



New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission

Dennis M. Bone, *Chairman*

Philip D. Murphy, *Governor*

**State Employment and Training Commission
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, June 12, 2024
10am – 12pm
TEAMS Platform**

I. Welcome

Chairman Dennis Bone called the meeting to order at 10:07 am and welcomed members and guests. Chairman Bone announced that, in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act of 1978, notice of this meeting was submitted to the Trenton Times and Star Ledger, shared with the Secretary of State's office, and was posted on the SETC website. Introductions were conducted. Chairman Bone called for a motion to approve the meeting minutes from 3-20-24. The approval of the minutes was passed by John Sarno and Teri Duda. moved forward.

II. Introductions

Dennis M. Bone, Chairman
Keith C. White, SETC

Chairman Bone welcomed the Heldrich Center and all presenters along with Keith C. White with the SETC.

III. Presented by *John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development*

An Evaluation of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Services in PY21

Liana Lin
Grace Maruska
Brittney Donovan

Laurie Harrington with the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development introduced Liana Lin, Grace Maruska, and Brittney Donovan. Laurie mentioned all the research was done by them and that the data and presentation presented is an evaluation of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Services for PY21.

We wanted to achieve four goals during this research plan. The four goals are to provide transportation services through WIOA through title I and title IV customers; second, to provide transportation delivery strategies implemented southern and rural communities; third, transportation services or options that warrant further evaluation and or expansion and replication, fourth, modifications to address transportation in New Jersey. We are looking to hone in on counties that are more rural and may lack the public infrastructure and to really try to look in New Jersey at options from other states to better serve individuals and their needs and to craft solutions and talking to policy makers and get a level setting about what we know.

The research tells us some fundamentals and that transportation is very important, especially for individuals with disabilities getting to and from work. Some issues that have impacted transportation over the last few years are, Covid-19 pandemic, exacerbated existing transportation challenges, rural populations are receiving less funding for transportation infrastructure, services, and maintenance, resulting in fewer options resulting in fewer residents.

Also, currently, there are new ideas for transportation and cleaner energy being at the forefront, which highlights new opportunities for public transportation such as electric buses. The research activities included 2 expert panels and conducted 9 interviews with 12 interviewees. The Heldrich Center focused on a technical advisory panel regarding transportation experts in New Jersey and conducted interviews with subject matter experts. For research there were 3 models used. The first was a micro transit service – innovations JC, it is a low-cost service and targeted those with disabilities with accessibility for wheelchair access and low cost.

The second NJTIP is a program that can offer individual traveling planning services for individuals with disabilities, and third, is an inner-city bus program, this model service we looked at the fair prices and schedules are coordinated with other public transportation. We selected these models to look at how they connect overall connectivity.

Recommendations which came out of the research study were the following: the short-term goal is working in conjunction with NJDOT and local counties, NJDOL can promote greater awareness for existing transportation systems and or supportive structures with transportation information hub. Also, long term, NJDOL could champion the development of a mobility and or transportation manager role with the New Jersey legislature. There were findings with these micro transit models which speak to connectivity and can fill gaps left by NJ Transit and other transportation services and help alleviate transportation deserts. Another finding is that NJ Transit ADA paratransit program Access Link is a critical program and is a model of service

but needs improvement. Another finding was that education on individuals on existing transportation is integral to increasing access and public transportation use, which can help reduce transportation barriers in pursuing training and employment opportunities. Research also showed that virtual service provision assists with addressing customers transportation barriers. The recommendation for this research question short term is that Local One Stop Career centers can highlight the need for staff and counselors to consider the impact of access to transportation upfront with any engagement with customers, long term, NJDOL could contribute to virtual service delivery. Liana Lin closed out the presentation by explaining this area is a significant problem for WIOA populations and there is a great need for broader coalition with community partners and for community partners to advocate for community members who rely on transportation.

IV. New Jersey Department of Labor

Lesley Hirsch, Asst. Commissioner, ORI, NJDOL
Charyl Yarbrough, Ph.D., Asst. Commissioner
Sheryl Hutchison, Director, ORI, NJDOL

Assistant Commissioner Dr. Yolanda Allen, opened the discussion, that we need more utilization and that the proximity of transportation geographically. What I would like to recommend is given the current participants who access transportation and the voucher services, to look at what are the barriers within? Are there policy issues?

Are there limitations on ride share vouchers for example, what are the limitations even if someone has access in that regard? We should provide rides for youth and perhaps we should put policy around that because it is not just kids need access to driving school, but they also need a car to practice. Even so, what else can we do to ensure that young people are driving and that even the folks that have vouchers that they can get to where they are going and are there any policies that we can work on while we are working on the infrastructure part, we need to work with various DOT and we need to look at what can we do better? Mr. Keith C. White with the SETC mentioned that the federal statute is more receptive than the state is, and the feds are doing more, and now I will pass this conversation on to Assistant Commissioner Dr. Charyl Yarbrough.

Assistant Commissioner Dr. Charyl Yarbrough opened the discussion with one piece I want to highlight is that we need to think about since Covid, what our services are and how we deliver our services have dramatically changed.

Our applications and looking at data, we can see the data and applications for eligibility and when we provide transportation services, I want to show the plan of where we come in and how the process starts. We see that our numbers were much

lower, and we have been looking over time with our VR services, and we are looking at our virtual services versus in person services and this goes back to our transportation services. When we look at the charts and services, we are looking at several pieces and equitable context. Where we were and where are now, we had many consumers that were not traveling and not using public transportation. We have also extended our services and we historically we talked about bus tickets but now we are looking at vehicle modifications and ride shares and now we want to integrate these services and supports better and highlight the components. We need to look at the data to see what transportation looks like. Currently the way DVRS are coded differently than how it is for rehabilitation services is different from the state. If we don't dig into it in a data set, we will never know what we need to figure out how to move everything forward.

Over 360 transportation services were offered and paid for and from nine dollars to three thousand dollars. There is a lot to pull apart and what do these individuals need for their services. We need to ensure that Workforce is helping these individuals be able to sustain a job. We need to be able to help them engage and sustain themselves. We are looking at in 2024 about 500 individuals we offered services to and under 300 that used it and I wanted to highlight the transportation needs which are very critical. We are hearing more and more that federally we can expand these services. It is a great moment to take next steps and regarding the data, as far as the youth in the high schools and we can all collaborate to work better with our youth and do better with the areas within transportation.

Francis Khun wanted to comment and thank the Heldrich center. Are there any incentives through legislation which can help the needs of transportation in the southern region? And are there any incentives to and from the public transportation especially which would be advantageous from the smaller companies for employees to get incentives from their employees. Keith C. White with SETC mentioned there is nothing currently in legislative wise, but we can investigate it. John Sarno, brought up transportation and how it works to and from the job it is not considered part of the job should someone get hurt on their way back and forth to work, the incentive that a place of employment would give an incentive would not be the ultimate tax break and even speaking about someone's personal vehicle, that would not be the ultimate possession and there are taxes and fees and costs for the car therefore not to mention maintenance and gasoline and there is more reason to not put more cars on the road, if I were putting a policy out there I would pursue the subsidy be the way to go.

Sheryl Hutchinson thanked the Heldrich team and gave kudos to Assistant Commissioner Dr. Yolanda Allen and Assistant Commissioner Dr. Charyl Yarborough for all the work they have worked on. The workforce modernization and data are being worked on. The whole point of this evaluation is to uncover any gaps and the research was needed to find out where the highest relief was needed. I encourage everyone to read the details and research. Currently, ORI is working on the workforce data link, which has been developed and we are working with procurement and the NJDOL at large as an infrastructure to look at data management. We need the

evidence, and we need to look at moving our data and moving to move our legacy systems in labor. Cloud services are what we are moving into, and we need to look at moving our policy forward. We are building our economic unit with Nicol Nicola, who is working in the economist role unit which is dedicated to research development. We also have a new Director in ORI, Nanci Hiller. The office of innovation and COEI and ORI are working on data systems and along with the Heldrich Center and the Office of Higher of Education along with educational data and educational studies, along with working with other states to use the power of our data to enhance and help New Jersey. We are also working with the Strategic Enforcement unit, and we are working with them as well. Also, AI is out there but it does not fix all our problems and we are looking at the way all of this impacts our economy. Sheryl Hutchinson thanked all presenters, Chairman Bone, and the SETC staff. Joan Desmarais with the SETC thanked everyone who took the time to respond to the public comment and thanked everyone. Please know the final draft will be posted on the SETC website soon and once that happens, we will keep everyone posted. Joan Desmarais with SETC asked if we can pass the meeting minutes from 3-20-24 which a motion was approved by John Sarno and Teri Duda.

V. Public Comment

No public comment.

VI. Closing Remarks – SETC Chairman, Dennis Bone

Chairman Bone mentioned his appreciation and thanked all who presented and attended. The meeting closed at 11:10.

Next SETC Meeting

Wednesday, September 18th, 2024, Online TEAMS Meeting

PRESENT MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES

Dennis Bone - Chairman
Jessica Steiger – OSHE
David Gehrke – NJDOE
Julie Diaz – NJDOL
Assemblyman Wimberly
Christine Beyer – NJDCF
Anthony Ferrera
Hosea Johnson
John Gagliano
Kate Butler DCA
Dr. Danielle Jubanyik - NJDOL
Tim Sullivan -EDA
Bob Wise
Sally Nadler
Gregg Debaere

ABSENT MEMBERS

John Donnadio
Carolyn Carter Wade
Angela Allen-McMillan
Sarah Adelman
John Franklin

Allen, Dr. Yolanda
Alpart, Davidene
Apple, Emily
Anochi, Eva
Arango, Oswaldo
Barracato, Meredith
Belin, Jacki
Bicica, John
Blanco, Francis
Bollhardt, Victoria
Brown, Melissa
Burkhardt, Ron
Carvajal, Allyson
Caramelo, JoAnne
Carter, Jean
Case, Kim
Celestin, Sancia
Choudhury, Mitra
Custard, Donna
Czar, Dianne
Demmellash, Alfa
Drakeford, Shamira
Emigholz, Chris
Enright, Patricia
Everett, Kaitlin
Feldman, Eliot
Gaylord, Karen

OTHER ATTENDEES

Giordano, Timothy
Gietka, Jennifer
Grzella, Paul
Harris-Kuiper, Stephanie
Hartman, Sharon
Hiller, Nanci
Hirsch, Lesley
Hunt, Stacy
Jainarine, Diane
Jordan, Dana
Kikkert, Becky
Kuiper, Mark
Kurdziel, Kevin
Levandowski, Andrea
Levitt, Jill
Knight, Braheim
Kuhn, Fran
Kurdziel, Kevin
Liu, Helen
Mader, Pamela
Martin, Michelle
Mazzagatti, Pete
McPartlan, Dennis
Mirasol, Catherina
Moody, Melissa
Morrison, Angelique
Murphy, Lauren
Meyer, Cheryl
Odeneye, Jobi
Philp, Amanda
Polack, Carol
Pierre, Eric
Rodgers, Beth
Reyes, Maritza
Sabater, Julio
Safrin, Michele

Satchell, Brigette
Schaeffer, Janine
Seith, David
Singer-Quast, Sarah
Soto, Luis
Staub, Stephanie
Strothers, Sandra
Swartz, Jeffrey
Tabassum, Zainab
Taylor, Sherwood
Taylor, Yolanda
Vail, Les
Vaidyanathan S.
Weir, Barbara
Williams, Albert
Zahirah, Sabir
SETC STAFF:
White, Keith C.
Desmarais, Joan
Lamarca, Carlye
Robinson, Kyree