster care in Tennessee, including the use of federal funding. Some recent changes to extension of foster care which are important for us as a board include a bill signed by Governor Lee. Effective January 1, 2023, if a young person ages out of foster care and they've completed their High School requirements, they can remain eligible for extension of foster care services if they are employed, working at least 80 hours per month, or if they're participating in a program that leads to employment. DCS has connected with the American Job Centers for some great partnerships to aid this population. This is significant for our state because young people would opt into foster care extension but they would lose eligibility for academic reasons. College isn't for everybody so if they weren't going to college DCS couldn't serve them anymore. DCS is really excited to have this opportunity to serve more young people who are aging out of foster care. Data was presented to support the increase in the number of youth helped by the recent legislative changes.

It's important for others outside of the DCS agency to know this population's needs and struggles to ensure their voice is heard. Ms. Matthews gave this presentation to the board because young people going into the workforce, especially if they age out of foster care, may not have the skills to be able to manage some work conflict. Having employers that are conscious of that would truly be beneficial to this population. Ms. Matthews was also curious about how DCS may be able to partner considering they have two additional eligibility criteria related to employment. She also played video of Tennessee youth who have been in the program. Board member Michelle Falcon noted that we have plenty of opportunities through apprenticeships and TCATs to allow youth to transition into those opportunities. Ms. Matthews was connected to new State Apprenticeship Director Jessica Barnett.

[Approval of Minutes \(vote required\)](#)

Chairman Berry requested a motion to approve the March 24, 2023 minutes. It was moved by Kevin Wright and seconded by Michelle Falcon to approve the minutes as presented. The motion passed.

[Committee Updates](#)

[Oversight Committee – Presented by Chair Michelle Falcon](#)

The Oversight Committee Meeting began with a fiscal review of the expenditures from Title I to Title IV followed by the KPIs for 2023.

The committee has been asking about fiscal review reporting, especially how we are measuring targets and goals to see if we are moving in the right direction. They have had a lot of discussion, and due to time constraints during

their meeting time, they have agreed to have an extra meeting to review the data points for fiscal review. This extra meeting will occur before the next board meeting. Justin [Attkisson] provided them with over 30 policies that have already been reviewed and will auto renew effective July 1, 2023.

Operations Committee – Presented by Chair Stuart Price

Chair Stuart Price gave the overview for the Operations Committee, noting that they convened virtually a couple of weeks ago. Leadership from each work group presented to them and received feedback on their charter renewals. Michelle Joyner and Lisa Johnson gave a SNAP Employment and Training plan overview for Program Year 2024.

This committee also had three work group presentations and discussions:

Job Seeker Workgroup

This group presented a job seeker dashboard they developed along with internal resources. The committee was impressed with what they developed and had good feedback on some ideas to make it more intuitive along with other suggestions. This group also presented Section 1 of their Workforce Resilience Plan which includes a customer journey map for the job seeker. The committee will be going through this plan over the coming weeks to give feedback.

Business Services Workgroup

Jennifer Thacker addressed some concerns and questions the committee had from previous meetings specifically centered around the employer engagement dashboard. A new version of the dashboard that removes any personal information will be presented to the committee. The Jobs4TN virtual recruiter and the employer advisory subcommittee were also discussed.

Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning

This group has exceeded every one of their goals and in some cases doubled their goals. The committee saw some rapid increases when this work group started their efforts, and they expect to see the numbers become a little more stabilized in the future with current students completing the program and new student enrollees. This workgroup had incredibly positive numbers and the committee gave kudos to Matthew Spinella, Holly Free-Ollard, and the people that support them for a job well done.

Innovation Committee – Presented by Chair Kevin Vaughn

Chair Kevin Vaughn welcomed new member Joe Baker to their committee and discussed their charter. Meeting highlights include the following:

1. Ryan Allen gave a Data and Performance Workgroup update.
2. A presentation was given about a vocational rehabilitation program that has been launched for forklift training in Bradley County.
3. The Adult Education system procurement is still in progress.
4. Some targets set for KPIs will be out in June 2023.
5. Teresa Smith gave an APDS summary report on the tablets in the jails. The number of tablets in facilities has increased however, there are five (5) counties that are not on board and internet access is an issue.
6. Housing for seasonal workers was mentioned.

Another meeting will be planned to establish the milestones for their charter.

Summer Youth Employment Program Update

Steve Playl, Workforce Services Assistant Commissioner - Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development (TDLWD)

Assistant Commissioner Playl discussed the Summer Youth Employment Program. In Governor Lee's budget for the upcoming fiscal year, he proposed and the legislature allocated \$15 million for summer youth work experience. This funding is not available until July 1, 2023: federal funding totaling \$3 million was reallocated to support phase 1 of this project and the \$15 million in state funding will be applied in phase 2. TDLWD has already received, reviewed, approved proposals for this project. They expect to expend almost 100 percent of the state funding and approx. \$2 million of the federal funding for a total of \$17 million to put young people to work. A metric has been established to employ 3,750 young people for eight weeks, and current data suggests they will exceed this metric. TDLWD is partnering with local workforce boards, non-profits, community organizations, school systems, and employers.

Fiscal Update

Ivan Greenfield, Workforce Services Assistant Administrator - TN Department of Labor & Workforce Development
Jay Baker, Adult Education Assistant Commissioner - TN Department of Labor & Workforce Development
Julie Johnson, DRS Director of Operations & Brittney Pipkin, VR Fiscal Director - TN Department of Human Services,
Division of Rehabilitation Services

Ivan Greenfield presented the fiscal update, noting that today's presentation would be different. There are four WIOA core programs: two (Titles I and III) are administered by the Workforce Services Division of TDLWD and their fiscal overview was given by Ivan Greenfield. Title II is administered by the Adult Education division of TDLWD and their fiscal overview was given by Assistant Commissioner Jay Baker. Title IV is administered by Vocational Rehabilitation, and their fiscal overview was given by Director Julie Johnson and Fiscal Director Brittney Pipkin.

TDLWD – Workforce Services (Titles I and III)

Mr. Greenfield's fiscal overview covered the following topics:

- Fiscal Review, including overall funding and expenditures
- Program Year 23 funding, including WIOA Title 1 Allocations and the State Reserve Funds Budget
- Key Performance Indicators, State and Federal
- Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP)

Combined authorized funding was \$190 million and expenditures were about \$123 million for a net position through quarter three of the state fiscal year of \$67 million.

Looking at Workforce Services more specifically through quarter three, total authorized funding was \$118 million versus \$58 million in expenditures for a net position of \$59 million. Total WIOA Title I participants served during quarter three of PY2022 was 13,967 and about 27,000 for Title II Wagner Peyser.

The State Reserve Funds are used to fund various state required and allowable activities. About \$20 million proposed for this PY23 budget would be used for agency priorities, economic development, program evaluations, program monitoring and oversight, and systems administration and maintenance.

Chairman Berry asked for a motion to approve the PY23 State Reserve Funds Budget as presented. It was moved by Jason Bates and seconded by Jeff Vance. After one question, the motion passed.

Achievement of the program-specific State Key Performance Indicators is ranked on a scale of 0-5 with five being the best/highest ranking. Of the 19 State KPIs, 15 are green, (i.e., at a ranking of 4 or 5), 3 are yellow (i.e., ranked 2 or 3) and 1 is red (ranked at 0 or 1). Technical assistance is given for rankings that are 3 or below.

Regarding 18 Federal measures: 16 of the 18 are green, and 2 of the 18 are red (i.e. below the negotiated target but exceeds the 90% threshold).

Summer Youth Employment Program: \$18 million in State and Federal funding; 3,750 youth targeted, 4,536 current applications.

TDLWD – Adult Education (Title II)

TDLWD Assistant Commissioner Jay Baker gave more detailed information about Adult Education's performance and fiscal status.

Their KPIs from July 2022-June 2023 and actual quarter 3 results are:

1. Participant enrollment - Target: 11,000; Actual: 10,674
2. Measurable Skill Gains (Educational Level, Diplomas) – Target: 39%; Actual: 32.5%
3. Soft Skills and Digital Literacy Certificate Attainments – Target: 2,000; Actual: 2,282
4. Workforce Development Initiatives Participants – Target: 650; Actual: 1,154

Their Labor Force Participation Rate KPIs include:

1. Students not in the Labor Force with Career Coach Conversation – Target: 75%; Actual: TBD

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- Counties with Outreach Plan Ready to Implement – Target: 5; Actual: 5 – Lake, McNairy, Perry, Bledsoe, Hancock (May 22 – Aug 7)

Financials:

- Total Funding PY22 = \$17.9M
- Total Expenses (July-March) = \$11.9M
- Local Grants Budget = \$15.6M
- Department Operational Budget = \$2.1M

As a result of their grant competition, Adult Education has adjusted their service map and added five new providers and three subcontracted agencies. This has increased their provider agencies from 13 to 21.

DHS - Division of Rehabilitation Services (Title IV)

Julie Johnson and Brittney Pipkin presented the update for Vocational Rehabilitation. Ms. Johnson talked about their program, customers, and services, and Ms. Pipkin presented the fiscal data.

Vocational Rehabilitation exists to help individuals with disabilities find competitive and integrated employment in the community. Person-centered, individualized services are provided to help individuals meet employment goals. At the same time, they serve businesses/entities that want to diversify their workforce with qualified candidates.

During Quarter 3:

- VR served over 10,000 customers and 20,000 students totaling 31,000 individuals.
- 33,848 Pre-Employment Transition Services were provided to prepare students with disabilities for life after high school, to include employment.
- A breakdown on customers served by disability: 68% psychological/psychosocial disability, 17% physical disability, 8% visual disability, and 7% auditory/communicative disability
- 303 individuals exited the VR program in competitive integrated employment
- Services to Employers to help them fulfill their hiring needs: 81 new businesses referred, 1,001 businesses served

YTD Total Authorized Funding = \$98.9M

YTD Total Expenditures = \$53.8M

Net Position = \$45.1M

Closing Remarks and Adjourn

Chairman Berry reminded the board of our next meeting and encouraged us to sign up for a task force option mentioned during his opening remarks. The meeting adjourned at 12:33 PM.

Note: An audio recording of this meeting is on file at the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development. All meeting minutes and dates are provided on the State Workforce Development Board website.



Tim Berry, Chairman
State Workforce Development Board

8.25.23

Date