



**Santee-Lynches Workforce Development Board Meeting  
Via Zoom  
Tuesday, December 8, 2020 - 5:00 PM**

**MINUTES**

**Members Present:**

Clarendon County – Robert Edwards, Kayla Padgett  
Kershaw – Renee Baker, Nicole Gardner, Stewart Kidd, Teresa Oelze  
Lee – George General (Chairman), Annette Karlinsky  
Sumter –Gail Lemmon, Sharon Teigue, Debra Young

**Members Absent:**

Clarendon – Christine Edwards (Excused)  
Kershaw – John Hornsby, Teresa Justice (Excused)  
Lee – Zina Wright (Excused)  
Sumter – Bobby Anderson (Excused), Ashton Elmore, Calvin Hastie, Sr. (Excused), Sam Lowery, Janice Poplin, Jerome Robinson, Elizabeth Williams (Excused)

**Staff Present:**

Christopher McKinney, SLRCOG Executive Director  
Areatha Clark, Deputy Executive Director and Chief, Workforce Development  
Esmonde Levy, Workforce Development Manager  
Freda Amerson, Workforce Development Operations Coordinator  
Steve Berger, SC Works Business Services Lead  
Becky Minegar, SLRCOG Administrative Assistant II  
Dennis Cyphers, SLRCOG Chief, Government Services

**Guests:**

Caroline Rogerson, Eckerd Connects – Workforce Development  
Ray Jackson, SC Works Operator, Eckerd Connects - Workforce Development  
April Barr Ragin, Eckerd Connects – Workforce Development  
Michell Carr, SC Department of Employment and Workforce (SCDEW)  
Brenda Gardner, SC Department of Commerce  
Rayshad Kind, WIOA Participant  
Dynasha Williams, WIOA Participant

**1. Welcome and Call to Order**

The Santee-Lynches Workforce Development Board of Directors' (WDB) Meeting was called to order by Chairman George General at 5:06 PM. A quorum was present.

**2. Invocation/Pledge of Allegiance**

Mr. Ray Jackson provided the invocation and Chairman General led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### 3. Introduction of Guests

Ms. Areatha Clark, Deputy Executive Director and Workforce Development Chief, introduced the new board member, Ms. Gail Lemmon, Carolina Filters, guests, and staff. Ms. Caroline Rogerson introduced two WIOA participants: Rayshad Kind and Dynasha Williams.

### 4. Adoption of Revised Agenda

Chairman General entertained a motion to approve the revised Agenda. **A motion was made by Ms. Sharon Teigue and seconded by Ms. Debra Young.** There being no discussion, Chairman General called for the vote. **All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.**

### 5. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes – October 27, 2020

Chairman General entertained a motion to approve the Workforce Development Board (WDB) Meeting Minutes of October 27, 2020. **A motion was made by Ms. Annette Karlinsky and seconded by Ms. Sharon Teigue.** There being no discussion, Chairman General called for the vote. **All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.**

### 6. Executive Director's Report

Mr. Christopher McKinney reported in November the SC Works Centers in Sumter and Camden placed 31% of customers into employment for our region. Mr. McKinney stated the staff is continuing to do outreach and connecting people to work. He further stated in the third quarter we are at 46.21% entered employment rate, contributing to the State's total for the centers.

He next reported on economic development. Santee-Lynches Regional Council of Governments has found their niche in regional small business development, support, and education. While the county economic developers focus on large companies, the COG will focus on local small businesses. The intent is to not compete with anyone but be supportive of all economic development efforts via collaboration and information sharing. Mr. McKinney continued with the announcement of creating two Innovation Hubs. These hubs will tie our region with two major education anchors, University of South Carolina, and the University of North Carolina. Staff are in the process of creating an agreement with Morris College to support and grow existing businesses and to help new ideas from concept to market. He further stated the COG has MOAs with the University of South Carolina and the University of North Carolina and are applying for a \$200,000 grant from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) to support these two innovation hubs. These hubs will be located in Sumter and Camden. The Sumter location will serve Sumter and Clarendon Counties and the Camden location will serve Kershaw and Lee Counties. The hubs will provide research, both virtually and in-person, entrepreneurship strategies and development, product demonstration, customer discovery, innovation and experiential learning, financial innovations to grow businesses. These hubs will also be focused on middle and high school students to talk with them about business development, ideas, and financing. He stated the vision is to help 100 new business in the next three years ~~to~~ get off the ground and to help 300 businesses that currently exist become more streamlined/profitable with the hopes of seeing a ripple affect across our four-county region.

### 7. Reports

#### **Youth Report and WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs Program Update**

Ms. Caroline Rogerson Eckerd Connects - Workforce Development, reported on their Performance for PY'20 through October 30, 2020 for all programs.

She reported Enrollments for Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth:

- Adult – Total active enrollments - 151 participants with a goal of 325 participants (46% of goal achieved)
- Dislocated Worker – Total active enrollments - 43 participants with a goal of 50 participants (86% of goal achieved)

- Youth – Total active enrollments - 88 participants with a goal of 145 participants (61% of goal achieved)

She next reported on Performance Outcomes as of October 30, 2020:

Adult and Dislocated Workers:

- 73 participants entered training with 40 of those participants currently active
- 73 participants have earned credentials
- 17 participants have engaged in the On-The-Job Training Program, with 11 currently active

Youth:

- 34 participants entered training with 12 of those participants currently active
- 41 participants have earned credentials
- 13 participants have engaged in Work Experience, with 3 currently active

Ms. Rogerson then shared an adult success story: Aundrell Jackson joined the WIOA program as a dislocated worker following a major layoff as a result of the pandemic in March 2020. He began CDL training at Sage Technical Services in Lancaster, SC in September. Aundrell obtained his CDL at the beginning of November and recently started orientation for his new employment at Gypsum Express. He will begin working full time on the road at the end of November. Aundrell had high praises for his case manager in the assistance she provided in sending him to training, encouraging him throughout, and seeing him through to the final stages of employment. Aundrell's success proves to be a high point during a global pandemic causing hardships on families and the surrounding communities.

Mr. Rayshad Kind provided an adult success story: He was laid off due to COVID19 and with the help of the Eckerd program, he attended CDL Training at Palmetto Training and has found employment as a truck driver. He stated this was a good experience.

Ms. Rogerson highlighted four WEX2Work Youth participants: Jaquan Johnson interned at Caterpillar and is now working full time at Continental Tire; Telisa Brooker interned at Caris Healthcare and is working at Lake Marion Nursing Home and is attending Pharmacy Tech training; Shatoria McCoy attended Patient Care Technician training and has received Phlebotomy and EKG Certifications and is employed with Sumter Health and Rehab. She is currently attending CCTC majoring in Biology and Psychology and minoring in Neuroscience; and Travis Sears attended forklift training and decided manufacturing was not for him. He attended CCTC for EMT training and is not working with BNT Transportation as an EMT.

Mr. Rogerson shared a youth success story: From studying for GED classes, to becoming a Professional Truck Driver, John Pfeifer III is now working the job of his dreams. Throughout the years, John watched his Father, a professional truck driver, workday in and out to make ends meet for his family. When asked who inspired him to become a Truck Driver, it was a no brainer for John to say that his Father inspired him. John started his journey by attending GED classes at the Sumter County Adult Education Building. He stated that he really appreciated the staff and was thankful for their assistance to help him get closer to his dream job. John said, "Without my career coach, Ms. Kelly, I would not have gotten my CDL License. She helped me get what I wanted in life." Ms. Kelly introduced John to Eckerd Connects and enrolled him in the WIOA program on March 2019. She went above and beyond to help John reach his goal to become a Truck Driver. John's first Truck Driving job was at Hodge Trucking Company, Inc., as a full-time employee making \$10.00 an hour. Now, he is working at Thompson Industrial working full-time making twice as much as his first job.

### **SC Works Operator Report**

Mr. Ray Jackson provided the SC Works Operator report thru October 30, 2020. Mr. Jackson gave a two-month comparison of individuals who checked into the VOS Greeter: September – 1,215 individuals and

October – 1,520. The reason for the increase in traffic is because of inquiries about training opportunities, Wagner-Peysers services, and other partner agencies that have returned to the SC Works Centers.

Mr. Jackson then provided a two-month comparison of services provided:

September 2020 Summary	Total	October 2020 Summary	Total
Total number of Individuals that Registered	505	Total number of Individuals that Registered	418
Total number of Individuals that Logged In	3,691	Total number of Individuals that Logged In	3,448
Total number of Distinct Individuals Receiving Services	4,803	Total number of Distinct Individuals Receiving Services	4,967
Total number of Internal Job Orders Created	111	Total number of Internal Job Orders Created	142
Total number of Services Provided Employers	177	Total number of Services Provided Employers	233

He reviewed the Unemployment Rates through October 2020:

- South Carolina – 4.2%
- Santee-Lynches Region – 4.4%
- Sumter County – 4.7%
- Clarendon County – 4.7%
- Kershaw County – 3.6%
- Lee County – 5.5%

Mr. Jackson provided a data table that reflected the Area Profile for the Santee-Lynches Region. It shows preliminary estimated labor force, employment, and unemployment information for South Carolina and our four-county region.

Area	Civilian Labor Force	Number Employed	Number Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
S.C.	2,386,684	2,286,351	100,333	4.2%
Santee-Lynches	92,719	88,623	4,096	4.2%
Sumter	43,701	41,639	2,062	4.4%
Kershaw	29,498	28,432	1,066	4.7%
Clarendon	12,814	12,214	600	3.6%
Lee	6,706	6,338	368	5.5%

Mr. Jackson reported there were 93 job placements in November which brings a total of 682 job placements since January.

Mr. Jackson next reported on two virtual job fairs held last month:

- SC Virtual Healthcare Job Fair – November 17, 2020. This event hosted 251 job seekers and 12 employers specializing in the healthcare field. He explained the job seeker was able to connect to the employer’s website to search and apply for available jobs.
- Virtual Job Fair of the Carolinas – November 17, 2020. This job fair was co-hosted by SC Works Catawba and NC Works.

Mr. Jackson highlighted the month of December virtual workshops and that staff are still providing services virtually, to include soft skills workshops and virtual hiring events.

A discussion ensued concerning the Job Fair of the Carolinas. Mr. Jackson explained that the reason for the job fair was to connect those job seekers that live along the South Carolina and North Carolina borders with employment opportunities in those areas.

### **Financial Report**

Mr. Esmonde Levy provided the financial update for Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Expenditures for PY'20 through October 31, 2020:

#### **Chart 1: Program Year 2020 Eckerd Adult Total including transfers:**

Mr. Levy stated an internal transfer of \$130,000 from Dislocated Worker to Adult was made by Eckerd due to serving more Adults than Dislocated Workers.

Eckerd spent \$188,274 of \$430,000 (contract amount including a transfer of \$130,000) of the Adult budget leaving a balance of \$241,725 (43.78% expended).

#### **Chart 2: Eckerd Adult Monthly Trends**

July 2020 – \$60,777  
August 2020 – \$40,677  
September 2020 – \$42,180  
October 2020 - \$44,639

#### **Chart 3: Program Year 2020 Eckerd Dislocated Worker Total**

Eckerd spent \$95,674 of \$320,000 (contract amount reflecting a transfer of \$130,000) of the Dislocated Worker budget leaving a balance of \$224,325 (29.9% expended).

#### **Chart 4: Eckerd Dislocated Worker Monthly Trends**

July 2020 - \$29,491  
August - \$25,342  
September - \$26,427  
October - \$14,413

#### **Chart 5: Program Year 2020 Eckerd Youth Total**

Eckerd spent \$172,461 of \$460,000.00 (contract amount) with a balance of \$287,538 (37.49% expended).

#### **Chart 6: Eckerd Youth Monthly Trends**

July 2020 - \$24,628  
August 2020 - \$50,692  
September 2020 - \$55,598  
October 2020 - \$41,542

## **8. Ratification of Email Vote**

### **Reallocation of Dislocated Worker Funding from Waccamaw LWDA**

The following was voted on via email by Workforce Board members: The Waccamaw Local Workforce Development Area/COG reached out to us in April 2020 to request funding to be able to cover their expenditures through the remainder of the 2020 program year (thru June 30<sup>th</sup>). Santee-Lynches is now in a similar position due to budget cuts for PY'20 and a surge in need from customers/participants and employers during the first quarter of PY'20. We have experienced a significant increase in requests for occupational skills training and On-the-Job Training and these requests have not waned. Our Provider, Eckerd Connects, has

spent a lot of funding in the past three-four months to meet the demand of both populations. As a result, Santee-Lynches has reached out to Waccamaw to request unexpended funds to help us continue to meet the demands within the region. Waccamaw has not experienced as much of a demand and has the funding available to reallocate funds to Santee-Lynches.

**Ratification of the email vote is required at this time. In response, a motion was made by Ms. Sharon Teigue and seconded by Ms. Annette Karlinsky to ratify the email vote to approve the Reallocation of Dislocated Worker Funds from Waccamaw RCOG to Santee-Lynches RCOG to ensure workforce services are not interrupted in their area. There being no discussion, Chairman General called for the vote. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.**

## **9. Special Presentation**

Mr. Dennis Cyphers, Government Services Chief spoke about Economic Development efforts in the region. He stated the COG was awarded a grant at the end of August that will fund a study for Broadband and an Industry Sector Study. He stated this will affect workforce and economic development in two ways: There are many areas that are underserved in broadband coverage. The COG has currently partnered with Farmers Telephone Cooperative (FTC) and other providers to assist in a plan to identify those areas that need additional broadband coverage. The second part is the Industry Sector Study that identifies gaps in our region and how to fill those gaps through workforce and post-secondary education systems. He stated in speaking with the leadership of USC, UNC, and Morris College, strategies need to be implemented to better align higher education and workforce. The COG will develop a plan based on the Industry Sector Study to determine where these gaps exist and, in turn, the local educational institutions will provide training or curriculum to help fill those gaps. He further stated IT is deficit in our area. The partnership with Morris College to add a Cyber Security Program could help close this gap.

A discussion ensued concerning broadband in the rural areas and students not having internet connectivity. Mr. Cyphers explained there will be parts to Broadband: First, to put a “band aid” on those immediate issues to get us through and second, a five-year plan where partners are created to not only get Broadband but Fiber to those areas to have a true high-speed internet.

Chairman General requested updates be provided to the board as the process moves along. Mr. Cyphers stated they should have a S.W.O.T analysis by January 2021. Mr. McKinney added Mr. Cyphers and team which includes two interns, have done a phenomenal job.

## **10. Chairman’s Comments**

Chairman General thanked everyone for joining and encouraged everyone to be vigilant and mindful of pandemic fatigue.

## **11. Adjourn**

There being no further business, the Santee-Lynches Workforce Development Board Meeting was adjourned at 5:47 PM.

Recorded by,

Becky Minegar, Administrative Assistant II  
Santee-Lynches Regional Council of Governments