

Workforce Innovation and Performance Committee of the Monroe County/Rochester Workforce Development Board
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, March 1, 2022
8:00 to 9:00 AM
Meeting Scheduled via ZOOM

Present: Bob Coyne, Cherie Becker, Debra Bell, Edie Arlauckas, Elizabeth O'Brien, Jane Sullivan, Jarmani Dozier, Jennifer Geiger, Joe Wesley, Marion French, Randy Andre, Romanda Gibson-Stevenson

Staff and Guest: Dave Seeley, Lee Koslow, Mary McKeown, Viatta Carter, Antwan Williams, Marisol Young, Laura Seelman

Approval of Minutes:

A motion to approve the December 7, 2021 meeting minutes was made by Romanda Gibson-Stevenson and seconded by Joe Wesley. The motion was carried unanimously.

Review of PY 2020 Performance and Programmatic Monitoring:

Lee Koslow began the discussion by providing a brief update on Program Year 2021 WIOA Performance. Lee also reviewed some comparative participant numbers and training participant numbers. Performance is summarized in the Workforce Innovation and Performance Committee slideshow.

Policy Discussion:

What additional supportive services should we offer and who should receive them?

Lee Koslow began this discussion by noting that one of the things that can help us to encourage more individuals to engage in training in an equitable way is to help them with those wraparound supports that they might need to be able to engage in training and be successful in training. The same goes with some of our other services, in addition to just the classroom training, and at times when money is not as tight, and that varies for us. Currently, we have a lot of resources, and they are time limited. Some are from National Dislocated Worker Grants that are expiring within the next 3-6 months. Some are from our regular WIOA formula funding.

Lee reviewed the supportive services currently available, by eligibility category. Eligibility includes the following:

- Career Services participants (low income) - These are individuals who receive any service while meeting with a career advisor, getting job referrals, or working with them in workshops. If they are low income, there are 2 different supportive services they are currently eligible for, which include limited use bus passes and exam and licensing fees.
- Veterans (Experience Counts Initiative, DW or low-income Adult) - Supportive services include security guard application and fingerprinting fees for security guard training.
- Transitional Jobs participants (low income) - These are work experience tryout participants whose wages are paid with program funds through a staffing agency. At the end of the tryout period, the business can either hire the individual or we could write a contract for an on-the-job training grant if they are lacking some skills that need to be developed. Monthly bus passes and gas cards in \$25 increments are available to get back and forth to the Career Center. We can also pay for uniforms and required safety equipment they may have needed to purchase themselves for the job.
- ITA Training participants (low income) - In addition to the Career Services supportive services and the same as Transitional Jobs participants, bus passes and gas cards are available to get back and forth to training.
- NDWG career or training services participants – In addition to the transportation supportive services, the exam and licensing fees, we can also help these individuals with the cost of an identification document, such

as a NYS DMV ID or birth certificate, or a driver's license, new or renewal. We can also help them with uniforms and required safety equipment, clothing and personal hygiene services, tools for participation in training, motor vehicle record costs, RAP sheets and school transcripts.

Lee continued with supportive services, by service type, looking to see how we can expand some of what is already being offered but to other categories of customers, and what additional supportive services might we offer in addition to the ones that are being offered right now, such as:

- Childcare: We do not offer that right now, it is very expensive, but it is one of the common supportive services. Would we use National Dislocated Worker Grant funds, which are time limited, to do childcare supportive services? Would we also use it for transitional jobs participants?
- Clothing and personal hygiene services: We only offer these to NDWG grant participants. Should we also offer these to transitional jobs participants earning a wage less than \$18/hour?
- Digital Divide Supportive Services: We do not offer this yet, except under some special grants. Should we offer this with our National Dislocated Worker Grant funding and offer this to transitional jobs participants?
- Driver License cost: We currently offer this to NDWG grant participants. Should we extend this to transitional jobs participants?
- Exam and licensing fees: We currently offer this to both career services participants (low-income) and NDWG grant participants. Should we expand this to all unemployed career services participants, regardless of income? Should we expand this to employed career services participants, so long as they are earning less than the suggested benchmark amount of less than \$18/hour?

Lee opened up the floor for thoughts and feedback on this group of services. Based on recommendations, we can make a recommendation to the Board if we want to amend the policy. Discussion included the following:

- Are these a bucket of funds that are flexible enough to be able to add this, or is this just the idea that if we had the funds, would we want to consider this? It is all according to what we decide in our local policy, what the board decides in our local policy, which is why we are having the discussion right now. These are all allowable supportive services if our local policy permits it. The Board can make the determination, if we want to increase the menu of what is allowable. Part of this is if we have funds available. From time to time, we have more funding than we can use in a particular time period, which is certainly true right now with our NDWG funding. With our WIOA formula funding, we do not have more than we can use, but we have enough to use that is has really increased our resources and could challenge us to be able to spend it. When we have more than enough, if the policy allows it, we can take advantage of this, if we are spending it in a way that will really benefit participants who need it to either go through a training program or to stabilize themselves in a job.
- Childcare is a true barrier, and it is expensive...How or who would decide how this funding gets distributed and to ensure these funds are distributed, at least, for the most candidates as possible? To address the concern, we could cap the amount available for childcare at a certain amount per participant. There are other resources out there that should go into childcare first, including the childcare development block grant funding. Once we know who distributes the funding, we could decide if we wanted to do childcare and if we thought we were going to do more than just a little bit of it. We could look at procuring an organization that would handle the figuring of what resources for childcare are available to you and how we could give you those resources first, then decide how much of the WIOA Supportive Services you need and should get afterwards.
- Do we have any supportive services funding to address parking fees? If an individual is getting ITA training, in the past, we only paid parking if the school required it, but otherwise, the student picked that up. This is something that could be paid with ITA training. We can take a look at the policy and see if that needs to be amended. We cover this under Trade Act now, it is allowable, and not a huge cost. Tickets are something that we cover under one of our foundation grants for our opioid participants, as well as our GVP funding for youth in the GVP program. This can be considered, and it might be a good idea when it comes to bundling it in with driver's license costs.

- Department of Human Services has the above discussed services, of which they state are completely under-utilized. An important focus for childcare would be for individuals that are only in a training program. DHS has available funding for anybody that is working, that needs childcare, and is below the 275% of the poverty level. If you are looking at someone who is not on public benefits and is only doing training, DHS cannot offer them childcare assistance, so this is a huge barrier. Could a funding stream be developed for this? If there could be some type of collaboration where DHS could utilize their funding for individuals that have lower income levels for diversion benefits, RochesterWorks! would have more funding to apply through supportive services.
- The Career Center refers to and collaborates with the Childcare Council. They also utilize funded resources such as bus passes and gas cards to cover transportation. With the Opioid Grant and additional funding, they were able to purchase bus passes and laptops specifically for this program. The Career Center is researching what would be best for an internet service for participants.

Lee continued with supportive services, by service type:

- Identification Document Costs: For individuals not having an identification. They will need an identification to obtain a driver's license and to get a job. This is currently available just to NDWG participants. We could make it available to our Transitional Jobs participants as well.
- Job-specific online coursework: We do not do this yet. This could be covered by supportive services if we want to allow for it, as it would be a relatively low cost.
- Motor Vehicle Record cost, RAP Sheets and School Transcripts: We could expand these to transitional jobs participants.
- Security guard application and fingerprinting fees: This is for Veterans only.
- Tools (for participation in training): This could be expanded to Transitional Jobs participants earning less than \$18/hour.
- Bus passes, 31-day: These are currently not allowed for those who are not low income.
- Gas cards: These are currently not allowed for those who are not low income.
- Uniforms and required safety equipment: Same eligibility at Tools.
- Tutoring Services: We have not provided this before.

Discussion on this group of services included the following:

- Should there be a cap or some type of mechanism in place to limit the costs, so they do not get out of control?
- For individuals who have a disability, which are not necessarily linked with ACCES-VR or the Commission for the Blind, and they use paratransit RTS Access, which is not a 31-day bus pass, it is a pass to actually use RTS Access, could this be included in the policy?

Lee concluded the meeting with thoughts on sending out a survey link to all members present today to get a vote on which supportive services we want to do based on our discussion, that will help us to formulate a proposal to bring to the Board in terms of this policy, as well as whether or not we want to raise our Individual Training Account limits.

Next Meeting Scheduled: June 7, 2022

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

Reviewed by:
Lee Koslow 3/8/2022