

**STARK TUSCARAWAS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD****WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING****January 8, 2025, at 12:00 p.m.****Zoom Meeting Platform**

<b>PRESENT</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>	<b>STWDB STAFF</b>
Marla Akridge	Andrew Fowler	JoAnn Breedlove
John Aldergate	Joe Sekely	Rebecca Harris
Rick Baxter	Sarah Spies	Maddy Miller
Stephen Carson		
Damus Cole		
Lisa Gould		
Para Jones		
Alison Kerns		
Mike Lauber		
Susan Lenigar	<b>Guests</b>	
Marc Manheim	Mary Kate Hastings	<b>ONE-STOP OPR/FISCAL AGENT</b>
Rick Moss		Chuck Byrd
Steve Rippeth		Amy Miller
Scott Robinson		Logan Little
Tracy Sabo		Lori Yager
Darren Van Winkle		
Patrice Yacko		

**BUSINESS MINUTES****CALL TO ORDER****Scott Robinson**, Chair called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m.**Guest Introductions**..... Scott Robinson, Chair

- Mary Kate Hastings

**Local Elected Official Representation Updates**..... Scott Robinson, Chair

- **Richard Regula** will replace Janet Weir Creighton who retired as the Stark County Commissioner representative.
- **Greg Ress** will replace Chris Abbuhl who retired as the Tuscarawas County Commissioner representative.

**November 6, 2024, Meeting Minutes**..... Scott Robinson, Chair (**Attachment A**)

**MOTION:CARSON MOVED FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 6, 2024, MEETING MINUTES. RIPPETH SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**Greater Stark County Urban League Agreement (Attachment B)**

Breedlove shared the letter on the screen. This letter is a request being made to our Board Chair to take to the board for action. This is a Request for a No Cost Agreement Extension with the Greater Stark County Urban League.

The Stark Tuscarawas Workforce Development Board (STWDB) maintains an existing agreement with Greater Stark County Urban League (GSCUL) to serve as a pass-through entity of funds provided by Ohio Department of Job & Family Services (ODJFS) for an employment navigator program. The existing agreement ended December 31, 2024, and allocated funds remain unspent at the grant's closing date.

GSCUL made a request to ODJFS for a no-cost extension of the allowable funding through June 30, 2025 for the employment navigator program. ODJFS has agreed to this request with no additional funding allocated.

**GSCUL Allocations are as follows:**

\$124,424.55 SFY24 Rollover (July 1, 2023-June30, 2024)

\$228,292.00 SFY25 New (July 1, 2024-December 31, 2024, allocation)

\$352,716.55     **Total SFY25 Allocation available through 6/30/25**

**MOTION: LAUBER MOVED TO EXTEND THE STARK TUSCARAWAS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD'S AGREEMENT WITH GREATER STARK COUNTY URBAN LEAGUE THROUGH JUNE 30, 2025, SERVING AS A PASS-THROUGH ENTITY BETWEEN ODJFS AND GSCUL FOR THE SFY25 SPECIAL PROJECT FUNDING ALLOCATION OF \$352,716.55. COLE SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**A Stronger Workforce for America Act (WIOA Reauthorization Update) (Attachment C)**

Breedlove shared a PowerPoint slide on "A Stronger Workforce for America Act (ASWA) that is proposed Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act Reauthorization. She has provided regular updates regarding this proposed legislation and changes since 2023. In December 2024, the Reauthorization did not move forward in the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress and a new reauthorization bill must be introduced in the next Congress. WIOA was last authorized in 2014 and that reauthorization lapsed in 2019 (a 5- year authorization). Programs with lapsed authorizations typically continue to operate if Congress allocates funding.

## Board Compliance Activities (Status Update)

- The **Board Certification** is completed every two years to certify with the state (Governor's office). As part of this process, the elected COG LEO Board Chair will need to sign off on this certification document that is sent to the state. Since we have newly elected Local Elected Officers (LEOs), we will need to have an election to appoint this COG LEO Board Chair, and then they will have the authority to sign off on this documentation.
- **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Partner Negotiation for the Job Centers** is a requirement every 2 years with all partners who make up the OhioMeansJobs (OMJ) system. There are 16 different entities that make up our structure at our OMJ centers in both of our counties. The board oversees this process/the MOU. Biennial negotiations include an operating budget discussion/agreement, as well as how referrals are made to partner entities and more. A series of meetings is scheduled in early 2025. Steve Rippeth as the Job Center Committee chair will assist in this effort as a board member representative in this process and that will lead to a MOU agreement of the partners based on services and funding provided for each program of the partners.
- **Job Center Operator Procurement (2025) – minimum one year contract with renewal**  
A Job Center Operator (DOL/WIOA term) is an entity that serves as the "hub" for communication, convening, collaboration for the job center's partners. The operator role is required to be procured every 4 years per WIOA legislation. The current operator of the centers is the Workforce Initiative Association (WIA) with a contract that ends June 30, 2025. The board is required to facilitate the procurement process for the Job Center Operator. This information will be discussed more in depth in a closed session as the last agenda item.
- **East Ohio Region Regional / Local Plans** is comprised of Stark, Tuscarawas, Mahoning, Columbiana, and Trumbull counties. Per WIOA legislation, a regional plan is required to be completed every 4 years and then updated every 2 years. Our State Workforce Association (Ohio Workforce Association) has made a request for an extension to the office of Workforce Development to see if we can complete the Regional Plan later in 2025.
- **Job Center Certification** is scheduled to be completed in 2025. The Job Centers are required to be certified every 3-4 years. Our State Workforce Association (Ohio Workforce Association) has made a request for an extension to the Office of Workforce Development to see if we can complete the Job Center Certification later in 2025.

## Other Updates

- The **Jobs Platforms** sites will be maintained for data/information needs, but the sites will not be updated monthly with data during transition planning for the sites.
- **Board Virtual Meeting Policy Update:** The Board does have a Virtual Meeting Policy that started during the pandemic. Ohio's General Assembly allowed Workforce Development Boards to continue to meet virtually, and we are one of the few entities that are allowed to meet virtually.

Breedlove stated she thinks we need to consider Artificial Intelligence "AI" into our existing policy with respect to the virtual meetings. She referred to the AI meeting Apps that take notes during meetings then share the notes with individuals that were invited to that virtual meeting.

Breedlove asked if anyone would like to share your policy on virtual meetings with AI. Akridge said that they are in the beginning stages of investigating but she would share what they find out.

- **Future Meetings:**
  - The next meeting is virtual on March 5, 2025.
  - The May 2025 meeting, which is during the state's "In Demand Jobs Week" will be held at the Canton Electrical Joint Apprenticeship Training Center. Thank you to Damus Cole for hosting the meeting location.

**Treasurer's Report (Attachment D)** ..... Chuck Byrd, Fiscal Agent  
Byrd shared the Treasurer's report on the screen. Currently we are 5 months into the fiscal year and spending is on track. Allocations are received in July 2025 and October 2025 because of the Federal Fiscal Year. The updated allocations are listed in this report which he referenced WIOA-PY24 Adult \$1,024,208, WIOA-PY24 DLW \$464,626, WIOA PY24 CCMEP Youth \$1,052,726 and WIOA PY24 Admin \$282,406.

The full allocations are shown for both of the program years (PY23 and PY24) that are currently active.

PY24 expenditures are on track, and we always want to fully utilize our resources (showed highlighted percentages for PY23). PY23 funds are in the second year of spending, and these PY23 funds need to be fully expended by 6/30/25. The general rule of thumb by December 2024, we want to have the PY23 at 100% spent so effectively we spend half of our allocation in one year and the other half in the next year. This report is as of 11/30/24 so we still have December to get funds spent. Once we have those funds spent, we will roll over to a new year allocation and start spending those funds.

Byrd noted, we are a little behind in spending in the admin, if we have any excess admin funds, we are able to use it to cover programmatic expenses. The plan is to have the admin fully spent as we do not want to send money back to the state.

Byrd referenced the Greater Stark County Urban League "Contract" line item listed as these are new allocations that are included in this report. There has been activity since July 2024. Sipe has worked with them directly to process invoices.

In the WIA section of this report, the TANF funds used to support the CCMEP Young Adult/Youth program. He pointed out the PY24 Expended line item at 100% (\$1,373,651) that is fully expended

which is last year's (FY24) TANF grant funds. The new year funds (FY25) of the TANF funds are starting to be spent. The TANF funds are on a federal Fiscal year which starts in October 2025.

Byrd referenced PY24 One Stop MOU line item of (\$313,884) which is the Memorandum of Understanding for all Job Center "One Stop" Partners which goes on the fiscal year, and it is 39% spent which is right on target for spending.

**MOTION: CARSON MOVED TO ACCEPT THE NOVEMBER 30, 2024; TREASURER'S REPORT AS PRESENTED. GOULD SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**OhioMeansJobs Operator Update / Operation Reports Summary**

**Communications Report (Attachment E)** ..... Maddy Miller, Communications Manager  
The Annual Report covering July 2023-June 2024 is complete and all board members were mailed a copy. Thank you all who contributed to making this report a success. A social media campaign to showcase the overall report and stories are in progress.

In November, "Hire A Vet" events were held in Stark and Tuscarawas counties. A Job & Resource Fair at the OhioMeansJobs Stark County center connected attendees with job opportunities and resources. Buckeye Career Center in Tuscarawas County hosted an event with breakfast for veterans. The veterans were able to connect to higher education opportunities and resources. The highlight of the Tuscarawas County event was a veteran who spoke to his experience in getting connected to Buckeye Career Center through the OhioMeansJobs centers to receive drone training, followed by a live drone demonstration.

**PY24 Operations Report Update (Attachment F)** .....Amy Miller, Deputy Director of Program Services  
**Miller** stated the **Resource Center Update** is the part of the report that compares the November and Year to Date traffic numbers in Stark County, Tuscarawas County, and systemwide, and it also shows the year-to-date customer visits. In November 2024, there were **445** customer visits systemwide and Year-to-Date customer visits were **2555**. November and December are typically slower, but we noticed customers needed help with Unemployment Insurance needs and résumé assistance.

**Rapid Response**

The following Rapid Response events occurred:

- American Freight Furniture in Stark County, there is an unknown number of impacted employed. The ODJFS Rapid Response Workforce Specialists worked with the corporate office to assist employees by providing rapid response packets. Local stores were not to be contacted by their request.
- The companies listed below were not listed in the report:
  - PPC Flexible Packaging LLC in Alliance (Stark County) is laying off 68 individuals and will start closing in January 2025 and be completely closed by March 2025 so services will be provided. Logan Little delivered packets as there was no response to phone calls or emails.
  - Big Lots is closing but there may be a buyer.
  - Old Navy is closing all chains in Ohio.
  - Party City is closing in Stark County.
  - SARTA is eliminating five of their routes which could be up to 30 layoffs. No contact has been made to date.

Miller provided an update for **Employer Services** for November **placements**. She highlighted the following industries in November: Manufacturing had 17 placements with average wage of \$24.34 per hour; Healthcare had 5 placements with average wage of \$16.35 per hour; Education & Social Service had 3 placements with average wage of \$14.67 per hour; All Others had 6 placements with an average wage of \$27.03 per hour.

Miller highlighted the November **Job Postings** in the two largest areas: which were Manufacturing and Healthcare. Miller reported on the November Job Postings in the following areas: Manufacturing average wage was \$17.50 per hour with 7 postings and Healthcare was \$19.26 per hour with 9 postings.

Miller reviewed the **Top Job Postings**-Auto Zone-Shift Supervisor at \$32.00/hr., United States Bankruptcy Court- Deputy Clerk at \$41.68/hr. and Thomas P. Collins- Dental Hygienist at \$45.00/ hr.

Miller reported there were 3 in-person **Hiring events** in November.

Miller reported the limited Business Resource Network (BRN) activity as this program transitions to the STWDB. The **Business Resource Network** (BRN) report includes any leveraged resources accessed through the partnership; \$7700 of leveraged resources included in November with information through the Stark Economic Development Board and \$64,520 Year to Date. The Incumbent Worker Training Program (IWTP) is an employer-sponsored program that provides grant funding to assist eligible businesses to offset the cost of training their existing workers. There have been 3 IWTP contracts in PY24 with 3 in manufacturing for approved contracts of \$44,295.00 and \$11,625.63 have been spent. The reason some of the contracts may not be fully expended is dependent on when the training they were requesting funding for was being completed.

Miller moved to the section covering **Occupational Skills Training** funds training to those seeking short-term training in-demand careers. Year to date (YTD), there were 15 individuals who completed training and a total of 53 enrolled; 38 enrolled in healthcare, 10 enrolled in Logistics & Transportation and 5 enrolled in Trade related training programs. There are 2 placements YTD.

Miller reported on the **Comprehensive Case Management & Employment Program (CCMEP)**. CCMEP serves young adults ages 16-24 with barriers to employment. Participation is mandated if receiving cash assistance through county Job and Family Services. After receiving framework services from WIA staff, individuals are assigned to a vendor. Individuals may also volunteer to participate, most frequently due to the desire to attend training. Comprehensive programs provide recruitment, eligibility, services, and follow up with individuals. In PY24, Job & Family Services referred 31 participants in the month of November and year to date referred 147 participants. There were 16 volunteers in the month of November and a total of 52 volunteers for PY24 YTD. The comprehensive programs, which are delivered by contracted vendors, enrolled 207 participants.

Miller reviewed the **Re-Employment Services & Eligibility Assessment Program (RESEA)** in which individuals who have previously received 5 weeks of Unemployment Insurance and who meet additional state criteria may be selected for participation. Selection for the program entitles those individuals to additional job search assistance. For November, there were 93 RESEA Appointments and YTD of PY24 there were 485 RESEA Appointments. Our workforce area succeeded in meeting our goals for selection of individuals, initial appointments, and subsequent appointments.

**MOTION: COLE MOVED TO ACCEPT THE OPERATIONS REPORT AND THE COMMUNICATION REPORT PER ATTACHMENTS PREVIOUSLY EMAILED TO MEMBERS. LAUBER SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**Job Center Operator Procurement**..... JoAnn Breedlove, Executive Director Breedlove referenced a previous email sent out in advance of this meeting that the agenda topic of Job Center Operator Procurement would be discussed in the January meeting. In this previous communication, details included a description of the Job Center Operator role and what type of entity can apply for the role. Those receiving this advanced communication with these details were intentionally communicated to avoid any potential conflicts of interest on this agenda topic.

**Breedlove announced** at this time, we request that any board members, guests, existing Job Center Operator provider organization representatives interested in applying for this role must leave the meeting. Those that will remain in the meeting include voting board members not interested in applying for the Job Center Operator role, and board staff.

**The following people left the meeting:** All Workforce Initiative Association staff members and Guest-Mary Kate Hastings

Breedlove shared her screen to display a Memo to Scott Robinson/STWDB Board Chair, from the Staff to the Board, dated January 8, 2025, and Subject; Authorization to Release Request for Proposals (RFP) for Job Center Operator. She reviewed the memo to all board members present in the meeting.

She stated, this memorandum serves to provide an update on the process for selecting a Job Center Operator for Stark and Tuscarawas Counties in compliance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). As mandated, the selection of the job center operators must occur through a competitive process at least once every four years.

Breedlove reviewed the section on the **Job Center Operator roll:** (but not limited to)

- Coordinate service delivery among partners as defined in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
- Coordinate service delivery among physical OhioMeansJobs centers, through electronic platforms, and access points
- Coordinate services across the local area workforce development system
- Implement Local Workforce Development Board (WDB) policies; and
- Report to the local WDB on operations, performance accountability, and continuous improvements

The operator will serve both Stark and Tuscarawas Counties through the existing OhioMeansJobs locations in Canton and New Philadelphia.

Breedlove reviewed who **Eligible Bidders** can be:

The following organizations or entities (public, private, or nonprofit) or a consortium of entities located in and provide services in the local area are eligible to submit proposals:

- Institutions of higher education
- An employment service State agency established under the Wagner-Peyser Act
- A community-based organization, nonprofit organization, or intermediary

- A private, for-profit entity
- A government agency
- Another interested organization or entity capable of carrying out the duties of the operator. Examples of such entities include a local chamber of commerce or other business organization, or labor organization

If a consortium is comprised of job center partners, there must be a minimum, three (3) job center partners included.

Breedlove reviewed the **Timeline and Process:**

The current agreement with the Workforce Initiative Association procured through a competitive process, will expire on June 30, 2025. To ensure continuity of services, we propose the following timeline:

RFP release: January 2025

Submission deadline: February 2025

New agreement start date: July 1, 2025

The resulting agreement will run from July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026, with the option to renew for up to three additional one-year periods, contingent upon successful performance.

Breedlove noted regarding the area of **Reviewing the RFP**, due to the competitive nature of the process, should board members desire to review a copy of the RFP, they can email Rebecca Harris who will provide a copy when the RFP is available.

Breedlove said the current 4-year agreement is \$119,000 which is to cover staff time, and this proposal will be similar.

Breedlove asked are there any **Questions?**

**John Aldergate** asked, "Have we learned anything from the existing contract moving forward into the new contract?"

**Breedlove response:** The last agreement was for 4 years so we are purposely adjusting the timeframe to one year. This will give us a better opportunity to list performance criteria in the RFP then transition over to an agreement and create a performance template to be able to follow up with contract provider activities. It will also provide more structure for monitoring (there are no specific concerns with the current provider), and it gives us a shorter timeframe to review performance and accountability and place some specific performance metrics as part of that operator role.

Breedlove said given the nature of the legislation reauthorization, the operator role was listed in the reauthorization. What is proposed in the "Stronger Workforce for America Act" was the Operator role could go back to the workforce boards should they choose to assume the role. She is unsure how that would look like moving forward with the new reauthorization language legislation. Having a shorter agreement may be helpful should there be any modifications with new legislation.

**Rick Moss** asked: "Have there been any other vendors who have shown interest?"



**Breedlove response:** The RFP has not been released to date. Once the RFP is complete and released, we are anticipating listing a date where an interested entity would need to let us know by this certain date so we would have a better understanding of who might be moving forward with Interest in Proposing process. As of now, since the RFP was not released, we do not know who would be interested.

The last procurement, which was 4 years ago, was a sole sourced procurement since there was one entity (Workforce Initiative Association) that applied and that required the board staff to communicate with the Office of Workforce Development for guidance. This was vetted with the state on the last Operator procurement.

**Rick Moss** stated: In referencing the bidding process, are you considering the lowest bid is not always the best and looking at what the history of the entity proposing.

**Breedlove response:** We will include and welcome board members that may be interested in reviewing the proposals as part of the process which would be our "Review Team."

**MOTION: ALDERGATE MOVED TO ACCEPT AUTHORIZE THE RELEASE OF THE JOB CENTER OPERATOR RFP MANHEIM SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**Adjourned:** 12:56 p.m.

**NEXT MEETING: March 5, 2025, 12:00 PM** (Virtual-Zoom)