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**State Workforce Board**

**Meeting Minutes**

**June 14, 2024**

*Present: Vaughan Woodruff (Chair), Robin Wood, Ryan Bushey, Gordon McAleer, Kim Moore, Joy Gould, Dale Doughty, Dan Belyea, Adria Horn, Jen O’Leary, LuAnn Ballesteros, Jason Shedlock, Corrine Watson, Abraham Furth, Alec Rogers, Colleen Hilton, Bri Warner, Tuesdi Woodworth, Grant Provost, Joseph Pietroski*

*Guests: Kim Smith, Andrew Dawson, Erin Benson, Tim Carlton, Mike Paglia, Kyle Olson, Sam Fenderson, MaryAnne Turowski, Jack Porter, Ginny Carroll, Shannon Fair*

*Staff: Chris Quint, Isaac Gingras*

**Welcome, introductions, agenda review**

* Vaughan opened the meeting at 9:05 am, allowing additional time for members to join.
* Vaughan recognizes and welcomes Abraham Furth and Ryan Bushey as new members to the SWB.
* Everyone goes around for introductions.

**WIOA Reauthorization update – Tim Carlton, NGA Legislative Director**

* Vaughan starts by welcoming Tim Carlton from the National Governor’s Association who joined to provide information on WIOA Reauthorization, which is currently being considered in US Congress.
* This year marks the tenth anniversary of the passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which replaced the Workforce Innovation Act (WIA).
* The House passed the *A Stronger Workforce for America Act (ASWA)* in April with a strong bipartisan vote with no Democrats opposing the bill in the Republican controlled chamber.
* The Senate will be considering the legislation next and is expected to have changes. The Senate HELP Committee held a hearing on Wednesday, June 12, 2024. The goal is to have a bill out to the full Senate before August recess.
* Tim continued to provide a general summary of the House version of the bill.
  + Changes to definitions include change from “out-of-school youth" to "opportunity-youth.” This will include justice-involved youth and those in the foster care system.
  + Authorizes the use of individual training accounts (ITAs) for in-school youth.
  + Partnership with education and employers to create and expand skills based competency reviews for workers.
  + Creation of Critical Industry Skills fund that would help to support training in specific industries.
    - Industries must be identified by Governor.
    - Funding would allow state to allocate up to 10% of Title I funds but must be matched by funds from Set Aside or other state funding sources.
  + Most controversial piece of the legislation has been mandate of 50% of Title I Adult and Dislocated worker funding for local areas being designated for training.
  + Removal of two-year modification for State Plans.
  + Required redesignation of LWBs three years after enactment of legislation and every eight years after.
* The election in November makes the forecast for the legislation difficult to predict based on other priorities. There are specifically three windows to take action: prior to August recess, the month of September prior to recess in October to allow for election activities and the period after the election before the new Congress is sworn in.
* Gordon McAleer: Is there a role for people to try and advocate for the passage?
  + Carlton: Senator Collins is a member of the HELP Committee and would be critically important as a member specific to this legislation.
* Jason Shedlock: Will the Critical Industry Skills Fund eligibility and qualifications be developed through rulemaking?
  + Carlton: The intent is to allow as much discretion to the state as possible within the boundaries of WIOA. Unless rulemaking is explicitly stated, it would be a surprise.
* Vaughan wrapped up the segment of the agenda and thanked Tim for joining the meeting. Advised the Board to send any additional questions to him and Chris.
* Chris noted that the Department is reviewing the legislation and is determining a position on the legislation.

**Director’s Report**

* Chris shared the full meeting schedule for the remainder of 2024 and 2025. The locations for each meeting is still to be determined.
* Chris provided a brief overview of the Maine Employer Summit that took place in May. Over 500 participants attended and there was positive feedback on the day as a whole.
* LuAnn Ballesteros: What were the anticipated goals?
  + Chris Quint: The primary goal was to get employers connected to youth for this year’s summit.

**Action Item – Meeting Minutes**

* Vaughan called for a vote on the meeting minutes from March 8, 2024.
* LuAnne Ballesteros made a motion to approve the minutes, Jason Shedlock seconded the motion.
* The vote was unanimously approved with three members abstaining since they were not present for the meeting.

**ACTION ITEM – Rescind & Replace Maine Workforce System Policy - PY 12-04 “Chambers of Commerce as required partner in local workforce areas”**

* Chris highlights the need to rescind and replace this policy and mentioned the Board heard about this change during the March meeting. The current policy is inconsistent with the requirements of WIOA.
* Vaughan asked for someone to make a motion prior to conversation.
* Gordon McAleer motioned to rescind and replace PY12-04 with the proposed policy. Aileen Huang-Saad seconded the motion.
* There was no extended discussion and the motion passed unanimously.
* Chris mentioned that there is a goal moving forward to review more of the State Workforce Board policies. We will be looking to pull together the SWB’s Program Policy Committee to come together on an ad hoc basis to review policies and make recommendations for changes. This committee will hopefully present policy changes at meetings moving forward.

**CSSP High Wage/In Demand list discussion**

* The goal of this segment of the agenda is to preview actions that must be made during the September State Workforce Board meeting and have initial discussions.
* Kim Moore provided an overview of the Competitive Skills Scholarship Program (CSSP), which was established during 2007 as an employment and training program to help individuals receive credentials in high-wage/in-demand occupations.
* Program can help provide financial assistance and support services that need it most.
* Kim continued to provide an overview of eligible participants for the program.
* Program adopted rule changes in March for the first time since 2015.
  + Highlights of the rule changes include removing the requirement for work authorization, increasing the cap on training costs, and increasing the monthly stipend for those eligible.
* Outline the definitions of high-wage and in-demand.
  + High-wage: Median wage above $18.45 per hour/$38,376 per year
  + In-Demand: The occupation is expected to have at least **35** openings per year between 2018 and 2028.
* Both employers and individuals are able to petition to have a position added by providing evidence to the Commissioner for review.
* Role of Board.
  + The Center for Workforce Research and Information creates the list, which is reviewed bi-annually by the State Workforce Board and then is recommended to the Commissioner of Labor for final approval.
* Briana Warner: Why are teachers’ salaries the only one listed by annual earnings?
  + Andrew Dawson: This is the simplest way to capture their average earnings because it would not be accurate if split over 52 weeks.
* Notes about how the list may be helpful to present to youths between middle school and high school. Provides information about average pay for specific occupations.
* Collen Hilton: Why should employers be interested in the program and see it as important?
  + There are opportunities where if an employer is hiring a cohort of workers, there may be opportunities to support some of the workers. There are examples of groups utilizing CSSP for groups of their pre-apprentices to help with barriers to training.
* Dan Belyea: Will there be enough time to petition for missing positions?
  + The goal is to send the list to the SWB as soon as it is created in order to allow time to review.
* Abe Furth: What are the annual participation rates for the program?
  + This can be complicated because participants are tracked throughout the entirety of their training regardless of the length. The goal is to have at least 300 participants at all times.
* Aileen Huang-Saad: What industries benefit the most from CSSP?
  + Typically participants are going into healthcare, construction, or manufacturing.
* Briana Warner: Are there ways to review participation and understand needs to support policy reforms such as child care and transportation.
* There will be additional time for discussion in September.
* Andrew Dawson from CWRI provided an overview of the High-Wage/In-Demand list and how the data is gathered and used to create it.
* SOC codes are used and provide a standard title for positions that might cover a broader range of occupations than listed.

**10-Year Strategy – Implementation strategy governance and SWB role moving forward**

* Chris provided a brief overview of the State Plan and 10-Year Strategy.
* The SWB will have influence over Strategy A – Grow Local Talent, Strategy B – Attract New Talent, and Strategy G – Hubs of Excellence and will act as a brain trust to help think through tough issues and provide advice to programs.
  + Committees are going to be reconfigured to help oversee implementation in each strategy area. Prior to the next meeting, Chris and Vaughan will be reaching out to members to serve on committees and there will be new committee leadership identified.

**10-Year Strategy – Implementation Planning Breakouts**

* Members were broken up into six groups to discuss specific action items under strategies and brainstorm the following:
  + Who needs to be at the table?
  + What are priority actions in the next 6-12 months?
  + What does success look like in 2 years?
  + What questions do you have about this action?

**10-Year Strategy – Report out**

* Each group took 2-4 minutes to talk about what their group came up with.
* Chris stated that he would compile all of the brainstorming and get copies around to members for review.
* Brief Notes on each report out:
  + Adria Horn – B2 – Highlight Career Pathways for New Mainers
    - This is a massive topic and issue filled with complexity.
    - Important to redefine the problem set and get alignment on what the goals are.
    - Can we redefine the level of readiness for New Mainers and get a sense of gaps?
    - Need to address benefit cliffs for those that are connected to employment.
    - Is there a way to involve federal partners who have a greater level of oversight?
    - Be very clear about who owns this work.
  + Vaughan Woodruff – A5 – Increase Equitable Workforce Participation
    - Would like to ensure that community stakeholders are active participants when looking at the issues.
    - Focus on an increase in access to the trades and CTEs.
    - Would like to see UI, wages, labor force participation trend towards equitable levels. It will take time to determine what this looks like.
    - Could we produce a report that focuses on destigmatizing the trades as a career option.
  + Bruce Noddin – A6 – Career Exploration Expansion
    - Need to ensure that there are a diverse range of employers taking advantage of the program, including small businesses.
    - Recovery centers may provide a good opportunity to find participants since they skew younger.
    - Important to focus on marketing the program and creating opportunities for publicity so employers know about it.
    - Work to increase the number of students participating in the program.
    - Is there a report on the status of the program and how it is currently running?
  + Aileen Huang-Saad – G1 – Hubs of Excellence
    - Critical to actually define what a hub of excellence is.
    - Create common understanding of definitions and language.
    - Identify and confirm interest by specific sectors.
    - Increase the participation of education and have hubs take responsibility for going into places of education to recruit employees.
    - Critical to demonstrate pathways to success for all levels of education.
  + Abe Furth – B3 – Match New England Students with Maine Employers
    - Need to identify and define what is meant by a New England student.
    - Create sense of community and belonging to get students to stay in Maine post-graduation.
    - There are programs where local business leaders go into the college or university to speak to prospective workers.
    - Truly expand ELO opportunities for college students in the state.
  + Ryan Bushey – A4 – Strengthen Career Pathways
    - It is important to start engaging with youth starting in the sixth grade to present career pathways and opportunities to them.
    - Form partnerships with schools, CTEs, and after-school programs like the Boys and Girls Club.
    - Involve parents in the outreach and education efforts so they understand career opportunities and have stigmas removed.
    - Refund the Governor’s Training Initiative.
    - How would we be able to create a metric to track exposure?

**Public Comment Period**

* No one had public comments during the meeting.

**Adjourned at 12:00 pm**

Next SWB Meeting  
September 13, 2024, 9:00am - Noon

Location TBA