

SC WORKS

UPPER SAVANNAH

Upper Savannah Workforce Development Board Meeting
Upper Savannah Conference Room
430 Helix Road
Greenwood, South Carolina
Monday, November 5, 2018
Meeting: 6:00 PM

Members Present: Ann Blanton, Roy Lowe, Kassie Hall, Glenn Herlong, Julie Bagwell, Darron Wilson, Betty Carol Jones, Zebbie Goudelock, Doris Watson, and Houston Matthews

Members Absent: Jesse Sibert, James Tisdale, Taiese Kidd, Lee Matthews, Dee Dee Setzler, Rick Farmer, Kevin Crouch, Shunna VanceDale Callum, and Cherie Martin.

Staff Present: Ann Skinner, Linda Lagroon, and Billy Morgan

Guest: SheVonne Randle and Renee Alexander, Eckerd Workforce Development; Julia Gamarra Mendoza and Michelle Paczynski, SCDEW; Katie Craven and Ursula McFadden, GLEAMNS

Welcome and Call to Order

Chair Ann Blanton called the meeting to order. She gave Kassie Hall an opportunity to give an update of new courses at Piedmont Technical College. Piedmont Technical College is offering learning systems exam prep courses for Human Resources Certification starting in March 2019. A full scholarship will be available that includes fees and books, but not the exam fees. There is also a new Human Resource Management certificate program. This quick skills certificate program, which includes four credit courses that leads to a certificate, will prepare students for entry-level positions in the human resources field.

Approval of the Minutes

The minutes of the August 6, 2018 meeting were distributed to Board members prior to the meeting. There being no corrections, Mr. Darron Wilson made a motion to accept the minutes as recorded. Ms. Doris Watson seconded the motion and Chair Ann Blanton called a vote. The minutes were accepted by unanimous consent.

Regular Reports

Usage Reports: Ms. Ursula McFadden reported that individuals are still coming into the centers. With the low unemployment rate, the Centers are not seeing as much traffic because more people are working. Slower traffic in the Centers gives staff an opportunity to communicate more with employers. Therefore, staff are able to offer more employer assisted job orders and referrals.

Contractor Enrollment Reports: Ms. Linda Lagroon briefed the Board on the participation levels for 2018. Four case managers have an average caseload of 44 adult and dislocated worker participants and two youth case managers have an average caseload of 23.5. Grantees submit a monthly recruitment plan when caseloads are below the expected level.

Performance: Ms. Linda Lagroon briefed the Board on the Program Year 2017 Annual Performance Report. The report lists the performance measures for each group (i.e., adults, dislocated worker, and youth), the goal, percentage of goal and the actual performance. Upper Savannah exceeded all performance measure goals. A goal has not yet been set for the measurable skill gains performance measure. This is a new measure and is being monitored to determine baseline information.

Expenditure Reports: Ann Skinner was asked to discuss the expenditure report. Ann suggested that she discuss expenditures later in the meeting when she would discuss a budget change.

Job Fair Report: Billy Morgan reported there were over 70 registered employers (list of confirmed employers given to Board members) and 550 job seekers (200 Piedmont Tech students/alumni and 350 general public) that attended the Upper Savannah Fall Job Fair held October 30 at the Greenwood Piedmont Technical College campus.

One of the employers, Lonza, indicated that three individuals were selected and sent over to their factory to begin the application process on the day of the job fair. This is considered a best practice, as most job seekers are looking for a quick return to work. Employers who do not have an expedited application process are losing out to the employers that do.

A newly announced company in Greenwood, Teijin, participated and was the highlight of the job fair. Representatives said they collected close to 325 resumes from interested job seekers.

One thing added to the advertisement of the Job Fair this year was daily employer spotlights on Facebook leading up to the job fair. These highlights created a lot of buzz and were seen and shared by many of the Upper Savannah SC Works Facebook followers. This allowed job seekers to learn about the company and apply online prior to the job fair. The applicant could then show up in person at the job fair, use that as an ice breaker and help the employer put a face with a name. Most employers were happy to share their information for this purpose.

Staff are currently seeking feedback from employers via a survey in order to help with the continual improvement of the job fair.

Strategic Plan Focus Area

Promote Careers in Manufacturing: Billy Morgan informed the Board that Link Upstate is a sector strategies workgroup comprised of four (4) Workforce Regions (Worklink, Greenville, Upstate and Upper Savannah), which covers 14 counties.

Advanced Manufacturing is the main focus of this group, in part due to there being a high demand for these type jobs and a shortage of workers. These jobs have great wages, which is a great return on investment for short-term training such as the SC Manufacturing Certification training. Staff continue to serve all businesses, however.

Link Upstate is a great resource for companies to learn strategies related to recruitment, retention and training. Some innovative and new ideas are represented on this website. There is a tool built into the website to allow companies to share their vision and best practices. The workgroup will review employer input and place the information on the website for other employers to review. If this prompts further action needed, the employer will be directed to the services and/or SC Works partner who could better fit their needs.

One example is the use of virtual reality equipment for recruitment and training. The Southeastern Institute of Manufacturing Technology (SiMT, which is located on the campus of Florence-Darlington Technical College in Florence, South Carolina) demonstrated their equipment with examples of welding and engine assembly. Virtual reality equipment can be used for many different purposes, such as to provide virtual plant tours. This equipment could help identify a person who has the hand and eye coordination for a specific job and give them some knowledge that could help eliminate safety hazards and product loss.

There is a link to SC Works in multiple places on the website. With the links, an employer in need of services can easily find an SC Works Center in their area.

Upper Savannah staff provide free job opening announcements and post them on the Upper Savannah SC Works Facebook page, which now has 1300 followers. New content and more followers are added each week. Many employers have come to rely on this easy, fast and inexpensive way to promote jobs.

Invest in Those with Greatest Potential to Change: Linda Lagroon explained that WIOA establishes a priority requirement with respect to funds allocated to a local area for adult employment and training activities. When using WIOA Adult funds to provide individualized career services, training services, or both, priority must be given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient. The State set a goal of which 70% of newly enrolled adult participants must be low-income, to include public assistance recipients, or basic skills deficient. Several meetings ago, the Board approved Upper Savannah setting a goal of 90% of newly enrolled adult participant to be low-income. This priority of service policy is not applicable to participants served as dislocated workers. Currently, 88.7% of Upper Savannah's adult participants are either low-income or basic skills deficient.

Ann Skinner followed Ms. Lagroon's presentation on the characteristics of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) clients. Ms. Skinner explained Upper Savannah was able to meet all performance measures while serving individuals who had substantial barriers to employment. Ms. Skinner said that the previous presentations on manufacturing, client characteristics and now apprenticeship are all part of the area's 12 part strategic plan. Each meeting the Board receives an update on three items so they are fresh in everyone's memory.

Apprenticeship Update: Ms. Skinner reminded the Board that there was an apprenticeship presentation six months earlier by Amanda Richardson. At the last meeting, Ms. Richardson was asked to give examples of local companies that have registered apprenticeships. Ms. Skinner passed

out a nine-page handout showing the company name and the training program for all programs in the seven county area.

Resources to Achieve Goal (Budget)

Request to transfer funds from Dislocated Worker to Adult funding stream. Request additional Dislocated Worker funding: Ann Skinner distributed a handout showing expenditures for the first quarter of 2018. The budget year starts in July and for the first three months of the year, it is expected that the program spends about 24% of the funds. If expenditures are much lower, they are not using all resources to serve clients. If expenditures are much higher, there is a risk that funds will be exhausted before the end of the year. The adult program is at 19% with funds set aside for clients at 15%. Ms. Skinner explained that it is not unusual to see client fund expenditures lagging at this time of year because bills for technical college are often received late. The expenditures for dislocated workers (those who qualified because they were laid off work) are below 13% and that just 4% of funds available for training and support of dislocated workers had been spent. Expenditures for youth were exactly on track with 22% for total expenditures and 22% for client expenses.

The differences in expenditures for adult and dislocated workers reflected economic conditions. Traditionally when someone is laid off, they are eager to get assistance with training. Now with the hot job climate, companies are courting soon to be laid off workers and they often find a job before they are laid off.

Next, Ms. Skinner went over a budget summary. The area saw a funding decrease of about \$200,000 from the previous year. The state maintains a reserve account of money to respond to plant closures. Because layoff events have slowed down, there is money in the account that local areas can request. Ms. Skinner proposed requesting \$150,000. She said that funding between adult and dislocated worker could be balanced by transferring funds. Ms. Skinner proposed that half of the dislocated worker allocation be transferred increasing the adult account to \$1,188,833. After the new money was added and the transfer subtracted, the dislocated worker account would be \$756,318.

There was discussion regarding the implications for transferring money. Ms. Skinner explained that it would mean additional tracking and reporting for Upper Savannah staff, but staff would gladly do it to be able to serve more customers. A vote is necessary to forward the request to Columbia, but Ms. Skinner asked that she continue so a request for additional technology funds be added to the motion.

IT Grant: Ms. Skinner updated the Board on a grant application to update technology in workforce centers. The Board voted on a list of priorities at the August meeting. Ms. Skinner reported that all of the Board's request was funded including: new computers for all centers, upgraded networks and Wi-Fi for McCormick and Saluda, security cameras for McCormick and Edgefield and a poster printer. Since the grant was approved, staff have determined that a new network is needed in Laurens. The existing system has caused numerous outages and in some cases caused clients to go use computers at the library. It is anticipated the cost will be about \$6,000.

To be able to serve more clients, it is recommended:

1. The area ask for \$150,000 in reserve funds to increase the dislocated worker account.

2. Take half of the original dislocated worker account and transfer to adult. This would mean a transfer of \$274,631.
3. Ask for additional funds from the technology grant to rewire Laurens. A vote was not necessary to request additional technology funds, but because the Board approved the original priority list, staff wanted Board's support for the request.

The motion to approve the proposal was made by Darron Wilson and seconded by Zebbie Goudlock. It passed unanimously.

Future outreach grant: Ms. Skinner said that it was noted several times in the meeting that traffic was down and enrollment was lower than expected because the unemployment rate was down. Ms. Skinner suggested that the SC Works system shift from a strategy of trying to help people find jobs to one where SC Works helps people find better jobs. Ms. Skinner said she wanted to try to help those earning \$9 or less find jobs, which pay \$12 an hour. It is doable and it can change lives. Ms. Skinner showed a handout compiled from SC Works partners indicating what their outreach needs are and sharing their outreach message. She said that she anticipates being able to apply for outreach funds and wanted to establish a framework for a communications strategy. There was discussion regarding possible tactics.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

Submitted By



Ann Skinner, Workforce Development Director