



**SANTEE-LYNCHES  
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING**

**Tuesday, May 21, 2024**

**Via Zoom**

**MINUTES**

**Members Present:**

Dr. Joshua Castleberry, Berri Outlaw, Robert Edwards (Chairman), Emily Peele, Debra Young, Calvin Leiter, Dr. William Wright, Jr.

**Members Absent:**

John Hornsby (excused), Gail Lemmon (Vice-Chairman) (excused), Dr. Vanessa Canty, Phil Briggs, Jeff Burgess, Tiffany Myers (excused), Charles “Scottie” Hayes, Celeste Taylor, Virginia Pryor, Kanzora Robinson, Teresa Justice, Samuel Lowery

**Workforce Development Staff Present:**

Areatha Clark, SLRCOG Deputy Executive Director, Workforce Development Director  
Freda Amerson, SLRCOG Workforce Development Operations Coordinator  
Steve Berger, SLRCOG Business Services Lead

**Guests:**

Brenda Gardner, SC Department of Employment and Workforce  
Stacie Bitondo, SC Department of Employment and Workforce  
Deidre Smalls, Area Manager, Eckerd Connects -Workforce Development  
Ray Jackson, SC Works Operator/Center Manager, Eckerd Connects -Workforce Development  
Paige Clack – Kershaw County Economic Development  
John Grigg – Central Carolina Technical College  
Caroline Hudak, Eckerd Connects

**I. Welcome and Call to Order**

Chairman Bob Edwards called the Santee-Lynch Workforce Development Board of Directors Meeting to order at 5:04PM. A quorum was present.

**II. Invocation/Pledge of Allegiance**

Mr. Ray Jackson, SC Works Operator/Center Manager for Eckerd Connects provided the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**III. Introduction of Guests**

Ms. Areatha Clark, Deputy Executive Director/Workforce Development Director, introduced staff, new Workforce Development Board members (Calvin Leiter – EMS-CHEMIE North America Operations Manager and Dr. William Wright, Jr. – Sumter School District Superintendent) and guests.

**IV. Adoption of Agenda – (M)**

Chairman Bob Edwards called for a motion to adopt the agenda. **A motion was made by Dr. Joshua**

**Castleberry and seconded by Ms. Debra Young** There being no discussion, Chairman Edwards called for the vote. **All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.**

**V. Approval of Minutes – March 26, 2024 (M)**

Chairman Bob Edwards called for a motion to approve the minutes of March 26, 2024. **A motion was made by Mr. Berri Outlaw and seconded by Dr. Joshua Castleberry.** There being no discussion, Chairman Edwards called for the vote. **All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.**

**VI. Special Presentation**

Mr. Troy Grigg presented on a Short Course for Initial Exposure to Manufacturing program created by Central Carolina Technical College. He stated that the program was developed based on conversation with the manufacturing companies in the region. Mr. Grigg stated that the manufacturing companies (i.e. Continental Tire, Invista, Starlite, and others) reached out to Central Carolina Technical College to determine if they could develop a program that would address weaknesses to enable them to hire skilled workers. They identified that manufacturing industry workers have the following weaknesses: 1) Following safety and ergonomic protocols; 2) Ability to interpret and follow work instructions; 3) Mathematical conversions; 4) Use of hand tools and power tools; 5) Attention to detail; and 6) identifying non-conformance and taking the correct action. The curriculum for the program included: 1). Introduction to Manufacturing; 2) Career Readiness Training; 3) Industrial Safety; 4) Manufacturing Core Fundamentals; 5) Lab Exercises; and 6) Six Sigma yellow Belt Simulated Work Environment. Information was shared on the enrollment process and a flow chart for implementation of the program. Course results were: 11 students registered; 4 students showed for class; 1 student dropped after the first day; 3 students graduated and all 3 graduates were hired the next Monday.

Several questions were asked regarding student enrollment and participation in the program. In addition, questions were asked regarding providing OSHA 10 training as a part of this program. Dr. Castleberry and Mr. Grigg both agreed that it could be an added component to the program. Mr. Grigg also offered for manufacturing employers to come proctor the training to provide feedback/input. Mr. Calvin Leiter volunteered to participate.

**VII. Executive Director’s Report**

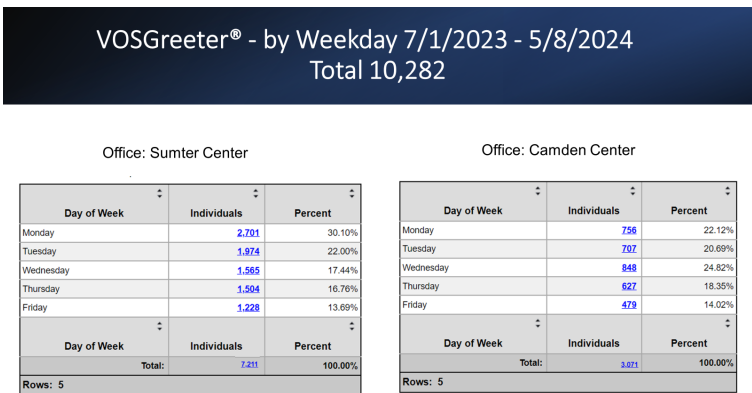
**None.**

**VIII. Reports**

**SC Works Operator Report**

Mr. Ray Jackson, SC Works Operator/Center Manager presented the SC Works Center Report for July 1, 2023 through March 8, 2024.

**Chart 1: VOS Greeter Report by Weekday**



**Chart 2: Area Profile for Santee-Lynches: Area Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment Data Table**

This section shows preliminary estimated labor force, employment and unemployment information in March 2024 for Santee-Lynches, SC. These figures are not seasonally adjusted.

Area	Civilian Labor Force	Number Employed	Number Unemployed	Unemployment Rate	Preliminary
Lee	6,725	6,411	314	4.7%	Yes
Clarendon	12,537	12,010	527	4.2%	Yes
Sumter	42,231	40,493	1,738	4.1%	Yes
Kershaw	31,093	30,084	1,009	3.2%	Yes
Santee-Lynches	92,586	88,998	3,588	3.9%	Yes
South Carolina	2,504,964	2,421,001	83,963	3.4%	Yes

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, SC Dept of Employment & Workforce

Mr. Jackson stated that the chart above shows Area Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment data reported by each county in the region. Mr. Jackson reported updated numbers for the month of March for unemployment: Clarendon County’s unemployment rate is 4.2%; Lee County’s is at 4.7%; Sumter County’s is 4.1%; and Kershaw County’s is 3.2%. Santee-Lynches is 3.9%; the State is 3.4% and the Nation is 3.9%. Mr. Jackson added that April numbers were just released and will be shared at the next meeting.

**Chart 3: Area Profile –Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment Distribution Table (March 2024)**

**Area Profile for Santee-Lynches, SC**

**Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment Distribution Table**

The table below shows the workforce development areas with the highest preliminary unemployment rate in South Carolina for March 2024. These figures are not seasonally adjusted.

Rank	Area	Civilian Labor Force	Number Employed	Number Unemployed	Unemployment Rate	Preliminary
1	Lower Savannah	131,383	125,980	5,403	4.1%	Yes
2	Waccamaw	199,982	191,734	8,248	4.1%	Yes
3	Pee Dee	156,347	150,242	6,105	3.9%	Yes
4	Santee-Lynches	92,586	88,998	3,588	3.9%	Yes
5	Upstate	196,621	189,799	6,822	3.5%	Yes
6	Upper Savannah	114,476	110,456	4,020	3.5%	Yes
7	Catawba	213,625	206,144	7,481	3.5%	Yes
8	Midlands	377,618	365,693	11,925	3.2%	Yes
9	Lowcountry	121,164	117,305	3,859	3.2%	Yes
10	Worklink	192,584	186,702	5,882	3.1%	Yes
11	Greenville	272,474	264,092	8,382	3.1%	Yes
12	Trident	436,106	423,855	12,251	2.8%	Yes

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, SC Dept of Employment & Workforce

Santee-Lynches currently ranks fourth at a 3.9% unemployment rate. Mr. Jackson also stated that the highest rate was obtained by Lower Savannah at 4.1% and the lowest was Trident at 2.8%.

## Chart 4: Area Profile Employers by Number of Job Openings Table

### Area Profile for Santee-Lynches, SC

#### Employers by Number of Job Openings Table

The table below shows the employers with the highest number of job openings advertised online in Santee-Lynches, SC on May 6, 2024 (Jobs De-duplication Level 2<i aria-hidden="true" class="fa-external-link-alt fa-fw"></i>Opens in New window).

Rank	Employer Name	Job Openings
1	Prisma Health	96
2	Kershaw County School District	69
3	Clarendon County School District	40
4	McLeod Health	37
5	Lee County School District	33
6	City of Sumter, SC	32
7	Food Lion	29
8	Morris College	29
9	Central Carolina Technical College	28
10	gTANGIBLE Corporation	26
11	McDonald's Corporation	26
12	Agile Defense, Inc.	25
13	Amedisys	24
14	Love's Travel Stops & Country Stores, Inc.	22
15	University of South Carolina	22
16	BD	21
17	Sonic Corp.	20
18	GovCIO	18
19	Dollar Tree, Inc.	17
20	Suppressed	16
21	EPS Corporation	15
22	Wendy's International, Inc.	15
23	Prestage Farms, Inc.	14
24	Growing Home Southeast, Inc.	13
25	Medical University of South Carolina Medical Center	13

Source: Online advertised jobs data  
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Chart 4 lists the top Employers by Number of Job Openings in our region through March 6, 2024. Mr. Jackson highlighted that Prisma Health has 96 job openings, Kershaw County School District has 69 job openings, Clarendon School District has 40 job openings, McLeod Health has 37 job openings and Lee County School District has 33 job openings in our region. Mr. Jackson reiterated that this chart helps when talking to clients about companies that are hiring.

## Chart 5: Employer Survey: Current Employment Statistics (March 2024)

Jobs by Industry	March 2024	February 2024	March 2023	February 2024 to March 2024		March 2023 to March 2024	
				# Change	% Change	# Change	% Change
Total Nonfarm Employment	2,358,400	2,351,200	2,293,200	↑ 7,200	↑ 0.3%	↑ 65,200	↑ 2.8%
Construction	114,900	115,500	111,300	↓ -600	↓ -0.5%	↑ 3,600	↑ 3.2%
Manufacturing	265,900	265,900	262,800	No Change	No Change	↑ 3,100	↑ 1.2%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	447,100	446,200	440,100	↑ 900	↑ 0.2%	↑ 7,000	↑ 1.6%
Information	29,000	28,800	29,500	↑ 200	↑ 0.7%	↓ -500	↓ -1.7%
Financial Activities	123,800	123,500	121,000	↑ 300	↑ 0.2%	↑ 2,800	↑ 2.3%
Professional and Business Services	317,400	315,400	311,200	↑ 2,000	↑ 0.6%	↑ 6,200	↑ 2.0%
Education and Health Services	295,400	293,800	276,800	↑ 1,600	↑ 0.5%	↑ 18,600	↑ 6.7%
Leisure and Hospitality	293,000	290,700	278,500	↑ 2,300	↑ 0.8%	↑ 14,500	↑ 5.2%
Other Services	89,800	89,800	85,900	No Change	No Change	↑ 3,900	↑ 4.5%
Government	377,600	377,100	371,700	↑ 500	↑ 0.1%	↑ 5,900	↑ 1.6%

#### NONAGRICULTURAL EMPLOYMENT BY METROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREA (SEASONALLY ADJUSTED)

The monthly survey of businesses in South Carolina marked an estimated increase of 7,200 nonfarm payroll jobs over the month to a level of 2,358,400.

Area	March 2024	February 2024	March 2023	February 2024 to March 2024		March 2023 to March 2024	
				# Change	% Change	# Change	% Change
Statewide	2,358,400	2,351,200	2,293,200	↑ 7,200	↑ 0.3%	↑ 65,200	↑ 2.8%
Charleston/North Charleston	424,600	424,300	409,000	↑ 300	↑ 0.1%	↑ 15,600	↑ 3.8%
Columbia	433,800	431,800	421,500	↑ 2,000	↑ 0.5%	↑ 12,300	↑ 2.9%
Florence	97,500	97,000	95,300	↑ 500	↑ 0.5%	↑ 2,200	↑ 2.3%
Greenville/Anderson/Mauldin	465,900	464,500	457,900	↑ 1,400	↑ 0.3%	↑ 8,000	↑ 1.7%
Hilton Head-Bluffton-Beaufort	91,200	90,900	88,000	↑ 300	↑ 0.3%	↑ 3,200	↑ 3.6%
Myrtle Beach	198,700	198,500	191,200	↑ 200	↑ 0.1%	↑ 7,500	↑ 3.9%
Spartanburg	174,300	173,800	169,800	↑ 500	↑ 0.3%	↑ 4,500	↑ 2.7%
Sumter	38,800	38,600	37,700	↑ 200	↑ 0.5%	↑ 1,100	↑ 2.9%

Next Mr. Jackson shared information on Community and Hiring Events held or will be held in the region:

Hiring Events:

Carolina Precision Foods – May 9<sup>th</sup>

Career & Education Fair:

Mary McLeod Bethune Learning Center (Mayesville, SC) – May 21<sup>st</sup>

Community Events:

SWCMHC Mental Health Day – May 8<sup>th</sup>

May Fest – May 19<sup>th</sup>

Expungement & Pardon Summit – June 22<sup>nd</sup>

**Chart 5: Santee- Lynches Connection Points**

**Santee-Lynches Connection Points**

**Lee County Public Library**

200 N Main St,  
Bishopville, SC 29010  
Phone: (803) 484-5921

**Harvin Clarendon County Library**

215 N Brooks St,  
Manning, SC 29102  
Phone: (803) 435-8633

**Midlands Fatherhood Coalition**

21 N Harvin Street,  
Sumter, SC 29150  
Phone: (803) 774-2140

**Kershaw County Library**

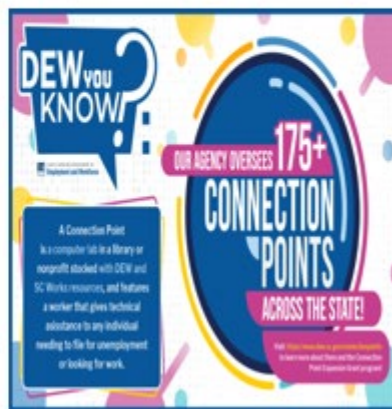
1304 Broad St,  
Camden, SC 29020  
Phone: (803) 425-1508

**Darlington-Lee County Adult Education (DLCAE)**

123 E College Street,  
Bishopville, SC 29010  
Phone: (803) 484-4040

**Community Medical Clinic of Kershaw County**

1165 US-1 #300  
Lugoff, SC 29078.  
Phone: (803) 900-1813



Mr. Jackson stated that Santee- Lynches connection points are computer labs in libraries or nonprofit organizations staffed with SCDEW and SC Works resources and features a worker that gives technical assistance to any individual needing to file for unemployment or look for work.

**WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Program Report**

Ms. Deidre Smalls presented the WIOA Adult, Dislocated Workers, and Youth Program Report for July 1, 2023, through March 8, 2024.

**Adult/Dislocated Worker**

**Chart 1: Total Active Adult/Dislocated Worker Enrollments**

New- 94      Actual- 170      Goal- 185

**Chart 2: Received Training**

Received Training - 70

Training was primarily provided in the Healthcare and Transportation sectors: Clinical Medical Assistant, Patient Care and CDL Training were the predominant training fields trained in.

### **Chart 3: Performance Outcome Updates**

Adult/DW Credentials - 88                      Measure Skill Gain - 305

#### **Adult Program Highlight**

##### ***Ms. Aberiell Wiley***

Ms. Aberiell Wiley enrolled into the WIOA Adult Program in March 2023 seeking assistance with employment and medical training. Ms. Wiley was underemployed and needed additional training to obtain self-sufficiency. She attended Professional Development & Training Services for Medical Assistant Training in Lugoff, SC. Ms. Wiley obtained fulltime employment with SC House Calls in April 2024 and is employed as a Certified Medical Assistant making \$20.00 per hour with fulltime benefits.

#### **Youth**

##### **Chart 4: Total Active Youth Enrollments**

New – 58      Actual- 92      Goal- 142

##### **Chart 5: Received Training**

Received Training - 34

Mrs. Deidre Smalls stated that currently 34 individuals have received training and based on the chart, the medical industry has the largest training area with Patient Care Technicians at 61%.

##### **Chart 6: Performance Outcomes Updates**

Youth Credential - 74      Measurable Skills Gain – 203      WEX/OJT – 22      Resumes created/updated - 92  
Career Smart - 52              Adult Education - 15

#### **Youth Program Highlight**

##### ***Ms. Qa’Neshia McNeal***

Ms. Qa’Neshia McNeal enrolled into the WIOA Program in August 2023 seeking assistance with employment and medical training. Ms. McNeal was underemployed as a Convenient store cashier and needed assistance with obtaining a new career. She completed the Patient Care Technician Training program in March 2024. Ms. McNeal obtained fulltime employment at Ridgeway Manor Healthcare in Ridgeway, SC as a Certified Nursing Assistant making 17.50 per hour with fulltime benefits.

#### **Financial Report**

Ms. Areatha Clark, Deputy Executive Director and Workforce Development Director presented the Financial Report for the Program Year 2023 through 4/30/2024:

##### **Chart 1: Total Percent Expended**

Eckerd Adult – 65.00% (YTD: \$208,035; Balance: \$111,964)

Eckerd DW – 55.10% (YTD: \$55,059; Balance: \$44,941)

Eckerd Youth - 68.50% (YTD: 274,101; Balance: \$125,899)

##### **Chart 2: Individual and Employer Training (IET) Grant**

Ms. Clark reported that the Individual and Employer Training grant was awarded a few months ago to assist with operations and participant costs. Eckerd has spent YTD: \$32,028; leaving a balance of \$82,479. Ms. Clark stated that this grant has been very helpful due to different budget cuts over the years and we have until September 30<sup>th</sup> to spend all of these funds.

#### **IX. Youth Committee Rating & Ranking Committee: PY’24 Youth Contract**

Ms. Clark stated that by law we are to go out every four years for new proposals. As a result, a Request for

Proposals (RFP) was issued on April 1<sup>st</sup> and proposals were due by May 3<sup>rd</sup>. Two proposals were received: one was from Eckerd Youth Alternatives dba Connects and the other from LSI Business Development Inc. Ms. Clark added that the minimum score requirement is at least a 75 to be considered for funding. Results of the Rating and Ranking Process were as follows: Eckerd Connects – 98.3 and LSI Business Development, Inc. – 58.5. Based on the Rating and Ranking Process, the Committee recommends awarding Eckerd Youth Alternatives, dba Eckerd Connects the PY'24 Title I Out-of-School Youth Contract. **Chairman Bob Edwards called for a motion to approve the recommendation of awarding Eckerd Youth Alternatives dba Eckerd Connects the PY'24 Title I Out-of-School Youth Contract. The first motion was made by Ms. Emily Peele and seconded by Ms. Debra Young. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.**

#### **X. Other Business: (M)**

##### Extension of WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Contracts

Ms. Clark brought forth on behalf of the SC Works Committee a recommendation to extend the WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Contract with Eckerd Youth Alternatives dba Eckerd Connects for one additional year (PY'24). She added that this contract is eligible for 3 additional contract extensions based on performance and funding availability. **Chairman Bob Edwards called for a motion to approve the recommendation of extending the WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Contract for 1 additional year with Eckerd Youth Alternatives dba Eckerd Connects. The motion was made by Ms. Debra Young and seconded by Ms. Emily Peele. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.**

##### Extension of SC Works Operator Contract

Ms. Clark also brought forth on behalf of the SC Works Committee a recommendation to extend the SC Works Operator Contract with Eckerd Youth Alternatives dba Eckerd Connects for one additional year (PY'24). She added that this contract is eligible for 1 additional contract extension based on performance and funding availability. Next year a Request for Proposals (RFP) will have to be released for these services. **Chairman Bob Edwards called for a motion to approve the recommendation of extending the SC Works Operator Contract for 1 additional year with Eckerd Youth Alternatives dba Eckerd Connects. The motion was made by Ms. Emily Peele and seconded by Dr. Joshua Castleberry. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.**

##### Workforce Innovation Grant

Ms. Clark informed the Board that the State has recently provided a new opportunity through a Notice of Funding for a Workforce Innovation Grant.

The SWDB has allocated 3 million dollars for Workforce Innovation Grants (INN). LWDAs are encouraged to pilot new strategies for delivering workforce development resources in their local communities and/or throughout their region in regional collaboration. Workforce Innovation Funding will be awarded to LWDAs on a competitive basis to pilot or scale effective strategies in partnership with local 'boots on the ground' organizations. Projects must align with one or more of the State Plan Goals/Objectives:

1. Develop and create an effective customer-driven workforce system through alignment of programs and policies, the use of leading-edge technology, and high-quality staff.
2. Prepare job seekers for high-wage, high-demand, and high-mobility (4H) occupations through relevant training and skills acquisition, and match job seekers to open employer positions.
3. Improve the education and workforce infrastructure network to decrease obstacles to work to improve recruitment and retention of workers, which is necessary to maintain economic development competitiveness.
4. Create alignment between the workforce development system and the states agencies and organizations directing implementation of the IJJA, IRA, and CHIPS and Science Act funding.

Application Deadline: July 1, 2024

Ms. Clark added that this grant could assist with a partnership with Central Carolina Technical College, as it aims to prepare job seekers for high-wage, high-demand, and high-mobility positions. Also, considering budget cuts, we are constantly seeking new opportunities. She asked Board members to send in suggestions/recommendations of possible opportunities. Ms. Brenda Gardner sent a recommendation for a possible opportunity in the chat for the meeting.

**XI. Chairman's Comments**

Chairman Edwards inquired if there were any questions and reminded everyone of the upcoming meeting on June 18, 2024.

Ms. Clark recognized Dr. Williams Wright, the Superintendent of Sumter School District and the possibility of pursuing a Workforce Innovation Grant opportunity with the school district based on the information provided in the chat by Ms. Gardner.

**XII. Adjournment**

The Santee-Lynches Workforce Development Board of Directors' meeting was adjourned at 5:59PM.

Recorded by,

Linda Jackson, Administration Director  
Santee-Lynches Regional Council of Governments