

SC WORKS

UPPER SAVANNAH

Upper Savannah Workforce Development Board Meeting via Virtual and Conference Call

Monday, May 3, 2021

Meeting: 4:00 PM

Members Present: Ann Blanton, John Calhoun, Candi Lalonde, Theresa Stover, Kassie Burton, Julie Bagwell, Shunna V. Jeter, Roberta Kinard, Roy Lowe, Chad Ulmer, and Matt Wiggins

Members Absent: Scott Coleman, Taiese Kidd, Debbie Walling, Betty Carol Jones, Camilla Haigler, Darron Wilson, Dale Callum, and Kevin Crouch

Staff Present: Ann Skinner, Billy Morgan, and Linda Lagroon

Guest: Katie Craven and Ursula McFadden, GLEAMNS; Melissa Rodgers and Diana Goldwire, SCDEW; Jill McCain, SC Trucking; and Sam Leaman, Upper Savannah

Welcome, Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Ann Blanton welcomed members and guests. The meeting was called to order.

The meeting conference call roll call was conducted by Linda Lagroon.

Approval of Minutes for February 1, 2021: <https://upperscworks.com/workforce-system/board-minutes/>

Ms. Blanton reminded members that minutes are emailed along with the meeting agenda. They are also archived on-line. There was a motion by Candi Lalonde, seconded by Shunna Jeter, to approve the minutes. The minutes were adopted unanimously as submitted.

Reports

Usage Report – Ursula McFadden

Ursula McFadden reviewed the Quarterly Usage Report which covered July 2020 through March 2021. The Centers are open daily and doing well. Traffic in the Centers has increased. With the reinstatement of the weekly job search for unemployment compensation, staff are looking for the

traffic to continue to increase. All partners have returned to the Centers. The Centers are getting back to normal.

Caseload Report – Linda Lagroon

Contractor Enrollment report showed an average of 47 participant enrollments for 4.5 case managers, which is an increase over the last two reports. The expected active caseload per case manager is 55. The contractor is continuing to recruit and enroll clients.

Expenditure Report – Ann Skinner

A copy of the report was emailed. There are a couple of reports which show funds expended for administration and program. Upper Savannah is on track to spend approximately 80% of funds this program year, which is above the state average. Areas are required to spend a minimum of 70% of allocated funds each year. Another metric Upper Savannah is judged on is the percentage of funds expended on clients. The goal is to spend 30% of all program funding on clients. Upper Savannah currently has a 32% client expenditure rate.

Also included, is the Eligible Training Provider List Program Performance. This report includes the approved providers and training courses that Upper Savannah can send clients. The report shows statewide how many WIOA customers completed training, attained employment, and average wages.

Skilled Trades Outreach: Be Pro, Be Proud – Jill McCain

Ann Skinner introduced Jill McCain, who is the Project Manager for Be Pro, Be Proud South Carolina and is employed with the SC Trucking Association. Ms. McCain introduced Be Pro, Be Proud, which works to get students excited and interested in all skilled professions. The Be Pro, Be Proud program started in Arkansas a couple years ago and identified that there is a universal skills gap which is not isolated to just one state. Be Pro, Be Proud is centered around changing the perception of high school graduates that are not planning to attend a four-year college. In order to qualify as a skilled profession highlighted through this program, it has to be a high-skill, high-wage profession that does not require a four-year degree. Be Pro, Be Proud organizers worked with the Department of Workforce and the Department of Labor to identify which professions in South Carolina are needed the most. After identifying the professions and in collaboration with several other private organizations and public agencies, a mobile workshop was customize designed and outfitted with high tech gamified simulators for each of the professions, such as

- heavy equipment operation,
- forklift operation,
- commercial truck driving,
- welding,
- CNC machine demonstrating how machining and tool and die work,
- utility bucket simulator for the linemen profession, and
- headsets to use controls in an augmented reality situation to explore the construction trades, carpentry, and diesel technician.

The workshop is the first part of a much larger program. It is the excitement generator. The mobile workshop was launched in September 2020 and is currently on tour. There is limited capacity on board. Along with the tour, there was a need to develop a program to give students more of a road map to

keep engaging them. After visiting the mobile workshop and having hands on experience with the simulators, Be Pro, Be Proud needed to let the students know there are jobs available after graduation and there are training centers near them where they can enroll in one of these programs.

The second part is the website (www.beprobeproudsc.org) which is laid out to give students more detailed information about each profession, salary outlook, job outlook, finding training centers, companies hiring, and partners/sponsors. This a public-private collaborative. Be Pro, Be Proud needs to continue growing partnerships and finding companies that offer apprenticeships or internships for students. At this time, curriculum is not provided for teachers.

Unemployment Insurance Update – Diana Goldwire

Diana Goldwire is a SC Department of Workforce Area Manager and works with reemployment.

Work search was reinstated Sunday, April 18, 2021, which means those on unemployment or Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) have to log in to SC Works twice a week and do a job search. This does not mean they have to apply for a position, but they have to search for work twice each week. This is a good time for employers to post positions because a lot of people are now logging into their SC Works accounts. If employers have SC Works accounts or would like an account for people to review job opportunities, this is a good time to update information or contact SC DEW staff about creating an account.

Fraud Prevention is a nation-wide issue and DEW is taking it extremely seriously. The unemployment department partnered with a program called ID.me. With this program, every claimant has to go through ID.me before they can get into the unemployment portal. This process has helped to eliminate fraud in South Carolina. If you know of anyone that is committing fraud or if you hear of someone that has, DEW has an online portal at which fraud can easily be reported. This can be done anonymously.

Employers are screened before they are allowed access to the SC Works jobs database system. These employers are labeled as preferred employers in the jobs database system signifying that they have been screened. SC Works also spiders other job listings into the database system.

Employers are needing employees. DEW is asking employers to make sure they are recalling their employees back to work. If they are hearing that people are not wanting to return, it is important to report this to SC DEW. Unemployment is being stopped if people are extended an offer of employment and they chose not to return. There are several ways to report this information: Employer Self Service Portal, Word document or submit information to the Recall Taskforce. See handout for further information.

Layoff and Business Expansion News – Billy Morgan

The good news is that there have been no new large-scale layoffs in the Upper Savannah Region since the board last met. In fact, most of these larger employers have called back the workers who may have been laid off temporarily due to COVID-19 and/or supply chain disruptions associated with COVID-19.

Edgefield currently has a large project with the new Generac company, which makes generators. The company plans to hire close to 500 employees by the end of the calendar year. Staff will be working with this company to conduct hiring events and job fairs. The first hiring events are scheduled for May 4-6, 2021. There was a text to apply method and more than 900 people have applied for the assembly and manufacturing positions using this method. Generac will be onboarding about 30 people a week until the end of October 2021. Staff will help Generac fill their positions and other employers to back fill vacated positions that this may affect. ReadySC, SC DEW, and Upper Savannah are all working together on this project.

Incumbent Worker Training Opportunity – Billy Morgan

In the past, Upper Savannah has done Rapid Response Incumbent Worker Training. Staff are looking at also offering regular incumbent worker training with a required match to businesses. Upper Savannah will have a total of \$60,000 regular incumbent worker training funds available. The maximum award allowed for any business will be \$20,000 and the minimum award will be \$5,000. These amounts will allow 3-12 businesses to be served. The incumbent worker training is a way for a business to retool, prepare for new technology, work towards expansion, create a new product line or help them be competitive and prevent a layoff. Businesses with less than 50 employees would have to provide a 10% fund match. Businesses with 50 to 100 employees would have to match 25% of the training costs. Businesses with more than 100 employees would have to provide 50% of the costs. In the past, a board committee would score incumbent worker applications. This time, Upper Savannah will plan to use the Upper Savannah Business Services Team and some members from the Board (Roy Lowe, Chad Ulmer, and Matt Wiggins) to assist with scoring/ranking the IWT applications.

Billy Morgan briefly discussed the Incumbent Worker Training Grants Scoring Sheet which will be used in scoring businesses applications received for the selection and approval process to receive training funds. Priority will be given to manufacturing and healthcare employers. Billy suggested that the priority be extended to skilled trades as well.

There was a motion by Matt Wiggins, seconded by Candi Lalonde, to include trades such as electricians, carpenters, and plumbers for IWT training, and to include Roy Lowe, Chad Ulmer, and Matt Wiggins as part of the committee to score/rank IWT applications received. The motion was approved.

Funding Update – Ann Skinner

There has been overwhelming demand at times, but it hasn't necessarily been for traditional programs. A lot of people are seeking information about unemployment and were using SC Works Center computers when schools were closed. Unfortunately, the budget has not kept up with the demand. Upper Savannah is anticipating a budget cut that could range anywhere from 8% to 10%. In the last five years, the Upper Savannah Workforce budget has decreased about one-third. Over the years, the Workforce Board has had a priority of having a SC Works Center open in each of the Upper Savannah's seven counties. The State Workforce Board has a goal that 30% of program funds will be expended on training or supportive services. Since Upper Savannah staff currently does not have exact funding figures for next program year, it is a little premature to finalize a budget for the program year that starts July 1. Upper Savannah staff would like to propose that we continue contracting with GLEAMNS Human Resources Commission, Inc., based on the fact that the Board voted to extend the contract at the last

meeting, keeping the seven county SC Works Centers open, and continue to look for cost savings that does not impact the quality of services for clients. Upper Savannah staff has been very aggressively seeking additional funding: half million-dollar grant received which most of the funds will be allocated for training and staff are also in the process of seeking another grant through the Greenwood Foundation.

There was a motion by Ann Blanton, seconded by Candi Lalonde, to approve the continued funding proposal which includes continuing contract with GLEAMNS, keeping SC Works Centers open, and looking for cost savings that does not impact the quality of services for clients. The motion passed. Shunna Jeter abstained from the vote.

Adjourn

Chair Ann Blanton called the meeting to conclusion.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ann Skinner', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ann Skinner
Workforce Development Director