

LWIA #15 County Consortium BOARD

Serving the counties of: Fulton, Marshall, Mason, McLean, Peoria, Stark, Tazewell and Woodford

MINUTES

GOOGLE MEET

DATE: Wednesday, January 27, 2021

9:00 am – 10:30 am



- I. **Roll CALL and Introductions** - Tazewell County Chairman, Dave Zimmerman, appointed Marshall County Chairman, Gary Kroeschen as 'acting Chairman' at 9:15 am, during Mr. Zimmerman's brief delay in his ability to join the Virtual Google meeting.

Roll was called and Fulton County Chairman, Roger Clark was the newest County Consortium Board member to join the meeting. **Present Board Members:** David Zimmerman (Tazewell Co Chair), John Krug (Woodford Co Chair), Roger Clark (Fulton Co Chair) (by telephone conference call) Gary Kroeschen (Marshall Co Chair), John McIntyre (McLean Co Chair), Andrew Rand (Peoria Co Chair) and Ken Walker (Mason Co Chair)

Absent Member: Al Curry (Stark Co Chair)

Career Link Staff: Steve Martin (Executive Director-Pekin office), Dena Weth (Assistant Director-Nrml office), David Vaughn, (Career Link Planner/Tech. Specialist/EEO Officer-Peoria office) LeeAnn(Whitlatch) Norris, (Fiscal Director-Pekin office), Kelly Schapmire (Program Manager, Normal Office), Warren Cheatham (One Stop Center Manager, Peoria Office), Norm Griffin (Career Link Business Service Rep-Peoria County) and Dona Nanney, (Career Link Business Service Rep-McLean County)

- II. ***ACTION ITEM: APPROVAL of Friday, January 01, 2020 LWIA #15 County Consortium Board Meeting Minutes**
A motion was made by Peoria Co Chair, Andrew Rand and seconded by McLean County Board Chair, John McIntyre, to approve the Friday, January 01, 2020 LWIA #15 County Consortium Board Meeting Minutes. Motion carried.

- III. **Participant Spotlight - Dena Weth, Asst. Director**

Dena Weth stated that the "Participant Spotlight" provides an opportunity to recognize outstanding customers of the LWIA #15. She gave a brief story of a customer, Kirstyn, who is from Woodford County, under Career Link's '1-A Adult Funded Program'. Kirstyn was eligible for Career Link services, based on her receiving 'SNAP' government assistance. She was a single parent, working part-time at Texas Roadhouse to provide for her and her 3 year old daughter. She was determined to complete her Bachelor's of Science in Nursing at Methodist College, Peoria, IL. On May 16, 2020, she received her BS in Nursing. She then received her Registered Nursing License from the State of Illinois on July 21, 2020. As of July 27, 2020, she is now employed full-time at OSF Health Care system as a Registered Nurse. She is currently earning \$53K Annual self-sufficient wages. Her current position is at the OSF Children's Hospital in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit. She stated that these 'Participant Spotlights' will continue to be recognized at all future LWIA #15 County Consortium Board meetings. There was no further discussion.

- IV. **Report on Re-opening status of offices/vaccine – Steve Martin, Executive Director**

Steve Martin stated that all eight LWIA #15 offices remain closed to the public. Currently IDES has staff in the Peoria, IL One Stop Center remains closed to the public. The IDES staff are taking telephone U.I. claims and are adjudicating claims. Career Link is currently processing applications via Career Link's website for people who are applying for funding services. Career Planner to client communications are being handled through emails and telephone communication although the enrollment numbers are still down a little but there are still enrollments and such being done in the eight county area. Steve expressed that he downloaded the CDC Guidelines for Employers who choose to mandate workers to obtain the vaccination. He stated that there are no formal state guidelines as of yet. After Career Link presented this mandate option to the Full 27 Member Workforce Innovation Board, Steve stated that he does not have any intentions to mandate the vaccination. He will encourage staff to obtain the vaccine but there may be reasons for not obtaining the vaccination due to religion, health, etc. Gary Kroeschen stated that an individual is not required to reveal if they have obtained the vaccination so a mandate cannot be set. Steve stated that possibly in the Spring, our office will be reopen to the public. There was no further discussion.

V. Review of Online Assistance/Assessment of customers – Kelly Schapmire, Program Manager

Kelly Schapmire expressed that at the start of the Pandemic, it was believed that working from home would be short term. However, due to the length of office closings to the public, the Career Link staff adapted quickly and creatively with both day to day tasks and working with Customers. Online applications are continuing to be processed for both training program enrollments and career services. Customer's personal and confidential information is being protected as well. Customers and Case Managers are communicating through the use of emails and telephone. A 'SIGN NOW' program was purchased to obtain remote signatures. Resource Room Technicians are continuing to answer calls remotely and assist customers with basic job search and resume building via email and telephone. There was no discussion.

VI. MOU Update - Steve Martin, Executive Director

Steve Martin stated that the MOU is being revamped and revised and this process began on Jan. 19, 2021. This MOU is supposed to be approved for three years, although the budget seems to be going through the process of approving, revising and reconciliation every year instead of every three years. The WIOA law mandates the Partners share the costs of the One Stop Center and enter into an MOU agreement which outlines responsibilities for each agency such as referral and services and establishing framework of cooperation collaboration and governances through the One Stop Model. The agreed lowest amount that a Partner can pay towards for the One Stop Budget is .25 Full-Time Equivalent Employee (FTE). There are three meetings upcoming for the One Stop Center Partner's Meeting: Friday, Jan. 29th a proposed MOU will be issued to the Partners. Feb. 11th will be a discussion of allocation and budget and on March 5th will be to approve the budget. Steve stated that he will then send the report of outcomes into the State with the draft budget and required checklist for the local partner service delivery direct linkage on the 15th of April. Steve will then send each County Board Member a copy of the MOU and the budget for review. Then each County Consortium Board member will need to sign signature forms to state the approval the MOU. There was some discussion regarding the scheduled upcoming County Consortium Board meeting schedule. Steve will be sending out meeting dates for the future quarterly Co. Consortium board meetings to occur in April and August 2021.

VII. One Stop Operator Procurement – Steve Martin, Executive Director / Warren Cheatham, One Stop Center Mngr:

Steve Martin stated the One Stop in LWIA #15 is a consortium consisting of: IL Dept of Employment Security, Dept of Human Services-Vocational Rehab & Title II Adult Literacy Services. The One Stop Manager is Warren Cheatham who resides over the One Stop and covers the meetings, training and assuring that the One Stop is meeting all of the requirements. The One Stop Center is required to be procured every four years. The Consortium has contracted with Workforce Enterprises (Tim Harmon) to write the RFP on behalf of the Workforce Board. The RFP will be sent out in Feb. 2021.

a.) One Stop Certification – Steve Martin Steve Martin stated that in addition to the One Stop Operator Procurement process, the One Stop is required to be certified every three years. There is a One Stop checklist that DCEO sends that is required to be completed and a desk review and a physical review by the certification team which consists of two LWIB members, One Stop Partners and a director from LWIA #4. The Desk review was completed and sent to DCEO last June 2020. A physical review was not able to be performed due to the Pandemic concerns. There will be some small improvements moving forward regarding the areas of the referral system, sharing performance information and tracking customer satisfaction. Other than these, we have met all of One Stop requirements.

b.) One Stop Website – Warren Cheatham Warren Cheatham stated that as part of his duties as the One Stop Manager, there were a number of committee meetings of different Partner agencies. Among the items that were discussed was the need to develop a website that was specific to the partnership rather than relying on the Career Link website which currently posts some of the information about all of the partnership agencies. This was bid out and Business Builders in Bloomington, IL received the winning bid. They began work on the new website in December. This website will have two portions: a public portion which will describe what the partnership is and what it does. There will be links to each of the 14 Partner Agencies. There will be a private side which will be accessible by password to be used by the staff of the different Partner Agencies; chat rooms, in-depth information of what each partner's eligibility and activities are, etc. This should be completed in the next two months.

VIII. National Disaster Grant Emergency Report – Dena Weth, Assistant Director

Dena Weth reported on a brief overview of the National Disaster Grant Emergency Report. She stated that this Grant has some similarities but yet many differences in comparison to the National Emergency Grant was awarded to Career Link back when the floods occurred in Fulton and Mason Counties. That initiative was to help rebuild bridges, paint buildings, etc that were destroyed by the flood waters. The National Disaster Grant is more of a humanitarian effort. The priority is to assist communities in addition to providing work opportunities to customers. In the summer of 2020, Career Link applied for the National Disaster Grant and awarded \$250,444.00. The Goal of the Grant was to reach out to nine (9) private entities in the

eight county LWIA #15 to establish what assistance was needed since most communities were obviously shut down by COVID-19 Pandemic. Overall, Career Link's position was to begin with 29 employment opportunity positions in the LWIA #15 eight county region. Currently there are 24 due to having some struggles with eligibility with customers. The possible reason of obtaining additional customers was due to the extra \$600 U.I. weekly benefits that was offered to those who were unemployed. In addition, the eligibility process had a longer length of time to complete due to employer sights requirements such as drug screenings, physicals, background checks, etc. which require more time to obtain before the Career Link eligible customers can begin with the employers. Also, there were some customers who either came down with COVID virus, exposed to the virus and had to self-quarantined or were just afraid of exposing themselves to COVID at the workplace. Most current customers are scheduled for 26 weeks and a maximum of 52 weeks and the most hours per week they can work is 29 hours for each participant. Also, when these job positions are being established, they cannot be what is considered 'standard-operational'. They must be specifically related to COVID so all job descriptions must be written in that respect and obtained DCEO's approval. Two months DCEO monitor made a visit for a technical assistance. Files and contracts were reviewed and Career Link did very well. Also, the number of enrollments are hoping to be increased. Two new sights have been added, one of them is The DREAM CENTER has been in contact with our Business Service Rep, Norm Griffin for four new positions. The goal with eligibility as it stands is to have seven customers actively employed. Recruitment is ongoing through U.I. E-mail blasts, Newspaper Advertisements and 'PATH' Newsletter in McLean County.

Dona Nanney (McLean Co Business Service Rep), who covers McLean, Woodford, Marshall and Stark Counties areas, stated that she contacted approx. 25 agencies/employers in the eight counties. Some agencies/employers were not interested in having workers since they currently use volunteers or community services workers so the need was not there for assistance from Career Link. Also some employers want to bring on workers that they have already established a relationship with them. Dona expressed to the Board that if they have any Employers they would like Dona to contact and explain to them the benefits they can receive to contact her at dnanney@careerlink16.com and Shelly Purchis will be taking over Dona position on Feb. 27, 2021 upon her retirement.

Norman Griffin stated that he covers the Business service areas of Peoria, Tazewell, Fulton and Mason Counties. He reached out to multiple agencies; health agencies, non-profits in the four county area in which he covers. He stated that there were a few positive conversations with some of the agencies that showed some interest in the National Disaster funds. He is waiting on Fulton Co Health Dept for a job description from them. He is working with the 'DREAM CENTER' in Peoria, IL which is basically a homeless shelter that also has a large population of youth that they work with through the '309 Project' with a need for four individuals to be placed. Due to COVID outbreak, there were 18 individuals contracted COVID and has been affected for both employees and for residents. This assistance is much needed for this agency. Recently the Peoria County Juvenile Detention Center was approved and he is working on getting eligible individuals for the Grant funds. However, the food services provided by the Peoria County Jail had difficulty delivering food to the Juvenile Detention Center, due to the COVID outbreak at the Jail that decrease the ability in getting staff to deliver meals. He stated Career Link will continue to reach out to all eight counties until the Grant funds are exhausted and reach out to Not-for-profit agencies, churches, food banks, etc. Board Members can contact Norm at ngriffin@careerlink16.com if they have any businesses or agencies to have Career Link to contact them.

David Vaughn stated that part of the \$250,444 Grant monies is broken down as follows: part of the \$250,444 has gone towards staff costs. \$183,000 went directly to participant wages.

LeeAnn (Whitlatch) Norris commented that the amount from the Dislocated Worker grant for the remaining participant wages is \$13,700.

IX. Business Service Update – Recap Training Programs, Rapid Response Efforts initiated during 2020 - Business Service - Reps, Dona Nanney (McLean Co) & Norman Griffin (Peoria Co)

Dona Nanney, McLean County Business Service Rep. reported that she and Norman Griffin are continuing to reach out with of Rapid Response services to companies that have either had lay-offs or they have had to close. The closing of these business is mainly due to COVID such as retail, food establishments, to name a few; 'Pier One', 'Flat-Top', 'Tony Roma's Restaurant', 'Family Video', 'Dress Barn', just to name a few. Because of the inability to hold RAPID RESPONSE sessions in person, paper information is being sent to these businesses as well as virtual sessions to assist them with the employee layoffs during this Pandemic. OJT (On The Job Training) contracts in McLean County are continuing; in 2020 year there were six total OJT contracts, with the most recent business that was just completed a chemical plant in Henry, IL called 'Emerald Performance Materials' that are closing until July, which Career Link will be working with.

Norman Griffin, Peoria County Business Service Rep. stated that he is working with a company 'Hawk-Attollo' and they had an OJT (On-The-Job) training and works with a dislocated worker participant for a programmer for 'Custom Power Products'. There have been quite a few businesses that he is working with for dislocated worker contracts; 'Morton Industries', 'Al-Cast Company 'Excalibur's Seasoning' in Pekin, 'Professional Printing & Marketing Services/PIP Printing' of Peoria & 'Fritch Heating and Cooling',

'Home Comfort' and a few more projects in the works. Norm reported that he and Dona have been holding 'virtual' Rapid Response team meetings, as well as reaching out via phone calls and mailings and emails for significant lay-off territories and offer retraining & other opportunities. In the past year, there was a special grant that came from the State to assist large businesses associated with the cost of COVID which included *OSF, St. Francis* to assist with transitioning current workers that had been affected in the surgical units for the elective surgeries to convert them to Tele-Health workers. Norm has been working a grant with '*PAL-HEALTH*', which is fabricated the custom prescription orthopedics, is now making PPE equipment to protect health care workers and '*Reditus Laboratories Technologies*', supplier of anatomical and clinical pathology testing and services, was quickly converted to perform actual COVID testing for the local area. '*Heart of IL United Way*' also received some funds from this grant which was a worker layoff conversion program to save jobs and they were able to purchase laptops so their employees could continue to work from home. '*Needle in a Haystack*' business, in Washington, IL was given funds to buy I-Pads and labeling materials to convert their in-store business over to online business. '*Fortner Insurance*' in Peoria, IL, received funds to get upgrading their computers so that their workers would have less contact to the virus. '*World of Power Sports*', in Peoria, IL, purchased computers & software to allow their workers to work from home. Rapid Response virtual meetings are continuing by Norm and Dona. The retail industry had been hit very hard in 2020. In Feb. 2020 many business were shut down; '*Gordman's*' stores (both East Peoria and Peoria), '*Prairie Farms*' in Peoria, IL, *ICC (IL Central College)*, among others. These business were provided Rapid Response services, either 'virtually' or dropping off materials, emails, etc. Once the COVID Pandemic clears, in-person Rapid Response will resume.

Steve Martin expressed the great work that both Norm and Dona but especially he wanted to pay a special recognition to Dona Nanney who has worked over 10 years as Business Service Rep & Trades Case Manager. She has done an exceptional job and took the lead with the Mitsubishi Layoffs, and many other layoffs in the eight county area. She has been and continues to be a skilled Business Service Rep for our Agency, over the many years. She will be retiring at the end of February 2021 and Shelly Purchis who is being promoted from Senior Career Planner to Business Service Rep, and will be taking over Dona's position as the Business Service Rep for the McLean, Marshall, Stark and Woodford County area.

Gary Kroeschen expressed his gratitude to Dona Nanney for her excellent service over the years with Career Link.

X. Audit Report – LeeAnn (Whitlatch) Norris, Fiscal Director / Dena Weth, Assistant Director

LeeAnn (Whitlatch) Norris provided an update on Career Link's recent Audits: May 2020 a virtual Audit was conducted by DCEO and in October the Independent Audit was conducted. Both Audits covered Fiscal and Programmatic aspects. The Audit by the CPA firm, there were no findings or questioned costs or weaknesses for Program or Fiscal. Fiscally, the State report had no findings or recommendations. There was only one small area of 'concern', fiscally, for an in-house employee document called the ECN (Employee Change Notice) and they wanted to have staff sign this form for every pay change regardless whether it was a pay raise or decrease.

Dena Weth reported on the DCEO monitoring of the programs. She stated that DCEO asked Career Link to supply files from all Formula populations in addition to On-The-Job training, Work Experience training and Incumbent Workers training contracts. This was quite a task to handle since it needed to be conducted remotely due to the Pandemic. Hundreds of files had to be uploaded into the State system. One area of concern was 'two-way communication'; in a 90day time period, the Career Planner has to be able to contact a customer and the customer has to respond. Even though the Career Planners would attempt to contact via telephone, email, Facebook, U.S. Mail, . . . if they would not respond, the State would hold us responsible for that. Career Link's argument was how would the Career Planners be able to remedy this issue, and force customers to respond, after all methods and avenues had been exhausted in contacting them? Since the monitoring, after the State had completed their monitoring, DCEO has now provided guidance with options that have been changed in Career Link's 'Follow-Up' Policy to remedy this area of concern. If the customer has exited the program, and have already developed a pattern where they are unwilling to respond within the 90-day time frame, then Career Planners are not obligated to follow them for the full-calendar year and this would not be held against Career Planners regarding the follow-up reporting process. The monitoring procedures extend for just a couple of weeks. However, the 2020 monitoring started in late April and was not 'wrapped up' until August. The State indicated that this remote monitoring will become the 'new norm' even after the Pandemic is over. Career Link was chosen for remote monitoring in 2020 due to not having any findings and/or very few problems over the past years. The next monitoring is schedule for April 2021. Board Member, Andrew Rand expressed that he appreciates hearing the results from monitoring and he commends the team on the monitoring results.

XI. Performance Report – Steve Martin, Executive Director

Steve Martin reported that he had individually sent the Excel Spreadsheet LWIA #15 Scorecard to the Board members, that indicated how each LWIA in the State was measured. Career Link was either at or near the top of the scoring in each measure over the last three years. In 2020, the performance goals for each measure were successfully negotiated with the State (DCEO) and reviewed by the D.O.L. There was no further discussion.

XII. Enrollment numbers – Dena Weth, Assistant Director

Dena Weth, provided a handout; “Numbers by County” Jan. 2021 report. She provided a brief overview for the eight counties of LWIA #15 regarding populations eligibility includes.

- a.) ‘*Adult Program*’ funding where 99% of those who are eligible participants, currently are receiving ‘*SNAP*’ funding (food stamps). *Other* areas to consider participants to qualify as eligible are areas of family size, income of any blood relative or married individual that resides in the household.
- b.) ‘*Dislocated Worker Program*’ funding eligible participants are those who are unlikely to return to a position, who are receiving U.I. benefits or exhausted U.I. benefits. Individuals who has been let-go of a position to no fault of their own, which also includes business closures. These are the two most likely ways that a participant is determined eligible for ‘*Dislocated Worker Program*’ funding.
- c.) There are two areas of funding for ‘*Youth Programs*’: ‘*In-School Drop-Out Prevention Program*’ funding and the ‘*Drop-Out Recovery Program*’ funding.
- d.) ‘*TRADE Program*’ funding is the *cadillac* of the ‘*Dislocated Worker Program*’ funding. The ‘*TRADE Program*’ participants receive an increased amount in areas, than what the *Dislocated Worker Program* funding participants receive: *TRADE Program* participants have an increase in their mileage funds that they receive and their U.I. benefits have an extended length of time to receive benefits.

Dena reported that ‘*GED Recovery Programs*’ applications are still being received. The Capitol Area School of Practical Nursing program does not start their term until February 2021 so eligibility has not been fully completed. Also throughout the semester, *CDL* (commercial driver’s license) individuals continue to be enrolled. Registrants include anyone who have been enrolled in either a training or a career service. There are numerous individuals who have completed those programs and are no longer referred to as ‘*Registrants*’ but are referred to as ‘*Exiters*’.

XIII. Budget Allocations – David Vaughn, Technical Specialist/Planner/EEO

David Vaughn presented a report for current county training budgets, ‘*Titled PY20 Budget*’, that is breakdown of WIOA funds by title; Adult, Dislocated Worker, In-School Youth and Out-of-School Youth, broken down by each of the eight counties in LWIA #15. This reflects the original PY20 budget that was established per county, in July 2020 and reflects the current available funding balance. There is a column for projected costs which is the Career Planner’s estimated costs per applicants (individuals that have not been enrolled yet, they haven’t been certified, they have applied and appear to be eligible) and the Career Planners add them to their spreadsheets for projected costs to help them track their budgets. After the projected costs are deducted, the remaining balance in their budget is the available funds in each counties. As needed, throughout the year, Career Link is allow to move funds between the eight-counties as necessary to serve the greatest need with the approval of the 27 member Workforce Investment Board to move up to \$200K from ‘*Dislocated Worker Program funding*’ to ‘*Adult Program funding*’. In order to transfer these funds, a request needs to be sent to DCEO, requesting to modify our WIOA budget. Once that process has been completed and approval by DCEO, then this will free up funds to make available to serve more Adult participants this coming Spring 2021. Also, this Budget report reflects a breakdown of the Incumbent Worker Program budget and the Youth Program awards for PY20.

Acting Chairman for the LWIA #15 County Consortium Board, Marshall County Chairman, Gary Kroeschen asked if the LWIA #15 County Consortium Board members are supposed to approve these types of BUDGET ACTION ITEMS that have to be sent to DCEO?

David Vaughn explained that the LWIA #15 County Consortium Board Members do not approve these types of Budget Actions. But rather, it is the *Career Link’s FULL 27 Member-Workforce Innovation Board* that approves these types of ACTION ITEMS and who also authorizes Career Link to seek approval from DCEO to proceed with the transferring of funds. Career Link provides the LWIA #15 County Consortium Board Members with only the knowledge of these types of operations of business actions for their understanding of these business movements. There was no further discussion.

XIV. New Website - CareerlinkIL.com – David Vaughn, Technical Specialist/Planner/EEO

David Vaughn stated that in July 2020, Career Link launched a new website. Through a RFP process, Career Link Procured a local marketing agency, ‘*Business Builders*’, which is the same company that the current 18 member ‘*One Stop Center*’ Partners are using for their new website. Career Link contracted with Business Builders to design a new custom-built site and they are hosting and providing maintenance. They also had created marketing for Career Link approximately 1 year ago and the design of Career Link’s website where the motifs match. The website has new and approved online applications for tuition assistance, career services, OJT (On-The-Job) training assistance. Applicants can choose their county of residence and their application is sent to the Career Link Office Manager of the corresponding county. The HomePage has a section for success stories that are updated every few months, which has quotes from customers and then links the user to information about those programs and how to apply for programs, etc. A section for ‘*Employers Success Stories*’ will link an Employer Service webpage. The site now meets all ADA requirements for accessibility and can be viewed in Spanish in its entirety with just a click

of a button. There is a new URL address: CareerlinkIL.com but the old URL can still be viewed at Careerlink16.com. David expressed that the board may want to view the new website at their leisure.

XV. Other Comments

Acting Chairmen, Marshall County Chairman, Gary Kroeschen stated that the future meeting tentative dates be made scheduled sooner so that these can be put on the Board Member's calendars. Steve Martin expressed that he would get those dates worked out. A meeting will need to be scheduled in possibly April, for the Board approval of the MOU and Steve will send out the signature page to the County Consortium Board members at that time.

Peoria County Chairman, Andrew Rand expressed that the Career Link staff should be commended for their innovation and patience that has been demonstrated during these days.

XVI. Public Comments

There were no comments from the Public.

XVII. *ACTION ITEM: Adjournment

A Motion was made by Peoria County Chair, Andrew Rand and seconded by McLean County Chair, John McIntyre, to adjourn. Motion carried. Adjournment- 10:20 am

Respectfully submitted,

Recording Secretary, Theresa Kotte
Career Link Executive Assistant