



northeastern WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Northeastern Workforce Development Board Quarterly Meeting 26 Franklin Street, Bangor or Via Zoom Meeting

Thursday, September 10, 2020
10:00 am – 1:00 pm

Attendees

Board Members via Zoom

Erin Benson Aroostook County Action Program (ACAP) Program Coordinator
Danny MacDonald Eastern Aroostook and Adult Education Director
Nikki Fletcher Bangor Savings Bank, Human Resources Manager
Jennifer Buckingham Tempo Employment Services Presque Isle Manager
Brent Harford Hammond Lumber Machias Manager
LaNiece Sirois Central Aroostook Chamber of Commerce Executive Director
Destiny Demo Cianbro Sr. Human Resources Manager
Traci St. Clair Teamster's Union Local 340 Union Representative
Patty Perry Bangor, Machias & Presque Isle CareerCenter Manager
Jon Farley Eastern Maine Development Corporation (EMDC) Vice President
John Herweh MMG Insurance Group Vice President, Human Resources
Leah Buck Northern Maine Community College Assistant Dean of Continuing Education
Terri Swanson Swanson Consulting and Associates Principal
Denice Conary Penquis CAP Chief Financial Officer
Andrea Bickford BRS-DBVI Rehabilitation Services Manager

Board Staff

Joanna Russell NWDB Executive Director
Rebecca Bryant NWDB Program Assistant
Ben Hawkins NWDB Program Coordinator

Interested Parties via Zoom

Susan Cerini Eastern Maine Development Corporation (EMDC) Director of Workforce
Betsy Fitzgerald Washington County Manager- Proxy for Commissioner Gardner
Sara McLaughlin Independent Financial Consultant
Jane Blackwood Axiom Adult Education Executive Director
Anne Patterson MDI Adult Education Director
Robin Doody Northern Light Talent Acquisition Specialist
Renee Doble City of Brewer Deputy Director of Economic Development
Molly Ginn Penobscot Job Corps Deputy Director
Tom Grogan New Ventures Maine Workforce Development Specialist
Jen Peters Sunrise County Economic Council (SCEC) Assistant Director
Chris Rector Senator Angus King's Office Regional Representative
Lisa Shaw Bangor Public Library Rural and Small Libraries Specialist
Ginny Carroll MDOL Division of Policy and Evaluation Director
John Wombacher Hancock County Commissioner
Mike Camire Penobscot Job Corps Center Director

Leah Gulliver EMDC Senior Workforce Development Specialist
Peaches Bass BES Program Manager
Glenn Mills Center for Workforce Research and Information (CWRI) Deputy Director
Kayty Jalbert AMHC Volunteer Coordinator – ACAP Guest Speaker

Board Members Absent with Notice

Chris Gagnon, Wayfair Regional Director
Heather Pelletier Fish River Rural Health Executive Director
Mike Ballesteros Puritan Med Products Director of Organization Development

Minutes

Welcome and Introductions – Nikki Fletcher opened the meeting at 10:00 am by welcoming everyone and asking them to introduce themselves by name and share the name of their organization.

Meeting Minutes from 6/11/20 – Action Item – Nikki Fletcher requested a motion to approve the 6/11/20 minutes. **Patty Perry motioned to approve. Terri Swanson seconded the motion. Motion approved. See attached pages 2-5 for 6/11/20 minutes.**

Executive Committee Report – Nikki Fletcher – Since the board last met, the Executive Committee discussed and approved a wage increase for the NWDB Workforce Coordinator, Ben Hawkins, and approved the NWDB Program Assistant, Rebecca Bryant, to return from maternity leave at 32 hours per week. Funding is still budgeted at 40 hours per week incase needed. The Commissioners then met and approved as well.

Staff and the consortium are working to update the One-Stop Partner MOU to reduce redundancy and find ways to collaborate. A major concern is the cost sharing plan for CareerCenters as they are currently closed. Many on-site partners will likely not return to their typical on-site delivery and will continue delivering services virtually. The One-Stop Operator contract needs to be extended for one more year due to the postponement of the service provider procurement.

Rob Brown with the CDI employer transition project facilitated his first workshop on July 29th and will have two more workshops for businesses looking to transition into retirement.

Ryan Bushey is no longer on the board or executive committee and will need to be replaced. LaNiece Sirois has joined the board representing the local area chambers of commerce replacing Gretchen Wilson. LaNiece has been asked to join the executive committee and Brent Hartford to join as assistant chair. **Traci St. Clair motioned to approve adding LaNiece Sirois and Brent Harford to Executive Committee. Patty Perry seconded the motion. Motion approved. See attached pages 6-7 for LaNiece Sirois and Brent Hartford Bios.**

The board had a request from a local organization to provide incumbent worker training. Funding for this type of training has never been allocated by the board. The executive committee discussed the importance of increasing skillsets in existing workforce and helping workers get to the next level of their careers. This will in turn

open more entry level positions. The executive committee discussed allocating no more than 10% on incumbent worker training (WIOA regulations allows up to 20% of funding). The executive committee recognizes that WIOA service providers would be responsible for all submitted proposals and in deciding what businesses are to receive the training.

Joanna could not reach an agreement with the Portland Recovery Community Center (PRCC) on the cost to deliver the Recovery Coach Basics training to our local area. As a certified trainer, the option of allowing Joanna to deliver training or search for another certified trainer was discussed. The Bangor Area Recovery Network (BARN) and Aroostook Mental Health Center (AMHC) are submitting proposals for Penobscot and Aroostook Counties. Healthy Acadia has been contracted to deliver training in Piscataquis, Hancock, and Washington Counties beginning on September 30, 2020.

NWDB Executive Director's Report – Joanna Russell – Action Items –

One-Stop Operator (OSO) Contract request to extend to June 30, 2021 – The OSO Consortium coordinates integration of delivery of workforce services at the CareerCenter among the required WIOA partners which consists of EMDC representing economic development, ACAP representing WIOA Title 1B, and Caribou Adult Education. The board previously postponed the procurement process due to Covid-19. Joanna is recommending the OSO consortium contract to be extended one more year to June 30, 2021. **Patty Perry motioned to extend the OSO contract to June 30, 2021. Traci St. Clair seconded the motion. Motion approved.**

Incumbent worker training will allocate funding to existing workforce. Under WIOA regulations, the purpose is to avert a layoff or to help increase wages for the underemployed. Heather Pelletier explained that Fish River Rural Health is still struggling to fill positions even after increasing wages as much as possible and questioned if this training would be an option for those positions. Incumbent worker training is not for new hire recruitment. There are currently thousands of open jobs in Maine and job seekers need to be connected to the appropriate positions. The Maine Quality Centers are currently offering incumbent worker training in our local area, but it cannot be used for non-profit companies or municipalities. The Sunrise County Economic Council offers a scholarship to provide training to individuals with low to moderate income. Jen Peters has seen many scholarship applicants that have been offered positions and the organization requires further certification within 90 days of employment. ACAP worked closely with Heather Pelletier to develop the healthcare academy and it proved difficult to get participation from individuals in that area. **Jon Herweh motioned to approve incumbent worker training with a cap of 10%. Patty Perry seconded the motion. Motion approved.**

Fiscal and program monitoring – Joanna will interview participants via Zoom from the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs and is inviting volunteers from the board to assist with group interviews. This has been a great way to help board members understand the system and regulations. **Robin Doody, Denice Conary, LaNiece Sirois, Nikki Fletcher, Terri Swanson, and Brent Hartford volunteer.**

Rob Brown CDI update – see attached page 8.

The workforce team is developing a proposal to deliver to Morgan Sturdivant with WABI TV 5 which will include five (or more) 60 second segments highlighting the value of combining workforce development and recovery. Next steps will be to meet with EMDC, ACAP, Laurie McDonnell with MDOL, and Ben Hawkins to complete the proposal. The team will present the proposal to Ms. Sturdivant the week of September 21st. 2020.

Betty-Ann Bryce, the Special Advisor for Rural Affairs, requested assistance in coordinating a visit by the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy Director, James Carroll on October 1st. She explained her experience in Bangor in November of 2019 was so positive she thought they may benefit from meeting with our rural stakeholders who deal with substance use disorder and workforce development during these challenging times with Covid-19. The group is interested in discussing challenges related to obtaining employment while in recovery. Joanna is working to recruit businesses to attend this meeting schedule 12:30p-2:00 at the BARN. Terri Swanson volunteered and if Zoom accessible, John Herweh and Brent Hartford would like to attend.

Joanna discussed an opportunity for the ONEG team to present an update on the Connections to Opportunities project to the Governor's Commission on Substance Use Disorder Services on October 14, 2020. She has confirmed EMDC, ACAP, MDOL and NWDB representatives to join in the presentation.

NWDB Budget Review – Sara McLaughlin – Action Item – Sara McLaughlin updated the board on the current administrative budget and expenditure of program funds. This program year, the fiscal operating approved budget is \$380,395 which is about \$100,000 more than the last program year due to the Opioid National Emergency Grant (ONEG). Through the end of August, two months into the fiscal year, expenditures should be at about 16% and we are at 14% of budget. Sara currently does not have any concerns; there may be some savings this year due to Covid-19, but it is too early to predict.

The ONEG is a two-year award and although the grant was awarded in March 2020, USDOL has December 2019 as the award date. The board has until December 2021 to expend all funds but can apply for a no cost extension if needed. EMDC has enrolled 35 individuals into the ONEG which is more than any areas within the state and are now fully staffed and John Farley believes they should be on target by the end of the year. *Notation – EMDC's budget has been updated on the financial report to not mirror ACAP's budget. Updated report attached.* **Denice Conary motioned to accept the current NWDB budget. Robin Doody seconded the motion. Motion approved. See attached pages 9-10 for the NWDB budget review.**

NWDB Program Review – ACAP Participant, Kayty Jalbert – After her home burned down, Kayty stayed at a homeless shelter in Presque Isle and visited the Hope and Prosperity Center frequently. The family coaches at the center suggested she reach out to ACAP for assistance. She began working with Stanley Targonski in January 2020 and is currently in recovery. Stanley connected her with Erik Lamoreau for work experience and she was able to volunteer at Roads to Recovery until the shut down in March. Kayty volunteered at a childcare center during the pandemic, was able to

reunite with her daughter, and received childcare through the center. ACAP helped to provide clothes, transportation, and ultimately employment as she is now an employee at Roads to Recovery. Kayty can be reached at kjalbert@amhc.org with any questions.

Erin Benson – ACAP update – Erin reported all but one employee has returned to the office. All participants are being served virtually. ACAP has partnered with WIOA providers across the state to develop a consistent message and seamless workforce development system and offer shared virtual workshops statewide. Valley unified adult education, young adult academy. ACAP has one support counselor and one peer connector working with the ONEG who visit the recovery centers weekly and are actively recruiting organizations for partnership. The grant currently has eight participants, eight pending enrollments, and two applicants that were ineligible but were referred to other programs. **See attached pages 11–16 for ACAP Program Review.**

Jon Farley – EMDC update – All of PY18 funding has been spent and PY19 is quickly spending down. Puritan Med Products now has 230 employees working in Pittsfield. EMDC is assisting to get word out to unemployed population in the area and has sent 33k emails. The Guilford location is expanding and hiring an additional 170 workers. EMDC is working closely with Ben Hawkins on the ONEG, also called Connecting to Opportunities Grant, working to recruit perspective clients and employers. This region is well in advance compared to the rest of the state and has a great strategy in motion. Just in the last six to eight weeks, 35 individuals have been served including individuals in recovery and reentering from detention facilities. EMDC was recently awarded the WIOA service provider contract to operate in the Central Western local area and has a 10-county area. **See attached pages 17–20 for EMDC Program Review.**

Leah Gulliver presented a slideshow of EMDC's first Young Mainers Workforce Academy cohort which had 14 participants, several of whom participated in successful work experiences. EMDC is on the second cohort now with 10 participants. The full graduation can be found on the EMDC Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/EMDCMaine>.

Connections to Opportunities, NEG Project – Ben Hawkins has been working on the Connecting to Opportunities Initiative with the board for a little over two months. Outreach has been primarily focused in Aroostook and Washington counties thus far. A common misconception is employing someone in recovery can have negative impact on business and employers who hear success stories are much more engaged in recovery. Ben is looking for referrals and can be reached at BHawkins@northeasternwdb.org.

Ben Hawkins participated in the Recovery Coach Basics training last week. While there was a lot of beneficial information, it may not be the best training program to educate employers. The board is still in the early stages. The BARN is familiar with Recovery Coach Basics training, among other trainings, and Ben will be meeting with them to try to find the best way to deliver training for businesses. Board members are invited to attend; Jenn Buckingham, Nikki Fletcher, Terri Swanson, Jon Herweh, and Robin Doody volunteered. Ben is requesting questions and suggestions from the board surrounding what this training should focus on when directed to businesses. Erin Benson is assembling a workshop for the spring and would like to coordinate with this training.

Labor Market Information (LMI) – Glenn Mills – The pandemic has drastically disrupted the labor market, but we are on the road to recovery. What is happening on a state level is happening nationwide as well. The biggest impact was in April with about 100k jobs lost in Maine. Through July, about 44k jobs have been gained back. All current LMI can be found on the website at <https://www.maine.gov/labor/cwri/> and more data will be released next week.

NWDB Procurement – Nikki Fletcher – Action Item – The board voted in March to postpone the WIOA Title IB service provider procurement process due to Covid-19 and to revisit in September after reviewing the local LMI. **Patty Perry moves to continue postponement and revisit the WIOA Title 1B procurement in December 2020. LaNiece seconded the motion. Motion approved.**

COVID 19 System Challenges & Updates – The situation we are in is unprecedented and the most important priority is safety of our employees and our community. EMDC resides at the Bangor CareerCenter, which is designated as the One-Stop CareerCenter, and at the Machias CareerCenter. The Maine Department of Administrative and Financial Services (DAFS) invoices EMDC quarterly in advance. The annual cost is \$66,000. EMDC does not have a lease agreement and historically has not had that type of arrangement; they created a cost allocation plan for the facility which is negotiated every year among the partners residing in the facilities. MDOL has not provided much information of reopening and how to reopen safely. October 8, 2020 is set as the soft reopen date but materials such as plexiglass, which has a six to eight week waiting period, has not been ordered. Kim Moore with BES stated they are following the Governor's direction and all government buildings are currently closed. Joanna is concerned if EMDC is paying rent for space that is not being used, it can be considered a disallowed cost and would have to be paid back.

Sara McLaughlin clarified for the board that the board itself does not have a direct agreement with the CareerCenter, EMDC does. The Central Western Maine Workforce Development Board did rent a space in the Lewiston and Augusta CareerCenters previously. Their board held back payments until a lease was in place. EMDC should assess the ongoing invoices to assure charges for unused space is NOT being spread across all partners as "shared space". If the facility has space that is not being rented, that cost should not pass along to other organizations within the building. **Denice Conary made the motion to direct EMDC to request a lease on behalf of the board for both the Bangor and Machias locations from BES and postpone next quarters payment until the end of this month to gain more information. Brent Hartford seconded the motion. Motion approved.** Joanna will meet with the CEOs to inform of this decision.

The next quarterly board meeting will be Thursday, December 10th from 10am to 1pm via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted by Rebecca Bryant.



Quarterly Meeting
September 10, 2020 – 10:00AM-1:00PM

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85953832506?pwd=S0tRaXYrL3JGbHVQcHdpVEUrUUU2QT09>

Meeting ID: 859 5383 2506

Password: 759884

Telephone Conference Dial: 1-646-876-9923 Meeting ID: 859 5383 2506

AGENDA

1. Welcome & Introductions – Nikki Fletcher (**5 Minutes**)
2. Meeting minutes from (6/11/20)- Nikki Fletcher- **Action Item**
3. Executive Committee Report – Nikki Fletcher (**5 minutes**)
4. NWDB Executive Director's Report – Joanna Russell (**15 Minutes**)
OSO- Extend Contract to 6/30/21 **Action Item**
Incumbent Worker Training **Action Item**
NWDB Fiscal and Program Monitoring
Update CDI Rob Brown Project
5. NWDB Budget Review- Sara McLaughlin- (**15 Minutes**) **Action Item**
6. NWDB Program Review- (**35 Minutes**)
EMDC Jon Farley & Susan Cerini – **Workforce Academy Video**
ACAP Erin Benson – **Adult Program Participant**
7. **Break- (10 Minutes)**
8. Connections to Opportunities, NEG Project- Ben Hawkins (**10 Minutes**)
9. Labor Market Information – Glenn Mills, CWRI (**30 Minutes**)
10. NWDB Procurement – Nikki Fletcher (**20 Minutes**) **Action Item**
11. COVID 19 System Challenges & Updates- Joanna (**20 minutes**) **Action Item**

Save the Date--Next Quarterly Meeting 12/10/20 (Zoom)



Quarterly Meeting Minutes **June 11, 2020 – 10:00AM-1:00PM**

All Attended via Zoom

NWDB Members

1. Nikki Fletcher – Board Chair – Bangor Savings Bank
2. Ryan Bushey- Board Vice Chair - **last meeting**- Louisiana Pacific
3. Denice Conary – Board Finance Chair
4. John Herweh – MMG Insurance
5. Brent Hartford – Hammond Lumber
6. Terri Swanson – Swanson Consulting & Associates, LLC
7. Patty Perry- MDOL/Bureau of Employment Services, (BES)
8. Andrea Bickford - MDOL- (BRS-DBVI) & Vocational Rehab
9. Chris Gagnon – Wayfair
10. Danny MacDonald – Eastern Aroostook Adult and Community Education
11. Heather Pelletier – Fish River Rural Health
12. Erin Benson – Aroostook County Action Program, (ACAP)
13. Jennifer Buckingham – **first meeting** - TEMPO Employment Services

NWDB Members Absent with Notice

1. Jon Farley – Eastern Maine Development Corporation, (EMDC)
2. Traci St. Clair – Teamsters Union Local 340
3. Melissa Gerety – Cross Insurance Center
4. Leah Buck – Northern Maine Community College, (NMCC)
5. Gretchen Wilson – Ellsworth Chamber of Commerce
6. Destiny Demo - Cianbro
7. Mike Ballesteros - Puritan Medical Products

NWDB Chief Elected Officials

1. Commissioner Wombacher – Hancock County
2. Commissioner Baldacci – Penobscot County
3. Betsy Fitzgerald – for Commissioner Gardner – Washington County

NWDB Staff and Financial Consultant

1. Joanna Russell – NWDB Executive Director
2. Sara McLaughlin – Financial Consultant

Meeting Guest and Interested Parties

1. Ryan Pelletier – Aroostook County Administrator
2. Susan Cereni – EMDC
3. Tom Fernands – EMDC
4. Loretta Alley, EMDC

5. Amanda Smith – EMDC
6. Sam Giason – EMDC
7. Doug Dunbar – EMDC
8. Michael Cormire – Penobscot Job Corps
9. Roger Felix – Loring Job Corps
10. Joe Fagnant – Houlton Adult Education
11. Ander Thebaud – RSU 24 Adult Education
12. Anne Patterson – MDI Adult Education
13. Megan Dichter – Statewide Adult Education
14. Tom Grogan – New Ventures Maine
15. Chris Martin – Get IT – GIVE IT (Computers)
16. Rob Brown – CDI Project update
17. Peaches Bass – MDOL/BES
18. Josh Howe – State Workforce Board
19. Kelly Cotiaux – US Senator Collin’s Office
20. Edie Smith – US Senator King’s Office

Welcome & Introductions – Nikki Fletcher

Nikki Fletcher opened the meeting at 10:05am with welcome and introductions by all.

Meeting minutes from (3/12/20; 3/24/20; and 5/11/20)- Nikki Fletcher- Action Item

- Danny MacDonald made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from 3/12/20 (**Meeting Document #1**). Terri Swanson seconded the motion. The NWDB members voted unanimously to approve the meeting minutes for 3/12/20.
- Terri Swanson made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from 3/24/20 (**Meeting Document #2**). Danny MacDonald seconded the motion. The NWDB members voted unanimously to approve the meeting minutes for 3/24/20.
- Danny MacDonald made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from 5/11/20 (**Meeting Document #3**), Terry Swanson seconded the motion. The NWDB members voted unanimously to approve the meeting minutes for 5/11/20.

Farewell Ryan Bushey & Welcome Jennifer Buckingham New Member- Nikki (10 minutes)

The NWDB recognized Ryan Bushey for his service to the northeastern region’s workforce system. Ryan has worked for over 15 years on the workforce boards, first for the Aroostook Washington Workforce Investment Board and second, for the Northeastern Workforce Development Board. He also served on the State of Maine’s workforce board for a significant amount of time. Ryan will continue to serve on local committees to support the region’s economy. Thank you Ryan and we all wish you the very best!

Before leaving Ryan Bushey also assisted in finding his replacement and recommended that the county commissioners consider Jennifer Buckingham as a board member and replacement for his seat to serve on behalf of Aroostook County. Jennifer agreed to serve on the board and the county commissioners voted and approved Jennifer Buckingham’s application to the board. Jennifer, welcome to the team!

NWDB Budget Review- Sara McLaughlin- Action Item (15 Minutes)

Sara presented the budget to actuals as her first item (**Meeting Document #4**). Danny MacDonald made a motion to approve the budget to actuals. Terri Swanson seconded the motion. The board voted unanimously to approve the budget to actuals.

Sara presented the proposed annual budget including PY20 (**Meeting Document #5**) to the board. Ryan Bushey made a motion to approve the proposed budget. Patty Perry seconded the motion. The board voted unanimously to approve the proposed budget.

NWDB Program Review- (40 minutes)- Program Reports and Handouts emailed 6.5.20

- 1) **EMDC** - Susan Cerini presented the program updates for EMDC (**Meeting Documents #s 6-10**).
- 2) **ACAP**- Erin Benson presented the program update and NEG Press Release for ACAP (**Meeting Document #s 11&12**).

NWDB Executive Director's Report – Joanna Russell (15 Minutes)

OSP Meeting 6.3.20 Zoom Issue

The NWDB OSP meeting experienced Zoom bombers and ultimately had to end the meeting and recreate another meeting to continue with the process. The NWDB Zoom meetings will be secured to avoid future incidents.

New Hire – Benjamin Hawkins (NEG Program Coordinator)

Benjamin Hawkins accepted the position of NEG program coordinator. His start date is June 22, 2020. He will be traveling throughout the five counties in the near future. Dates have been set to visit Aroostook County June 29 & June 30, 2020.

Puritan Medical Products update

MDOL in collaboration with NWDB and Coastal Counties Inc. applied for a disaster relief grant through U.S. Department of Labor for \$11.1 million to support disaster relief workers across Maine (approximately \$4.5M of that was dedicated for Puritan). However, we were only awarded \$1.5M and the award agreement places a very strict limit on what we can spend per participant. The low award and spending restrictions have required everyone to rethink how to use the funds.

Unfortunately, MDOL will not be able to fund the Puritan positions with this NEG grant.

Ginny Carroll met with the two local areas (NWDB and CWMWDB) to discuss how to serve the existing Guildford site and the new Pittsfield site. The NWDB and CWMWDB and their service providers (EMDC and WMCA) talked about how they can continue to support Puritan's efforts to recruit and train the workers needed. Both areas are committed to working with Puritan and the recruiting agency to identify and direct applicants for the open positions and to identify any that meet program eligibility so that regular workforce funds can be tapped to support an on-the-job training (OJT) agreement. An OJT agreement can reimburse companies up to 50% of the worker's hourly wage cost for the first few weeks of OJT training.

EMDC has contacted over 13,000 job seekers via email to inform them of the Puritan positions and prompt them to apply as these positions get listed. They have agreed to continue this level of outreach going forward as is WMCA.

Jon Farley's team at EMDC want to continue to work with Puritan and will smooth the way for WMCA to assist also.

The Central Western Maine counterparts who will work with Puritan to set up OJT contract agreements and can be contacted if needed. Puritan was encouraged to reach out to CWMWDB to settle on next steps.

Although we did not get the funding we anticipated, we are all dedicated to supporting Puritan in every way possible.

NWDB MDOL Fiscal Review for PY18 - Quick Update

Department of Administrative Services conducted a fiscal review Tuesday June 9th and Wednesday June 10th. They had discussions with MDOL-Bureau of Employment Services (conducts all WIOA program reviews) and decided to combine the reports for both last year's fiscal and program reviews and this year's fiscal and program reviews. I will provide an update once the letter is received.

Procurement Reminder – September LMI assessment

On March 24th, the county commissioners in collaboration with the NWDB decided to postpone the procurement process for the NWDB WIOA contracts. The board and commissioners agreed to reassess the labor market information in September. This serves as a reminder to all that the board will look at the new data and decide whether to move forward or wait.

15 Minute Break

Information Technology Exchange - give IT, get IT, **Chris Martin** (15 Minutes)

Ownership Transition Initiative – Project Update **Rob Brown** (5 minutes)

Online WIOA Information/Orientation Workshop **ACAP & EMDC** (45 minutes)

Save the Date--Next Quarterly Meeting 9/11/20 (Zoom & onsite- Piscataquis County?)



LaNiece Sirois Bio

LaNiece's education is in business with a concentration in Human Resources and has over 20 years of Human Resources experience and leadership. Following, she worked in aspects of workforce development including as staff to the Northeastern Workforce Development Board. She currently serves as the President for the Northeastern Society of Human Resource Managers (NESHHRM) and serves on The Maine State SHRM Board (MESHHRM). She is also the President of the Presque Isle Kiwanis Club. She began her career change almost 2 years ago to start leading the Central Aroostook Chamber of Commerce as the new Executive Director. In this capacity, she serves on the Boards of the Aroostook Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (AACCE) and on the Maine Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (MACCE). In her spare time, she is the creator of LaNiece Skin Care products and manages the MaineSimple Shoppe featuring locally made crafts, seeds, and other creations.

LaNiece lives in Fort Fairfield with her husband, Sonny. Together they have 5 children and 6 grandchildren.

Brent Hartford
Milbridge, ME

Married for 36 years, Beth Hartford and a daughter Katelyn Hartford.

Grew up in Columbia Falls, Washington county. 7 siblings.

Retired from the US Navy Chief Petty Officer. During my Naval career I taught, Rights and Responsibilities class, Ethics and Professionalism, and Courage and Conduct. I may be presenting this to a classroom of 20 or a whole command of a 1,000 or more. I also, designed, constructed courses of instruction on technical operations on classified equipment. I have over 5,000 hours of flight time in the P-3 Orion, I was a crew member, and our primary mission was hunting submarines.

After the Navy, I worked for Worcester Wreath company for 6 years as GM. During peak season we would have over 300 employees. I was the direct contact for LL Bean, and we produced hundreds of thousands of balsam products for them. We did this in a 6-to-8-week period time with seasonal employees.

The last 16 years I have been with EBS now Hammond Lumber Company, I started as the Branch manager at the Cherryfield store. Currently, Branch manager at the Machias store. I have 34 employees. In the last 10 years I have doubled the sales here, while other branch have not grown at all. Through excellent customer service and positive employees, we are able to keep customer coming back.

I also own and operate Gay's Wreath LLC in Marshfield. We do mostly wholesale wreaths and balsam products for greenhouses and suppliers. Our market is from Maine to Florida. We produce about 150,000 wreaths a year.

I have in the past served on the board for DCP, Ethics Committee Town of Milbridge and appointed to Downeast Economic Counsel.

I love to read, spend time with my family and enjoy the outdoors.

Brent Hartford
Machias Branch Manager
Hammond Lumber Company

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Machias, ME 04654

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bhartford@hammondlumber.com

Visit us online at <http://www.hammondlumber.com>

CDI Project Update – NWDB Quarterly Meeting 9/10/20

- We revamped our [website targeted to business owners](#) with exit planning education and the partnership of NWBD, CDI and others. This was originally explicitly focused on Washington County and now speaks to a ME business owner generally.
- Our first workshop for NWDB partners was 7/22. [You can watch a recording of it here](#). Approx 30 people attended some portion of the workshop, with 19 participating in its entirety. Feedback was very positive and you can see the [participant evaluation here](#). There was 1-1 follow up with a number of individual WIB partners further answering questions after the workshop.
- Joanna and I have organized/participated in a number of 1-1 or small group meetings with key stakeholders from the region to engage, educate and seek buy-in and participation in this effort.
- In late September, we will be conducting another training, similar to 7/22, for those who want to learn more or those who could not attend the last training.
- Over the month of September, we will be soliciting support from Chambers, trade associations and other business connectors to participate in 1) promoting a survey of business owners in the region on exit planning needs and retirement intentions, providing some guidance on the scope and scale of potential near-term business closures, and 2) promoting a workshop series for business owners on exit planning and a video series (see below) for self-directed learning.
- We are in the process of filming a video series targeting business owners with education about the exit planning process, resources that can assist them, and will include education about the role and work of NWDB in supporting the region's economy. Likely outcome will be a 3-video series, roughly 20 – 30 minutes each, with a template landing page designed so anyone can put these resources on their own website.
- We have submitted a proposal for a Northern Border Region Commission grant that would provide a comprehensive training program and financial support for NWDB and interested WIB partners, and similar economic and workforce development entities across the NB region, for assisting businesses in exit planning and worker buyouts to preserve businesses and jobs.
- Rob Brown will be doing a presentation for the Ellsworth Rotary 9/17 as a result of the workshop we did on 7/22.

5

WIOA Spending	% Increase
2018-19 Actual.	244,249
2019-20 Actual	280,029
2020-2021 Budgeted	280,881
	15%
	0%

Opioid contract is picking up some of Executive Director's time

Northeastern Workforce Development Board
Program/Service Provider Budget vs. Actual
Actuals through 8/31/20

<u>Contract</u>	<u>Start Date</u>	<u>End Date</u>	<u>ACAP</u>				<u>EMDC</u>				<u>Total Program/Service Provider</u>				
			<u>Budget</u>	<u>8/31/20 YTD</u>	<u>Remaining</u>	<u>% Spent</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>8/31/20 YTD</u>	<u>Remaining</u>	<u>% Spent</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>8/31/20 YTD</u>	<u>Remaining</u>	<u>% Spent</u>	
WIOA 19/20	7/1/19	6/30/21													
			Adult	154,520	17,971	136,549	12%	400,921	400,921	-	100%	555,441	418,892	136,549	75%
			Youth	164,673	17,188	147,485	10%	467,478	83,954	383,524	18%	632,151	101,142	531,009	16%
			DW	84,459	4,119	80,340	5%	412,673	245,904	166,769	60%	497,132	250,023	247,109	50%
Total				403,652	39,278	364,374	10%	1,281,072	730,779	550,293	57%	1,684,724	770,058	914,666	46%
WIOA 20/21	7/1/20	6/30/22													
			Adult	206,322	-	206,322	0%	396,440	-	396,440	0%	602,762	-	602,762	0%
			Youth	212,987	-	212,987	0%	442,748	-	442,748	0%	655,735	-	655,735	0%
			DW	86,965	-	86,965	0%	395,610	-	395,610	0%	482,575	-	482,575	0%
Total				506,274	-	506,274	0%	1,234,798	-	1,234,798	0%	1,741,072	-	1,741,072	0%
NDWG Opioid	3/1/20	12/31/20		113,939	11,872	102,067	10%	360,806	76,730	284,076	21%	474,745	88,602	386,143	19%

Quarterly Performance Report
LWIB: NWDB – ACAP, Quarter Ending 6/30/2020 (Narrative)

SERVICE PROVIDER: Aroostook County Action Program

PERFORMANCE PERIOD Start: 4/1/2020 End: 6/30/2020 Date Calculated: 07/10/2020

An explanation of any deviation of 30% or more from planned service delivery (enrollments, services, exits), and steps the local area will take to address this.

Enrollments ended up ahead of PY19 goals in both adult and dislocated worker programs. Youth participant goals are 10 shy of the yearly goal stated in the PY19 plan. Due to the pandemic, enrollments slowed due to lack of referrals. This hit us particularly hard in the youth area. The Career Center and adult education centers provided a major pipeline for the Youth and Adult programs. The Career Center closed to traffic and its major focus was, and still is, on supporting unemployment. Adult Eds around Aroostook County were still closed during the fourth quarter of PY19. A few opened up their doors toward the end of the fourth quarter, but none were offering the typical training that attracts youth and adults, such as CNA. Northern Maine Community College shuttered its CDL program in March, mid-way through the session. They are working now on getting participants back in the door to complete the course that began in January. The institutions of higher education sent students home, squelching the opportunity to recruit on campus. Efforts to plan a young adult academy in the St. John Valley for the fourth quarter fell through, as we were not able to attract a cohort. We are continuing to work with the Valley Unified Adult Education Program and the Career & Technical Education Centers to develop this young adult academy for PY20.

An explanation of any expenditure levels at risk of not meeting minimum spending thresholds or exceeding spending caps, and steps the local area will take to address this.

At the close of PY19, we spent all of the Dislocated Worker budget from PY18, all but \$2,108 of the Adult budget for PY18, but had \$33,144 remaining in the PY 18 Youth budget. These funds were turned over to the state for use in the PY20 year. We had an unexpected retirement of long-serving youth counselor, Mike Jordan, at the end of April, and were unable to fill the position until mid-June. We were not able to use his salary line for 6 weeks. We also had to cancel work experiences due to COVID-related closings. We were able to find new placements for some, but others voiced hesitation in being in a public space during the pandemic. In an effort to expend the funds, we reached out to the Houlton and Presque Isle Career & Technical Education programs (Region 2 and the PIRCTC) to develop some work experiences for youth. The interested youth were not eligible for the program. We worked closely with the Valley Unified Adult Education Program to develop a Young Adult Academy for 10 St. John Valley youth, which would incorporate workforce development trainings along with a work experience. While we were not able to recruit a cohort, we did purchase equipment to create a mobile computer lab for an on-site cohort, or a lending lab for a virtual cohort.

A success story from each program (Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, and National Dislocated Worker Grant), showing how:

Adult: Kaytlyn first became aware of ACAP's Workforce Development programs while living in the Homeless Shelter and taking advantage of ACAP's Hope & Prosperity Center. She had bounced from job to job, battled with substance use and lost custody of her daughter to the state. Determined to carve out a better life for herself and her child, she took advantage of ACAP's recovery coach, and coaching staff, and connected with the Recovery Center in Caribou. She met with ACAP's career counselor, Stan Targonski, to discuss a career path. She expressed a desire to work in the field of substance abuse counseling. Stan was able to create a work experience at the Recovery Center in Caribou. The coaching staff helped her secure housing, and when she was reunited with her daughter, the workforce team reached out to ACAP's childcare program to find a slot for her daughter. When COVID 19 hit, the Recovery Center shut its doors and Kaytlyn's source of income dried up. Stan was able to place her in the childcare center to continue her work experience, and when the Recovery Center reopened its doors, Kaytlyn was able to reestablish and extend her work experience back at the Center. She has now become an employee of AMHC at the Recovery Center. We are encouraging her to take advantage of training that could further her career in the substance abuse counseling career path.

Dislocated Worker: Geneva, at the age of 56, lost her job after working for 11 years when SITEL closed its doors in the fall of 2019. Geneva was devastated and not sure what she would do next. Her husband had been on workers comp for over a year due to an injury at work, so already their income was not what it had been. With her unemployment, she was not sure how they would move forward. Career Counselor Kathy Williams met Geneva at a RETI session that the Department of Labor held at SITEL for workers losing their job. She talked to Geneva about employment options and let her know that help was available in resume preparation, as well as interviewing techniques. After several job seeking attempts on her own, Geneva that training might be the better option. With Kathy's assistance, Geneva looked at the job market in her community and decided that the medical field had many open positions and would be a good fit. She contacted Northern Maine Community College and enrolled in the Medical Assisting program. She was able to secure a Pell grant, but quickly learned that the Pell would not cover all the costs. Kathy reviewed her training costs and financial aid. Together they developed a plan to assist with tuition and books, as well as the purchase of a computer. Transportation was also a barrier, as she could not afford the 25-mile round trip to school four days a week. Through WIOA support service funds, Geneva received the help she needed to attend school. Kathy said Geneva was so grateful and very emotional. She said she never had to ask for help before and astounded by the support she could receive. She successfully completed her first semester despite some health issues and COVID 19 that closed NMCC's doors. She enrolled in a summer class, which she has now completed. Geneva will continue with her plans to get her Associates degree in Medical Assisting from NMCC.

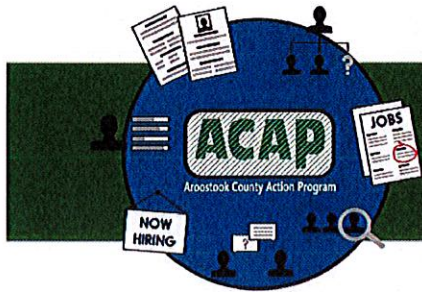
An additional short story, Travis-Jon Brown was dislocated from Re-Energy. ACAP assisted him in getting a heat pump installer certification. Travis started self-employment as an electrician, and was added to the State of Maine approved heat pump installer vendor list, as well as ACAP's Housing approved vendor list. When business slowed down, he applied for an electrical instructor job at Eastern Maine Community College. He started teaching full time at EMCC with benefits, and is still doing electrical jobs on the side on weekends.

Youth: Robert was a referral to ACAP Workforce Development through Houlton Adult & Community Education Center. Robert realized the importance of high school completion and was motivated to explore potential services through the WIOA Youth Programs. Robert was enrolled in the Older Youth program to receive guidance and assistance to develop a plan for his future employment and educational endeavors. Through assessment and exploration of the local labor market as well as discussion of his current skills and long-term goals, Robert received assistance to identify career goals and the potential to expand his work history. Robert lacked a work history and realized that he would need to find employment as well as continue with his education for completion of his high school equivalency. Robert worked with Workforce Development career counselor, Mary Duff, and explored potential training opportunities to enable him to maintain a regular schedule with the local adult education center and to gain valuable work skills/training. Robert participated in a youth work experience program, working part time and maintaining regular attendance with the local adult education program until he successfully completed his high school equivalency. Afterward, he secured temporary employment with Smith & Wesson in Houlton. During a follow-up contact, Robert shared that he has accepted a full time position with Smith & Wesson. Full time status will allow Robert to receive health care benefits, an increase in his hourly wage, and eligibility for company profit sharing/retirement.

Any other information about WIOA activities, innovations, and/or successes of the local area:

- Most of ACAP's workforce development career counselors have returned to their respective offices where they continue to work with clients virtually, but can also meet with them by appointment in safe and appropriate spaces. The lessons of COVID 19 have shown us the value of email, phone, texting, Facebook, and Zoom in working with clients. Aroostook County is a large geographical area with transportation barriers, such as no public transportation. Virtual connections have proven effective and may be a way to serve more people in the largest county east of the Mississippi.
- Through a special funding source, ACAP is now employing navigators, tasked with helping clients connect with all available resources to meet a variety of needs, such as unemployment insurance benefits, location of local food banks, support through DHHS, Vocational Rehabilitation, mental health services, health insurance enrollment, rental assistance, and the Home Energy Assistance Program. The Workforce Development team is able to connect its clients to this valuable advocacy network.
- ACAP worked with a local adult education program to deliver a Healthcare Academy, which began in January. Due to the pandemic, the academy shut down midstream in March. The WD team is working to ensure that the academy is completed.
- In order to provide a more engaged level of interaction during this time of social distancing, the WD staff created and delivered virtual workshops around Job Search, Career Decision Making, How to Cope during COVID 19, How to Create the Perfect Resume, and Interviewing. ACAP worked with EMDC to create an information session that could be delivered to the NWDB region. Both ACAP and EMDC are now partnering with all the WIOA 1B providers in Maine to create shared virtual workshops that can be delivered state-wide with presentation duties being spread around the state. The effort is two-fold: to develop consistent messaging and delivery of workforce development opportunities to all of Maine's citizens, and to create a seamless workforce development system that can serve the needs of employers and job seekers.

- ACAP, in conjunction with the NWDB, continues to work with the Valley Unified Adult Education program to offer services to youth in northern Aroostook County. Toward that effort, other partners have been brought into the discussion including the local chambers, the Aroostook County government, and the Aroostook Partnership.



National Health Emergency Dislocated Worker Program

**The ACAP Workforce Development Team
is available to help dislocated workers!**

Who Can We Help?

- Those who have been impacted, either directly or indirectly, by the opioid crisis **or** those who have not been impacted and are willing to train and work in fields related to treatment and recovery.
- Eligible individuals include:
 - dislocated workers who have been terminated or laid off, or who have received a notice of termination or layoff from employment
 - OR**
 - An individual who has been unemployed for at least 27 consecutive weeks and has been actively seeking reemployment

How We Can Help?

- For eligible individuals who have been impacted by the opioid crisis, we can:
 - Invest in career training and support activities to support reemployment
 - Support the transition in re-entering the workforce
 - Create temporary employment opportunities for individuals
- For eligible individuals who have not been impacted by the opioid crisis, we can:
 - Invest in career training for professional fields that could impact the causes and treatment of the opioid crisis
 - Support finding employment that builds the skilled workforce in professions like addiction treatment, mental health and pain management

For more information about this program and how we can help you, please contact
Meghan O'Berry at moberry@acap-me.org or by calling (207) 554-4154.

**www.acap-me.org
207-764-3721**



Aroostook County Action Program



If you are a young adult between the ages of 16-24...

You're Invited!

Join members of the ACAP Team and learn all about the programs that we offer.

August 7th

10:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M.

1:30 P.M. to 3:30 P.M.

Market Pavilion in Madawaska

Riverside Park in Fort Kent

ACAP Team Members will be available to talk about:

- Improving Outcomes for Youth Program
- Career Counseling
- Family Coaching
- Drug Free Aroostook Resources
- Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children



The first 25 individuals age 16-24 to come and complete an informational punch card will receive a gift card!



Come chat with us and enjoy free Ice Cream and Chips!

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to reach Sofia Crouse at scrouse@acap-me.org or (207)-554-4156

www.acap-me.org
207-764-3721



Aroostook County Action Program



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EMDC - Narrative report on the 50th day after each quarter, to include:

- a. An explanation of any deviation of 30% or more from planned service delivery (enrollments, services, exits), and steps the local area will take to address this.

As reported in last quarter's report, the demand for WIOA services has continued to be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and while both adult and youth programs have continued to operate within the 30% threshold of planned service levels, the Dislocated Worker program fell short of this mark. During the past quarter we have continued to concentrate on services to existing WIOA participants and our participants in the follow-up period with our remote service delivery approach. We have also expanded our on-line services and have been adding features to our service offerings including weekly Informational Sessions, Assessment, Career Exploration and Job Readiness workshops. Through these efforts we are incrementally progressing with new enrollments, although overall numbers of new participants are down from the 3rd quarter. During the 4th quarter EMDC enrolled 2 new Adult participants, 7 new Youth participants and 8 new Dislocated Workers. At year's end we have served 206 Adults, 71 Dislocated Workers and 114 Youth with WIOA services.

An explanation of any expenditure levels at risk of not meeting minimum spending thresholds or exceeding spending caps, and steps the local area will take to address this.

EMDC continued to spend PY 2018 youth funds through the end of the 4th quarter with all funds fully expended by the end of June. While COVID-19 derailed the momentum of the youth program during the past months we did complete the year with all youth funds invested and met the 20 percent work experience spending minimum percentage.

- b. A success story from each program (Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, and National Dislocated Worker Grant), showing how:
- i. Participants have overcome significant barriers to complete education, earn a credential and attain high-wage, high-quality employment;
 - ii. Service providers have collaborated to blend resources on behalf of a shared participant who has achieved the above;
 - iii. Participants have earned special awards or commendations or achieved significant upward mobility because of program participation.

EMDC - Adult Program

Diana H.

Diana, a Hancock county resident, attended an information session with EMDC in September 2019. She is a single parent who had moved to rural Maine last year and had struggled to find full-time, year-round employment. She is also a disabled veteran whose primary work in the

military was working in warehouses. In addition to the WIOA adult program Diana was also eligible for NFJP based on her seasonal farm work on a goat farm in Steuben. Since leaving the military her employment had been sporadic and wages not enough for her to sustain herself financially.

After career exploration Diana enrolled to start the CNA course through Ellsworth Adult Ed, however, there were not enough students and the class was cancelled. She took the initiative to seek out alternative programs and enrolled in the CNA program through RSU #24 Adult Ed that began in October 2019. Throughout her time in the course, Diana remained in regular contact with ENDC to report successes and discuss progress and eventual employment options. EMDC assisted Diana with tuition/supplies for the course, mileage reimbursement and emergency assistance with heating oil. These resources were a critical factor in Diana's ability to sustain her educational goals.

Diana successfully completed the course in February 2020 and was officially certified as a CNA on 3/2/20. Following her successful completion of the course, Diana interviewed for a CNA position in the Med-Surg department at Northern Light Maine Coast Hospital in Ellsworth – she was offered the job and accepted, with a starting wage of \$14.00/hour plus benefits. She started her employment on 4/6/20 amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Since that time, Diana stated that she has been loving her job and has been picking up extra shifts.

EMDC – Dislocated Worker Program

Alan C.

Alan aged 29 came to EMDC seeking assistance last February 2019 after he had been laid off from Sargent's as a Cement Truck Driver. He had worked primarily as a truck driver/equipment worker in his past work history. After consulting with our Workforce Development Specialist in EMDC's East Millinocket center he decided to pursue training in the welding field. He soon enrolled in the one-year Welding Certificate Program at Beal College in Bangor. The first Mod started in March of 2019 with a scheduled end date of April 2020. While Alan's unemployment benefits were scheduled to expire during the summer of 2019 he proactively started looking for work and was offered the public works job with the Town of Medway. He would have to drop his welding classes if he took this job. Fortunately, his job search also placed him in contention for employment with a local employer who could utilize his growing welding skills. He was offered a training-related welding job with Pelletier Manufacturing a day after he got offered the public works job so he decided to take the job with Pelletier's Manufacturing. The employer agreed to make an accommodation in his hours of work so that he could finish his certificate program. Alan successfully completed the welding training with a certificate in April 2020 and continues his employment at Pelletier Manufacturing as a welder and is enjoying his career choice.

EMDC - Out of School Youth Program

Kristina B.

Kristina was connected to EMDC while working with a Downeast Community Partner's Family Advocate in the fall of 2018. Kristina dropped out of high school during her Junior Year because she became a young mom. She was unable to complete her HiSet because the local adult education program did not offer the option. While Kristina has had episodic jobs she had been unable to develop longer term employment in one sector and felt defeated and that she would never be able to build a life for herself and her child while working for minimum wage. Kristina, with the help of her EMDC counselor worked together to contact MSAD 37 to discuss their Adult Education High School Diploma program and Kristina began the path to completing her High School Diploma in February 2019. To augment her educational plans and efforts we began to explore work-based training options that would prepare Kristina for longer term sustainable employment. After brainstorming different possibilities, we decided to reach out to Maine Seacoast Mission a local non-profit organization. They readily scheduled an interview with Kristina and agreed to offer her a Work Experience position as a Program Assistant beginning Memorial Day Weekend 2019. Kristina successfully completed this work experience which involved their gardening programs, home remodeling programs, and food security programs. Taking the experience at Maine Seacoast Mission Kristina easily found further employment with a local retail establishment in October 2019 where she has since progressed to Assistant Manager making \$14.50 an hour. In addition to finding more stable long-term employment in her community Kristina also achieved her Adult Education High School Diploma in May 2020! Her long-term goals are to continue her education and to attend college for Criminal Justice and become a Police Officer. The WIOA program was instrumental in Kristina's success to date providing her with connections to education, support services for transportation and other needs as well as a formative work experience that launched her current career path.

- c. Any other information about WIOA activities, innovations, and/or successes of the local area, such as:
 - i. Results of projects or partnerships successfully addressing specific employer or industry sector needs;
 - ii. Innovative practices implemented by the local board, local service provider, and/or through collaboration with partners;
 - iii. Significant achievement of program and resource integration between required partners.

With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Governor's declaration of a state of emergency EDMC in March EMDC moved to a remote working posture with the workforce programs. During the April through June period we launched an all-digital program delivery platform including basic and individual career services workshops, These workshops including an **Information Session** for new applicants: a **Job Readiness Workshop** for those in job search; an **Assessment Workshop** and a **Career Exploration Workshop** for new enrollees; and a **HealthCare Workshop** for participants interested in this sector have been operating for four months with increasing participation of current and new participants.

In June 2020 we launched a comprehensive, completely on-line Young Mainer's Workforce Academy initiative with an inaugural enrollment of 14 WIOA youth program participants. This project had been scheduled to start in March but had to be delayed due to COVID-19. The initiative's goal is to align, augment and add value to existing education and training opportunities by directly involving businesses with work readiness skills and entrepreneurship. As EMDC has expanded its outreach to businesses to assist young job seekers with training

strategies, like work experiences and OJTs, it is clear that employers are more and more supportive of these efforts. The *Workforce Academy* design is structured as a cohort training developed with feedback received from local employers and in conjunction with education providers. The seven-week curriculum is delivered to small groups of youth blending employability (soft skill) training, guest speakers, career exploration, industry certification trainings along with paid or unpaid work-based learning activities. Youth spend time in the classroom gaining employability knowledge, such as the importance of workplace safety and the need to understand employer expectations. Classroom instruction also focuses on how to search for jobs, how to write a resume, how to interview and how to dress appropriately for work. The initiative offers a hands-on approach to career exploration and addresses many of the WIOA Youth Service elements with special emphasis on leadership development, youth mentoring, basic skills, counseling, work experience and occupational learning. Personal development and responsibility are common themes through all aspects of this approach. The *Workforce Academy* design provides flexibility to develop customized projects around a single industry sector or across a diverse set of employers. It also enables the tailoring for a specific group of young people, such as youth offenders or pregnant and parenting teens, or for out-of-school or in-school youth. This framework additionally allows for the attaching of certificate/credentialed classroom training, youth mentoring, academic remediation, financial literacy, leadership activities and other youth program elements into a customized package for each youth while continuing to have the advantages of group dynamics and the efficiencies of online instruction. During the initial seven-week period, participants have had an opportunity to explore career options in local industries identified with a need for employees. This includes tours and networking opportunities with local employers. Upon completion of the academy, participants will choose their next path. It could include a paid work experience or other short-term training opportunities or direct job placement.

We expect to continue to operate these (and other) virtual services for the foreseeable future even after the stay-at-home requirements have been lifted by the Governor.