



SANTEE-LYNCHES WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, March 25, 2025

Via Zoom

MINUTES

Members Present:

Robert Edwards (Chairman), Gail Lemmon (Vice-Chairman), Lynn Blizzard, Paige Clack, JoAnn Eaddy, John Hornsby, Tiffany Myers, Berri Outlaw, Emily Peele, Kim Smith, Heather Waddell, Dr. William Wright, Jr.

Members Absent:

Dr. Ora Spann, Charles “Scottie” Hayes, Dr. Vanessa Canty, Calvin Leiter, Tad McIntosh, Kari Middleton, Kanzora Robinson, Celeste Taylor, Virginia Pryor

Workforce Development/COG Staff Present:

Areatha Clark, SLRCOG Deputy Executive Director, Workforce Development Director
Freda Amerson, SLRCOG Workforce Development Operations Coordinator

Guests:

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
Margarita Servance, Lead Career Coach, Eckerd Connects – Workforce Development
Elisabeth Kovacs, Executive Director, SC Future Makers
Brenda Gardner, Regional Workforce Advisor, SC Department of Employment and Workforce

I. Welcome and Call to Order

Chairman Bob Edwards, called the Santee-Lynch Workforce Development Board of Directors Meeting to order at 5:01PM. A quorum was present.

II. Invocation/Pledge of Allegiance

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

III. Introduction of Guests and New Board Members

Ms. Areatha Clark, Deputy Executive Director/Workforce Development Director introduced guests and staff.

IV. Adoption of Agenda – (M)

Chairman Bob Edwards called for a motion to adopt the agenda. **A motion was made by Mr. Berri Outlaw and seconded by Dr. William Wright. There being no discussion, Chairman Edwards called for the vote. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.**

V. Approval of Minutes – January 28, 2025 (M)

Chairman Bob Edwards called for a motion to approve the minutes of January 28, 2025. **A motion was made by Mr. John Hornsby and seconded by Ms. Lynn Blizzard. There being no discussion, Chairman Edwards called for the vote. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.**

VI. Special Presentation

Ms. Elisabeth Kovacs, Executive Director of South Carolina Future Makers – SC Manufacturers Alliance, presented on the organization's role in workforce development and its partnership with the South Carolina Manufacturers Alliance. She highlighted the alliance's 102-year history and its focus on addressing workforce challenges. Ms. Kovacs emphasized the importance of policy advocacy, particularly in areas like tort reform, and shared legislative priorities such as the SC Campaign and the rebranding of the Ezone retraining credit. She also discussed the need to modernize the Education Economic Development Act to meet today's business needs. Ms. Kovacs' organization, SC Future Makers, aims to connect students, educators, and businesses with opportunities in manufacturing, using the TALO platform to facilitate this connection. She encouraged collaboration within the workforce ecosystem to ensure a skilled workforce for South Carolina's economic development efforts.

Ms. Kovacs stated with a \$27 billion investment and 500 new projects announced, South Carolina has seen the creation of 46,000 new jobs. The workforce needs to keep pace with this growth to support businesses and industries in the region and state. South Carolina is home to over 6,000 manufacturing facilities, with 38% of the general fund coming from manufacturing. The largest manufacturer in the state is based in Lawrence County with over 147,000 employees worldwide. The South Carolina Manufacturing Alliance, known as the voice of manufacturing, focuses on policy priorities like workforce development, energy, tax, and economic development. Advancing education and workforce development initiatives is crucial for the success of the state's manufacturing industry. Legislative priorities include the Making SC campaign and retrained SC tax incentives for worker training. Education Economic Development Act modernization is also being pursued to support regional education initiatives. It is important for all stakeholders to collaborate for a skilled workforce to drive economic development.

Ms. Kovacs also informed members about efforts in the Education Oversight Committee in collaboration with the State Chamber, where they have identified areas in legislation that may require adjustment based on the past two decades of global developments. Our focus is on connecting citizens, students, educators, and parents with manufacturing opportunities through initiatives like the South Carolina STEM Signing Day and the Road Trip Nation program. Our platform, Tallow, enables students to showcase their skills and interests, connect with opportunities, and apply for scholarships at both state and national levels. With over 139,000 student profiles already created, we are working onboard businesses to facilitate meaningful engagements between students and industry professionals. They are collaborating with this commission to spotlight the creative opportunities available in manufacturing careers. Ms. Kovacs had the pleasure of meeting with students in the low country, many of whom expressed interest in graphic design. And shared with them the idea that they could pursue graphic design within the manufacturing industry, and to support this notion, they have launched a video series featuring five South Carolina manufacturers. Our goal is to showcase the diverse opportunities available in manufacturing to inspire these students. In addition, we have recently introduced the South Carolina Manufacturing Leadership Program in partnership with the Darla Moore School of Business. This program aims to develop and retain mid-level managers in the manufacturing sector, ultimately strengthening our state's manufacturing industry.

Ms. Kovas presented information on the compensation and benefits survey for manufacturers in South Carolina. The survey, now in its third year, had 61 companies participate in 2024 and will kick off for 2025 in May. It covers hourly wages, executive pay, benefits, and over 100 job titles, providing useful information for manufacturers across the state. She also mentioned an upcoming Educator Industry Academy to help educators learn about manufacturing through hands-on activities. Additionally, she announced the

upcoming reveal of the 2025 "Coolest Thing Made in South Carolina" winner, with the final four products including High Noon, Boeing 787, Sleep Number bed, and AFL fibers. Ms. Peele from Continental confirmed they use the survey for compensation analysis.

Lastly, Ms. Kovacs encouraged high school seniors to apply for Stem Signing Day and for employers to participate in their company benefit survey.

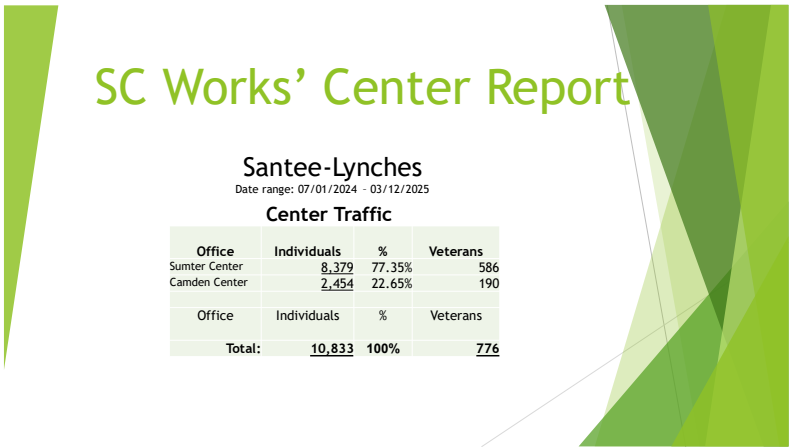
A brief discussion ensued regarding the use of data to motivate and guide students in their career planning. Dr. William Wright mentioned the importance of exposing children to various career options beyond popular choices like sports training. Ms. Brenda Gardner explained that they use this type of data in the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) for CTE education to evaluate programs and determine which ones to add based on demand and wages.

VII. Executive Director’s Report
None

VIII. Reports
SC Works Operator Report

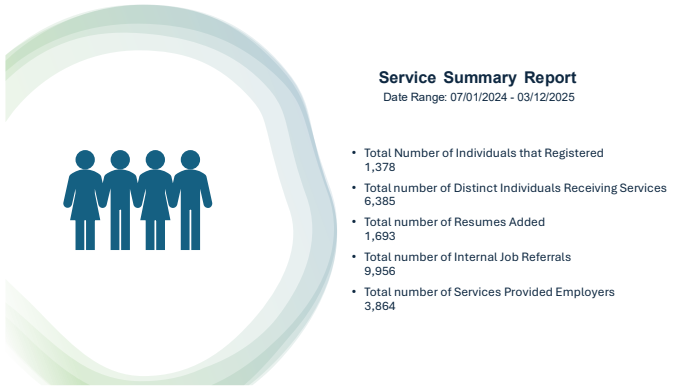
Mr. Ray Jackson, SC Works Operator/Center Manager, presented the SC Works Center Report for July 1, 2024, through March 12, 2025.

Chart 1: Santee- Lynches Center Traffic



Mr. Jackson reported that for both centers combined, 10,833 individuals came into the centers for services through the date reported. Of that number, 776 identified themselves as veterans.

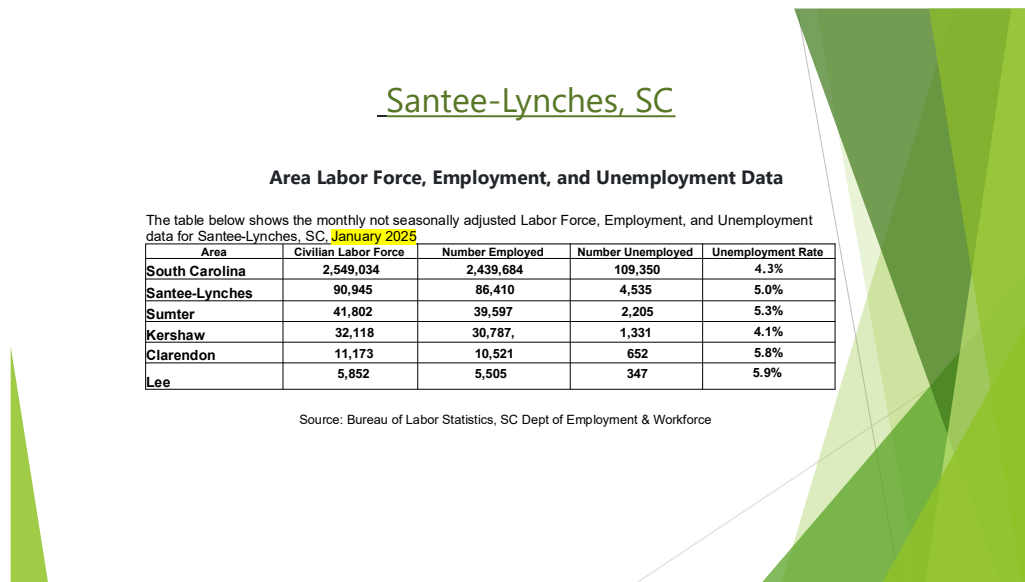
Chart 2: Service Summary Report



Mr. Jackson highlighted the number of services provided to job seekers and employers in the above chart.

Chart 3 Area Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment Data

Mr. Jackson informed the Board he has received updated unemployment figures through January.



Updated figures for January 2025 are as follows: - Santee Lynches region: 5.0% - Sumter: 5.3% - Kershaw: 4.1% - Clarendon: 5.8% - Lee: 5.9% These figures indicate a positive trend, with most regions experiencing a decrease in unemployment rates. This update is promising news for our organization.

Chart 4: Hiring Events

Mr. Berri Outlaw, Regional Manager for SCDEW, took the opportunity to discuss their successful Back-to-Work program. He indicated that their week-long camp is designed for individuals facing challenges in the workforce, providing workshops on soft skills and various other necessary tools for professional development. Through our partnership with Sumter United Ministries, we were able to achieve a remarkable 100% success rate with our three participants securing employment at reputable companies. Our comprehensive program, led by Ms. Sandra King, aims to build confidence and offer intensive case management support to facilitate successful reentry into the workforce. We culminated the program with a hiring event where participants interview with potential employers. We are immensely proud of the outcomes and grateful for our collaboration with Sumter United Ministries.

Mr. Jackson added that March has been busy with 20 hiring events scheduled. Mr. Outlaw interjected that a job fair was held in Clarendon County with 17 employers and 66 job seekers attending. Additionally, our staff's dedication led to winning a competition for United Way, resulting in a fun reward with Diana Goldwire dressing up as the SC Works Wavy Arm Guy at the event in Clarendon County. He also announced that there are two upcoming job fairs: one in Kershaw County on March 28th and a "Second Chance" job fair on April 17th in Sumter at the North Hope Center. These events will offer valuable workshops and opportunities for participants. If you are interested in attending or need more information on these events, please reach out to staff for registration details. Mr. Jackson concluded by sharing statistics from the recent Sumter County Job Fair, which had 38 employers and 195 job seekers in attendance. Let's continue our successful momentum in supporting job seekers and employers alike.



Foundever



Eaton



Sumter County DSN Board



3 Graduates = 3 Hires



Graduation Ceremony
Monday, February 24, 2025
2:00 PM

United States
36 S. Ardrey Drive
Sumter, SC 29150

RSVP: Sandra King, Sking@fdeu.org



March Hiring Events



CAREER CONNECTION

March 24

9AM-12PM

SC Works Sumter Center
31 E. Calhoun St
Sumter, SC 29150

SC WORKS

Great employee benefits package:
3 weeks of annual leave accrued yearly
3 weeks of sick leave accrued yearly
13 paid holidays per year
15 days of military leave per year
Police Officers Retirement System (PORS)
Student Loan Forgiveness Program (SLFP)
State health, dental & vision insurance
VA OJT & apprenticeships

Contact us:
(803) 942-0220 | Bob.Holney@scdc.org

KERSHAW COUNTY JOB FAIR

Join us for upcoming Job Fair featuring employers and community partners from Kershaw County and more!

MARCH 28 2025
8:00 AM – 1:00 PM

70 INNOVATION WAY
CAMDEN, SC 29820

SC WORKS

Second Chance Job Fair

10:00AM – 02:00PM
APRIL 17, 2025

North Hope Center
904 N. Main St.
Sumter, SC 29150

SC WORKS

Upcoming Events

Sumter County Job Fair Summary

Employers/Vendors- 38
Job Seekers - 195
Unemployed - 131
Employed - 64
Veterans - 14
Employers/Vendor Survey
Applications/ Resumes received - 311
Considered Good Prospects - 130



WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth Performance Reports

Ms. Margarita Servance presented the WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Program Report for July 1, 2024, through March 12, 2025.

Adult/Dislocated Worker Programs

Chart 1: PY'24 Total Active Adult/DW Enrollments

- New – 108
- Actual -170
- Goal - 156

Chart 2: Received Training:

- Adults/DW – 53

Healthcare remains the dominant area for training; followed by CDL then HVAC.

Chart 3: Performance Outcomes Update

- Credentials - 58
- Measurable Skills Gains - 231

Adult Program Highlight

Mr. Rasheed Halley

Mr. Rasheed Halley enrolled into the WIOA Adult Program on August 23, 2024, being low income. Rasheed began CDL training with Palmetto Training, Inc. on September 28, 2024. While in training he started working with Global Glory Innovations as a yard driver. Mr. Halley successfully completed training and obtained his CDL license on December 31, 2024. He was promoted to a professional driver on February 5, 2025 with a wage of \$27/hour.

Youth Program

Chart 4: Total Active Youth Enrollments

- New – 49
- Actual – 80
- Goal- 130

Ms. Servance briefly discussed the challenges with recruiting and enrolling Out-of-School Youth.

Chart 5: Received Training

- Youth - 23

Ms. Servance stated all training programs attended under the Youth program thus far were in the medical field.

Charts 6 and 7: Performance Outcomes Updates

Youth Credential - 20 Measurable Skills Gain – 77 WEX/OJT – 13 Resumes created/updated - 44
Career Smart – 33 Adult Education - 9

Youth Program Highlight

Ms. Ceasya Gaither

Ms. Ceasya Gaither enrolled in the WIOA Youth program on August 10, 2023, as an unemployed, basic skills deficient, and low-income individual. She participated in a traditional work experience at the Camden SC Works office, where she gained valuable customer service and office operations skills. While continuing to work with her career coach, Ceasya began Patient Care Technician training at Professional Development and Training Services, where she earned her C.N.A. and EKG national certifications. Her hard work and dedication led to employment as a C.N.A. at Pruitt Health Ridgeway on February 12, 2025, with a starting wage of \$17.38/hour.

Financial Report

Ms. Areatha Clark, SLRCOG Deputy Executive Director & Workforce Development Director presented the Financial Report for Program Year 2024 through 2/25/2025:

Chart 1: Total Percent Expended for PY'24

Eckerd Adult – 57.2% - (YTD: \$194,471; Balance: \$145,529)
Eckerd DW – 55.2% - (YTD: \$44,156; Balance: \$35,844)
Eckerd Youth – 48.6% - (YTD: \$194,388; Balance: \$205,612)
Eckerd SC Works Operator – 61.2% - (YTD: \$79,537; Balance: \$50,463)

Chart 2: Planning & Development (PAD) Grant

40.4% - (YTD: \$5,857; Balance: \$8,643)

Ms. Clark mentioned that there had not been much progress in the utilization of the PAD grant until now. Our staff, including five board members, attended a conference last month that is expected to have a significant impact on the grant usage for the month of March. As a result, there will be a noticeable increase in the expenditure rate for this grant by the next meeting.

IX. New Business: **(Motion)**

- Ratification of Email Vote for Fund Transfer: Chairman Edwards called for a motion to ratify the email vote to approve the Transfer of \$140,000 in PY'24 "Fiscal Year" Program Funds from Dislocated Worker to Adult. **The motion was made by Ms. Paige Clack and seconded by Ms. Kim Smith. There being no discussion, Chairman Edwards called for the vote. All were in the favor and the motion passed unanimously.**
- New WIOA Eligible Training Provider Programs: Ms. Freda Amerson, Workforce Development Operations Coordinator, presented two training programs for Board approval. The first program is the Welding Technology training program offered by Palmetto Training, with a tuition cost of \$5,800. This program is being conducted at a new welding location in Manning, which is conveniently located for our participants in Clarendon County. The second program is Class A CDL Training provided by the Valley Coach and Logistics driving training school. This is a training provider in Orangeburg with a tuition cost of \$6,500. While the cost is higher compared to other CDL Training providers, the training duration is

longer and they also offer a hybrid option for the classroom portion. Our team has visited both facilities, reviewed their curriculum, and believe they would be beneficial for our participants. As a result, Chairman Edwards called for a motion to approve the two new training programs and new training provider (Valley Coach and Logistics) for the Santee-Lynches WIOA Eligible Training Provider list. **The motion was made by Ms. Blizzard and seconded by Ms. Tiffany Myers. There being no discussion, Chairman Edwards called for the vote. All were in the favor and the motion passed unanimously.**

- c. PY'25 Request for Proposals for SC Works Operator Services – Rating and Ranking Committee: Ms. Clark discussed with the Board the requirement to establish a Rating and Ranking Committee for the PY'25 Request for Proposals for SC Works Operator Services. She indicated that five (5) volunteers from the Board are needed to serve on this committee. She also explained the process and timeline. The following Board Members volunteered to serve: Dr. William Wright, Chairman Bob Edwards, Mr. John Hornsby, Ms. Kim Smith, and Ms. Emily Peele. The Committee will review proposals in early May and present recommendations at the May 20th Board meeting.

X. Other Business - N/A

XI. Chairman's Comments

Chairman Edwards expressed his gratitude to the staff and Workforce Board members for their engagement in the meeting. He thanked the presenter and all attendees for their participation and valuable contributions.

XII. Adjourn

The Santee-Lynches Workforce Development Board of Directors' meeting was adjourned at 6.07PM.

Recorded by,

Shala Dinkins, Administration Assistant
Santee-Lynches Regional Council of Governments