



Santee-Lynches Workforce Development Board Meeting
Via Zoom
Tuesday, August 24, 2021 - 5:00 PM

MINUTES

Members Present:

Clarendon –Kayla Padgett
Kershaw – John Hornsby, Renee Baker
Lee – George General (Chairman), Annette Karlinsky, Zina Wright
Sumter – Bobby Anderson (Vice-Chairman), Calvin Hastie, Sr., Janice Poplin, Debra Young, Dr. Vanessa Canty

Members Absent:

Clarendon - Robert “Bob” Edwards (excused)
Kershaw - Teresa Justice, Teresa Oelze(excused), Steward Kidd(excused?),
Sumter - Sam Lowery, Jerome Robinson(excused), Ashton Elmore (excused), Gail Lemmon(excused),

Staff Present:

Christopher McKinney, SLRCOG CEO/Executive Director
Areatha Clark, Deputy Executive Director and Chief, Workforce Development
Esmonde Levy, Workforce Development Manager
Freda Amerson, Workforce Development Operations Coordinator
Steve Berger, Business Services Lead
Kourtney Page, SLRCOG Administrative Assistant I

Guests:

Ray Jackson, Eckerd Connects - Workforce Development
Kal Kunkel, Eckerd Connects – Workforce Development
Renee Alexander, Eckerd Connects, Workforce Development
Raiford Hinton, SC Department of Employment and Workforce (SCDEW) – Santee-Lynches
Melissa Rodgers, SC Department of Employment and Workforce (SCDEW)
Brenda Gardner, SC Department of Commerce

1. Welcome and Call to Order

At the request of Chairman George General, the Santee-Lynches Workforce Development Board of Directors’ (WDB) Meeting was called to order by Vice-Chairman Bobby Anderson at 5:12 PM. A quorum was present.

2. Invocation/Pledge of Allegiance

Vice-Chairman Anderson provided the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Introduction of Guests

Ms. Areatha Clark, Deputy Executive Director and Workforce Development Chief, introduced guests and staff. She also introduced a new Board Member, Dr. Vanessa Canty of Sumter Adult Education. She replaced Ms. Sharon Teigue who retired in June.

4. Adoption of Revised Agenda

Vice-Chairman Anderson entertained a motion to approve the agenda. **A motion was made by Ms. Zina Wright and seconded by Chairman George General.** There being no discussion, Vice-Chairman Anderson called for the vote. **All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.**

5. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes – June 22, 2021

Vice-Chairman Anderson entertained a motion to approve the Workforce Development Board (WDB) Meeting Minutes of June 22, 2021. **A motion was made by Mr. Calvin Hastie and seconded by Ms. Annette Karlinsky.** There being no discussion, Vice-Chairman Anderson called for the vote. **All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.**

6. Executive Director's Report

SLRCOG's Executive Director, Christopher McKinney provided the following report:

Mr. McKinney began by sharing updates. The biggest update was that a grant was received by the Santee-Lynches Regional COG to place technology on school buses for UVC lighting. This technology is designed to kill germs and disinfect students from COVID-19 any other pathogens of other illnesses such as flu, etc. The COG is coordinating with state engineers to have this technology placed on state school buses by the beginning of November within our four counties of Sumter, Lee, Kershaw, and Clarendon. Mr. McKinney expresses his excitement about this grant and states that this will provide another layer of protection for school bus drivers and students entering the buses. The other effect of the UVC lighting is that when students exit the buses, anything within a certain distance of it, will be disinfected. He added that this will be a huge win for our rural areas in the four counties once this project is completed.

Vice-Chairman Anderson asked, "if this UVC light supposed to detect if students have the virus or not". Mr. McKinney clarified by stating that the UVC light disinfects; it's a passive ongoing disinfection with wave lengths that destroys any pathogens without being harmful to the human eye or skin. Vice-Chairman Anderson expressed that this technology should be a big help for the region.

Mr. McKinney provided the second big update that they just partnered with Lee County and Farmers Telephone Cooperative in submitting a grant to lay down about 140 miles of fiber to rural Lee County. It's going to reach homes of underserved and under privileged people to give them broad band and fiber access, hopefully within the next 18 months. They are unsure if the grant will be approved or not, but they are extremely hopeful because it will help Lee County significantly with telework, tele school, tele medicine, etc. There will be more to follow once the grant is approved.

7. Reports

Eckerd Restructuring and Vision for 2021

Mr. Kal Kunkel shared Eckerd's restructuring and vision for 2021. He provided an update on current staff changes. Amanda Wagner and Caroline Rogerson both resigned from their positions due to new and other opportunities. Mr. Kunkel expressed how they will be missed for their great leadership in Eckerd Connects. He recognized that members of Eckerd Connects: Renee Alexander, Senior Operations Director present on the meeting and congratulated Ray Jackson for being promoted to Area Manager and Overseer of One-Stop Operation along with Pam Hall who has been promoted to Program Manager.

Mr. Kunkle stated that Eckerd currently have some vacancies with career coaches and identified they have two people that will fill those open slots. They are hoping to have those individuals on quickly within the next week or so to begin the training process.

Mr. Kunkle continued that the Eckerd team members are working well together and Mr. Marquel Jackson, Regional Manager now for Santee-Lynches will be working closely with Mr. Ray Jackson and Ms. Hall. He added that Mr. Marquel Jackson knows the region well due to previous positions he has held within the Santee-Lynches and Pee-Dee Regions.

Vice-Chairman Anderson congratulates Mr. Ray Jackson on his promotion and Mr. Kunkle for identifying some people that will be coming to work due to the economic strain of getting people to work.

SC Works Center and Program Reports:

Mr. Ray Jackson provided the SC Works Center and Program Reports. He provided a recapping of PY20-21 thru June 30, 2021.

He provided a comparison of the VOS Greeter (the number of customers visiting the center).

- 14,160 total number of customers served and 512 were identified as veterans.

He next provided a Master Summary Report for PY 20-21.

Master Summary Report -Region/LWIA: Santee-Lynches	7/1/2020 – 6/22/2021
Total number of Individuals that Registered	4,878
Total number of Individuals that Logged In	12,553
Total number of Distinct Individuals Receiving Services	26,733
Total number of Services Provided to Individuals	1,664,665
Total number of Internal Job Orders Created (Region)	1,789
Total number of Internal Job Referrals Created (Statewide)	52,874
Total number of Services Provided Employers	4,876

Mr. Jackson highlights the Employer on the floor events. During this pandemic, they were able to serve a few employers through hiring events in both offices in Sumter and Camden. They held a total of 12 hiring events that produced 229 applicants for the following employers: Sumter County, Crown Healthcare Laundry Services, Comfort Keepers, Pilgrim's Pride, Color-Fi, Welvista and the SC Department of Corrections.

Mr. Jackson gave a comparison on Job Placements from 2018 - 2021:

Month	2018	2019	2020	2021
January	66	93	74	100
February	87	91	75	94
March	97	103	56	108
April	103	92	14	92
May	92	108	0	96

June	100	97	1	192 PY 1052
July	81	113	71	
August	87	96	103	
September	108	101	94	
October	97	98	101	
November	93	101	93	
December	98	78	100	
Total	1,109	1,166	782	682+

Mr. Jackson stated that for PY20, they had a total of 1,052 job placements. The breakdown is from year to date with the total of 682.

Information was shared on Hiring Events that have taken place this current program year in the SC Works Camden and Sumter offices. Staff have Tuesdays and Fridays dedicated for the Employers on the floor events. So far, 22 companies have participated for the month of August.

Sumter Location	
31 E. Calhoun Street Sumter, SC 29150	
August 3	Pilgrim's Pride
August 10	Maysteel Hartt Thompson Industrial
August 13	Comfort Keepers
August 17	Santa Cruz Nutritional
August 20	Pilgrim's Pride
August 27	Comfort Keepers

Camden Location	
1111 Broad Street, Camden, SC 29020	
August 6	Comfort Keepers
August 17	Cal-Maine Foods
August 20	Comfort Keepers Santa Cruz Nutritional
August 27	Hartt

Also shared was information on the social media performance of the calendar posted for the Hiring Events. Staff hope that seeing this type of engagement will encourage customers to visit our centers.

Social Media Performance	
People Reached	35,173
Likes, Comments, & Shares	657
Post Clicks	3,043
Photo Views	1,400
Link Clicks	93
Other Clicks	1550

Mr. Jackson next reviewed Unemployment Rates as of June 2021:

- South Carolina 4.5%
- Santee-Lynches Region – 4.9%

- Sumter County – 5.0%
- Clarendon County – 5.3%
- Kershaw County – 4.2%
- Lee County – 5.9%

Mr. Jackson stated that the numbers for July just came in and there was slight change for Clarendon County:

- South Carolina-4.3%
- Santee-Lynches Region-4.8%
- Sumter County-4.9%
- Clarendon County-5.4%
- Kershaw County-4.1%
- Lee County-5.9%

Adult Program Highlight

Mr. Jackson shared the Success Stories for Adult program: Tevin Gipson came into the WIOA program September 2020, looking to obtain a Class A CDL after being laid off from Kaydon in April 2020. Mr. Gipson was extremely determined to begin class at Palmetto Training Inc. in Sumter, SC. He was excited to receive training on how to properly operate a heavy-duty commercial truck. Throughout the training Mr. Gipson had a few frustrating moments that were out of his control, but he was patient and completed all training hours. He was blessed with a son during training and was able to stay home for a week, which gave him more inspiration to complete training. Once he completed training and received his Class A CDL, Mr. Gipson chose a company that best fit his life. As of 2021, Tevin is now enjoying his new position as a full time Class A CDL Driver for Jordan Carriers in Mississippi.

Youth Program Highlight

A Thank You Message was shared as a part of the Youth program highlight: Ms. Teonna Kinlaw expressed how she was so very grateful for this wonderful program through Eckerd Connects. They have and still are helping her become a better version of herself. The very first thing they assisted her in was helping her get her record expunged. As she sat in jail, she made a decision that she was NOT going to put herself in a position like this again. When she got out, she went down to Eckerd's Manning office, and spoke to her Career Coach. During the whole expungement process, Ms. Kinlaw was able to attend medical administrative assistant training, and received her certification. Shortly after, she set up with TWO job interviews where she would get work experience in her field. Ms. Kinlaw stated that this program has helped her in ways she couldn't even imagine and connected her with amazing mentors, such as Ms. Kathleen L. Gibson, who she currently works for.

Next, Mr. Jackson provided the WIOA Title I Program PY20 data.

Orientation/Info Sessions Totals 419	Enrollment Total 419	Total Served (Carry Over & New) 529
Adults	244-Adults	306-Adults
Dislocated Workers	55-Dislocated Workers	66-Dislocated Workers
Youth	120-Youth	157-Youth

Ray Jackson shared information and outcomes on individuals participating in Occupational Skills Training:

1. Received Training in PY20'
 - Adults-153
 - Dislocated Workers-36
 - Youth-20

2. Credentials earned
 - 68 Adults-122 Credentials
 - 22 Dislocated Workers-27 Credentials
 - 63 Youth- 117 Credentials
3. MSGs (*Measurable Skills Gains*)
 - 153 Adults-373 MSGs
 - 34 Dislocated Workers-81 MSGs
 - 148 Youth-369 MSGs

Vice-Chairman Anderson asked if credentials earned were GEDs. Mr. Jackson responded that some were GEDs, but the credentials were mainly certifications received after training completion. Ms. Areatha Clark added that the credentials were earned primarily from occupational skills training. All training programs that are successfully completed earn a credential and MSG.

Vice-Chairman Anderson inquired about the effectiveness of the programs provided by the government; and if they are increasing the number of people coming into the centers to earn their credentials due to the shortage of employees in local businesses. He also expressed his concern on if we can control a specific area of where money is provided to people by the government during this pandemic. Ms. Clark stated that one area that is funded by the government is the child tax credit; which she is certain has caused an impact on the workforce. She states that staff are coming up with innovative strategies on how to serve students at the technical colleges receiving scholarships who are seeking additional supportive services that SC Works may provide that is not covered by those scholarships. The goal is to gain additional partnership with colleges to get individuals referred to us.

Vice-Chairman Anderson asked if there are any skilled individuals coming in for these jobs that are offered paying over \$20/hour. He shared his concern of why people are not contacting SC Works but instead visiting other job posting sites such as Indeed. Mr. Jackson stated that they try to match skill with the job, and they have not received many that are highly skilled. However, they may be highly skilled if visiting the online system but not many of them are entering the center so far.

Mr. McKinney shared information on his visit to Central Carolina with Dr. Kevin Pollock. He stated that they meet with the Chamber of Commerce representatives, the Link, Mr. Jeff Burgess in Kershaw County and George Kosinski in Clarendon County to discuss their unique workforce challenges to see if there is a training program that individuals can take to equip themselves. So far, they are looking at the retail side for customer service training and the industry side. The mission is to find something specific that can be transferrable to multiple companies. They will regroup in October to see what the different stakeholders have to say on what they will want for certifications for their industry or region. Vice-Chairman Anderson suggested that Mr. McKinney relay their challenges with school districts to instill the motive to work in the students as they approach the working age.

Vice-Chairman Anderson asked about tax credits, and will it be beneficial for SC Works track that information to determine if it is why individuals are not going to work. Mrs. Clark stated that SC Works can look into adding an additional question on the surveys distributed in the centers. The questions of *“What is impacting you from finding employment?”* or *“What are the barriers preventing you from going to work?”*. Mrs. Clark stated that these questions will help them discover what the real issue is for job seekers visiting the centers.

Mr. Jackson shared the goals for PY’21 for the following programs:

Adult/Dislocated Worker Programs

- ▶ Increased partnership with business partners such as Adult Ed and Vocational Rehabilitation to identify referral opportunities
- ▶ Business engagement with business development and other agencies by working with the Chamber and Economic Development partners
- ▶ Improve WIOA service models to increase performance measures
- ▶ Increase collaborations with community partners through outreach initiatives
- ▶ Encourage partners to utilize SCWOS (SC Works Online System) referral process to track outcomes more effectively.

Youth Program

- ▶ New Outreach and Partnership Opportunities
- ▶ Establish quarterly Mentor program for Youth Participants

Financial Report:

Mr. Esmonde Levy provided the Financial Report for PY'20 through June 30, 2021, end of the year review.

Chart 1: Program Year 2020 Eckerd Adult Total (including transfers):

Eckerd Adult spent their entire budget of \$535,500 (100% expended).

Mr. Levy states that they did some transfer of funds between Eckerd Adults and DW to help balance funds amongst the programs.

Chart 2: Program Year 2020 Eckerd DW Total (including transfers):

Eckerd Dislocated Workers spent \$192,939 (90% expended) with a remaining balance of \$21,561.

Mr. Levy states that the remaining balance will carry over into the next fiscal year.

Chart 3: Program Year 2020 Eckerd Youth Total:

Eckerd Youth spent \$437,790 (95% expended) with a remaining balance of \$22,210 for carryover.

Mr. Levy shared how Eckerd did a good job with utilizing their funds and meeting those margins.

Staff are looking forward to working with Eckerd in this new fiscal year, especially with the updates Kal Kunkle shared on Eckerd's team.

Next, Mr. Esmonde Levy shares the financial report for PY21 through July 31, 2021.

Chart 4: Program Year 2021 Eckerd Adult Total:

Eckerd Adult spent \$17,816 of \$280,000 (6.4% expended) with a remaining balance of \$262,184.

Chart 5: Program Year 2021 Eckerd Dislocated Worker Total:

Eckerd spent \$7,612 of \$420,000 of the Dislocated Worker budget leaving a balance of \$412,388 (1.8% expended).

Chart 6: Rapid Response Eckerd Dislocated Worker Total

Eckerd spent \$41,937 of \$100,000 of the Rapid Response Dislocated Worker budget leaving a balance of \$58,063 (42% expended). [Grant ends December 30, 2021]

Mr. Levy stated that they are keeping track of and monitoring the expenditures of regular DW and Rapid Response DW to ensure that the funds are spent.

Chart 7: Program Year 2021 Eckerd Youth Total

Eckerd spent \$29,945 of \$420,000 with a balance of \$390,055 (7% expended).

8. Other Business

WIOA Eligible Training Provider Addition

Mrs. Areatha Clark shared that Central Carolina had been a long-time training partner with them for many years and this year, they have decided to remove themselves from the Eligible Training Provider (ETP) list for the second time. The waiver that was issued to the Department of Labor to request performance information that is reported for all individuals was not approved this year. Other technical colleges have removed some of their programs from the list but they remain on the overall list. Staff are still working with Florence Darlington Technical College and others that are available. Staff will still work with Central Carolina, just not through the ETP list. The college has received additional funding from the state that will provide scholarships. Staff are working closely with Central Carolina to get referrals of those individuals receiving scholarships. We've worked with Elizabeth Williams (former board member and CCTC employee) but are now seeking another contact at the college to assist with the referral process.

Ms. Clark reported on a new ETP request from Williamsburg Technical College. They have individuals from Clarendon County that are accessing services at that technical college. The request is to add the Practical Nursing Program for which they currently have individuals enrolled who reside in the region. As a result, staff is requesting approval for Williamsburg Technical College and their Practical Nursing Program to be added to the ETP list for the Santee-Lynches region. Chairman General asked what the impact is for Central Carolina. Ms. Clark stated that while they were on the list last year, they served close to 50 individuals. However, many of them did receive scholarships. The only difference is that they are not on the list, but customers can still be served who are receiving scholarships and other grant funding. **With no further discussion, a motion was made by Chairman George General and seconded by Mr. Calvin Hastie for Williamsburg Technical College and their Practical Nursing Program to be added to Santee-Lynches' ETP list. There being no discussion, Vice-Chairman Anderson called for the vote. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.**

Concern was expressed regarding the removal of Central Carolina from the ETP list. Mr. McKinney reiterated how Central Carolina is not the only technical college that has made this decision. Other technical colleges may fall under that same category due to receiving funds for training from the State. However, those funds, do not cover a lot of additional things that the WIOA program provides. Ms. Clark encouraged the board to keep in mind that yes, other technical colleges have removed programs, but they are still participating. However, the cost to send individuals to their training facilities does cost more money due to extra costs for paying supportive services. She expressed how taking advantage of those scholarships given by Central Carolina will be a benefit to allow more funding for mileage reimbursement if individuals do have to travel outside the region. Chairman General expressed how there should be a way to communicate the situation with personnel in Columbia who tracks this information. Ms. Clark stated that several of the Workforce Regions have considered going to the State to discuss the continued budget cuts and how we will continue to operate and compete in this arena with the funding that is given. Mr. McKinney interjected that there is no representation from the Santee-Lynches Region on the state board, but he would like for Chairman General and Ms. Clark to schedule a day to join him in traveling to Columbia to have that conversation with Mr. Dan Ellzey, the Executive Director of the SC Department of Employment and Workforce, because he isn't sure if people are looking at the levels of impact from the decisions that they are making. He continued that those continuous cuts will only pay staff and minimum services for customers.

Vice-Chairman Anderson shared his concern that technical colleges should be more aware of where the students are going and be able to report it so the funds can be maximized. He feels that more people can be served at these colleges under the usage of the services we provide. Ms. Clark stated that they will work with

Dr. Pollock in hopes of adding Central Carolina back to the list by continuing to build a relationship to help him understand the magnitude of our services for the college.

Ms. Debra Young asked if the colleges focus on job readiness and job search once the training is over or are they focused strictly on the training. Ms. Clark responded that they do to a certain extent. They have pre-employment training classes that is given two weeks prior to classes starting. They began integrating this in the Continuing Education classes. However, she is unsure on the credit courses. Ms. Clark added that these same serves are offered at SC Works.

Dr. Vanessa Canty asked if Central Carolina decided to remove themselves off the list solely based on funds that were sent down or other reasons. Ms. Clark responded that they had to sign an MOU to agree to provide performance information and they choose not to. She is sure there are other reasons, such as staffing to track this information, etc., but are unsure of all reasons.

9. Chairman's Comments

Chairman General expressed his appreciation for Vice-Chairman Anderson facilitating the meeting on his behalf. He commented that the meeting covered valid discussions and he hoped that this will be a good year for the Workforce Development Board. Chairman General commented on the participation of the board tonight and wished for everyone to stay safe.

10. Adjourn

There being no further business, the Santee-Lynches Workforce Development Board Meeting was adjourned at 6:10 PM.

Recorded By,

Kourtney Page, Administrative Assistant I-PR
Santee-Lynches Regional Council of Governments