

The WorkPlace
Southwestern Connecticut's Regional Workforce Development Board
Board of Directors Meeting
September 18, 2020

MEMBERS PRESENT

Agosta Yecenia, DSS
Alvarado Frank, Small Business Admin.
Bailey Leon, Comm. Fndtn Gtr New Haven
Bentley Larry, Consultant
Carbone Bing, Modern Plastics
Coley Thomas, CSCU
DeMarco Julie, Bigelow Ctr For Sr Activities
Falcon Clodomiro, Falcon, Vargas Group
Feldman Gary, US Computer Connection
Ferguson Monette, Alliance for Community
Empowerment
Fuda Victor, CT DOL
Gold Lindy-Lee, DECD

Grabinski Joe, Sikorsky
LaBella Michael, TD Bank
Loeser John, Small Business Consultant
Lohr Jim, Carpenters Labor Mgmt Program
Lopez-Cordone Eileen, Avangrid
Oddo Jim, Exec. Search Professionals
Rafael Cindy, DRS
Richards Loni, Service After Service
Seebeck Matt, SoNo Properties
Sheahan Margaret, Mitchell & Sheahan
Smith Dwayne Dr., CEO Housatonic CC
Watson Debra, People's Bank

OTHERS PRESENT:

Acevedo Liz, The WorkPlace
Aird Enola, Community Healing Network
Alcantara Christine, The WorkPlace
Amacechi Nneanata, The WorkPlace
Amarante J.
Ameri Rachelle, The WorkPlace
Arboleda Samantha, The WorkPlace
Artes DiaMond, The WorkPlace
Aerruda Christine, The WorkPlace
Baldwin J.
Baptiste Christine, The WorkPlace
Barclay Joyce, The WorkPlace
Bartolomey Luis, The WorkPlace
Bartoli Maria, The WorkPlace
Becker Allison, The WorkPlace
Benzant Constanza, The WorkPlace
Bissell Ben, The WorkPlace
Breedon Paula, The WorkPlace
Brewster Nicole, The WorkPlace
Brighindi Millie, The WorkPlace
Brooks Desiree, The WorkPlace
Brown Marcus, The WorkPlace
Bryant Rhaeshetta, The WorkPlace
Burke Chelsea, The WorkPlace
Burton Jack, The WorkPlace
Butler Andrea, The WorkPlace
Camacho Maria, The WorkPlace
Campos Rosalie, The WorkPlace
Carbone Joseph, The WorkPlace

Carroll Tim, The WorkPlace
Chairaluce Danielle, Chapel Haven
Charpentier Mark, The WorkPlace
Collins Pam, The WorkPlace
Colon Jennifer, The WorkPlace
Corey Adrene, The WorkPlace
Crawford Diane, Career Resources, Inc.
Cruz Michelle, The WorkPlace
Daniels James, The WorkPlace
Deamico Bernadette, The WorkPlace
DeLeon Krystal, The WorkPlace
DeMarco Tim, The WorkPlace
DeMattia Donna, The WorkPlace
DiBacco Joe, Ansonia Public Schools
DiLeo Carmen, Career Resources, Inc.
Douglas Maurice, The WorkPlace
Downes Vernon, The WorkPlace
Edelstein Jane, The WorkPlace
English Carol, The WorkPlace
Falkowski Gloria, The WorkPlace
Fernandez Barbara
Foster Ruby, The WorkPlace
Franqui Marie, The WorkPlace
Frost Robert, The WorkPlace
Furey Angie, The WorkPlace
Furness Dean, The WorkPlace
Galletti Jennifer, TheWorkPlace
Garcia Judy
Garcia Yvette, The WorkPlace

Gerena Hailey, The WorkPlace
Ginsberg Will, CFGNH
Green Aikayla, The WorkPlace
Gibbons Michelle, The WorkPlace
Giegengack Theresa
Glazier Cal, The WorkPlace
Gopian Al, The WorkPlace
Grota Justin, The WorkPlace
Hailey Gloria, The WorkPlace
Harris Elra, The WorkPlace
Harris Gwen, Career Resources, Inc.
Harris Michelle, The WorkPlace
Harris Ken
Hebert Cindy, The WorkPlace
Hodge Ray, The WorkPlace
Hopkins Karen, The WorkPlace
Hopson Tanesha, The WorkPlace
Houel Adrienne, Bpt. Comm. Enterprises
Jackson Angela, The WorkPlace
James Juanita, FCCF
Johnson Arnold, The WorkPlace
Johnson Ebony, The WorkPlace
Joyce Kara, The WorkPlace
Kearse Carrie, The WorkPlace
Keel Deb, The WorkPlace
Kelman Lauren, The WorkPlace
King Corey, The WorkPlace
Kleiner Thom
Lathem-Magee Stephanie, The WorkPlace
Lawrence Lyn, CT DOL
Lazaro Karen
LeDuc Kimberly, The WorkPlace
Lee Sean, The WorkPlace
Leon Nestor, The WorkPlace
Leone Carlo, The WorkPlace
LeBron Amanda, The WorkPlace
Lewis Sarah, The WorkPlace
Lignore Maria, Career Resources, Inc.
Lisher Jim, Career Resources, Inc.
Llanos Angie, The WorkPlace
Long Tom, The WorkPlace
Madden Shelly
Makela-Johnson, Libby, The WorkPlace
Malony Lisa, The WorkPlace
Martorelli Christina, The WorkPlace
McCarthy Mike, The WorkPlace
McCrae Pam, Life Bridge
McGinnis Monica, The WorkPlace
McNeil Desiree, The WorkPlace
Mendez Tykeisha, The WorkPlace

Miniman Jennifer, The WorkPlace
Montes. Grixaliz, The WorkPlace
Morgan Mike, The WorkPlace
Mountain John, The WorkPlace
Mucherino Elaine, The WorkPlace
Napier Diana, The WorkPlace
Nicholas-Xavier Taylor, The WorkPlace
Nieves Carmen, The WorkPlace
Numbers Nelson, The WorkPlace
O'Brien Patricia, The WorkPlace
Pacowta Mike, The WorkPlace
James Page, UB
Paleologos Celeste, The WorkPlace
Parkmond Adrienne, The WorkPlace
Patton Cathy, The WorkPlace
Patton Rory, The WorkPlace
Payton Charmaine, The WorkPlace
Peeler Donna, Career Resources, Inc.
Pelletier Gayle, The WorkPlace
Perez Gloria, The WorkPlace
Perez Jose
Perry Megan, The WorkPlace
Pham Mai, The WorkPlace
Pizzaro Jose, The WorkPlace
Porter Angela, The WorkPlace
Proto Dennis, Ansonia Public School
Robinson Don, The WorkPlace
Rojas Alejandro, The WorkPlace
Roman Tracey
Romano Fran, The WorkPlace
Rule Shannon, The WorkPlace
Russell Andrew, The WorkPlace
Russo Nicole, Microboard Processing
Sampson Tracy, The WorkPlace
San Roman Teresa, The WorkPlace
Santiago Priscilla, The WorkPlace
Sarro Mario, The WorkPlace
Savage Nordia, The WorkPlace
Sementilli Lisa, CT DOL
Shepard Sylvia
Shuster Ben, The WorkPlace
Smith Honda
Stokes Mike, The WorkPlace
Sutton Matt
Taylor Christina, The WorkPlace
Taylor Therman, The WorkPlace
Thornberg Dan, Aced My Interview
Tiller Anna, The WorkPlace
Toti Cynthia, The WorkPlace
Tripodi Bill

Troutman R.
Turner-Young, Diane, Comm. Healing
Vandiver Ashley, The WorkPlace
Venditti Debbie, The WorkPlace
Venditti Gino, The WorkPlace
Vermont Carolyn
Vitale Angelo, The WorkPlace
Vizcarrondo Celia, The WorkPlace
Watson Shirl, The WorkPlace
White Maurice, The WorkPlace
Williams Janet, The WorkPlace

Williams Pandora, The WorkPlace
Williams Terri, The WorkPlace
Wright Bethany, The WorkPlace
Wynter Nigel, The WorkPlace
Zaremby Joel, The WorkPlace

The quarterly meeting of The WorkPlace Board of Directors was held via a Zoom Meeting. Leon Bailey, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:15 a.m. Mr. Bailey introduced our guest speaker, Enola G. Aird, Esq., Founder and President of Community Healing Network.

The Community Healing Network's goal is to help people realize their potential. Workforce professionals help people realize their potential through training, counseling, skills development and other strategies. CHN helps people realize their potential by promoting emotional healing – to help people show up in life, and in their various roles and responsibilities, with a heightened sense of purpose, agency and efficacy.

- CHN's **vision** is for a world in which Black people have moved beyond surviving to flourishing, and are enjoying life in all its fullness, in body, mind and spirit.
- CHN's **mission** is to heal the trauma caused by centuries of anti-Black racism, to free ourselves of toxic stereotypes, and to reclaim our dignity and humanity as people of African ancestry.
- **SO THAT BLACK LIVES TRULY MATTER.**

CHN is focused on addressing the reason why Black lives so often do not matter: the lie that Black people are inferior which has been told to Black people for 600 years and the lie still is with us today.

COMMUNITY HEALING NETWORK:

- Paving the way to ensure that Black Lives Matter.
- In pursuit of our shared goal.
- To help people realize their full potential.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

Mr. Carbone thanked Ms. Aird for an inspiring presentation and noted that we can learn from each other.

TRANSITIONING OPERATIONS DURING COVID-19:

Mr. Carbone congratulated the WorkPlace staff for their dedication and diligence. We have had remarkable results over the past 6 months without interruption. Our results are as good as before. Our Health Career Academy now provides Foundation Skills workshops online and offers virtual CNA training and has completed a needs assessment of all participants. YouthWorks hosts weekly online orientation programs. The staff are meeting virtually with participants for job

readiness workshops and training programs. P2E successfully launched P2E 2.0. It offers a holistic approach to support individuals separated from their jobs including emotional supports and guidance on the new world of work. MaturityWorks continues to support over 750 participants across, CT, NY, PA and RI. We have provided technology to those who are isolated and continue to deliver training virtually. Our AJCs in Connecticut are preparing to open in October with an appointment system, social distancing and appropriate protective measures. Mr. Carbone stated that his is proud of The WorkPlace staff.

OUR NEW OFFICES – 1000 LAFAYETTE BOULEVARD:

Mr. Carbone noted that we expect to move in during October. The pandemic has delayed the delivery of materials, installation of equipment, furnishing and required inspections. We are waiting for the Certificate of Occupancy. All health and safety measures will be observed, following the Governor’s orders fully.

UNEMPLOYMENT NUMBERS:

	Feb 2020	April 2020	August 2020
NATIONAL	3.5%	14.7%	8.4%
STATE of CT	3.8%	8.3%	8.1%
Southwest CT	4.6%	8.0%	10.9%

Note: COVID-19 impacted data collection and classification survey tools used to determine the unemployment rate. Some published estimates projected the Connecticut unemployment rate as high as 17.5% and greater.

COVID-19 RECESSION VS. GREAT RECESSION – WORKFORCE TRENDS:

Mr. Carbone stated that this is not like the Great Recession. The rise in the number of unemployed workers due to COVID-19 (14 million) is substantially greater than the increase during the Great Recession (8.8 million). Unemployment struck within days due to COVID shutdowns, during the Great Recession we had months to prepare. The current recession significantly impacted the leisure/hospitality and educational sectors. 47% of filers had incomes below \$35,000. By contrast, job losses in the Great Recession were primarily from finance services, construction and manufacturing sectors. During COVID, unemployment has hit individuals with less education harder. The Great Recession impacted all education levels.

COVID-19 RECESSION VS. GREAT RECESSION – CHART, BY GENDER AND RACE:

UNEMPLOYMENT	COVID-19 – MAY 2020	GREAT RECESSION MARCH 2010
Women	14.50%	8.60%
Men	12.20%	10.70%
Black	16.80%	16.50%
Hispanic	17.60%	12.60%
Asian	15.00%	7.50%
White	12.40%	8.80%

CONNECTICUT UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS:

- **1. REGULAR UI**
 - Benefits from the regular state-funded unemployment compensation program – **26 weeks available**
- **2. PEUC**
 - Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Assistance benefits for people who exhaust their regular state benefits.
 - Created under the CARES Act – providing 13 additional weeks before extended benefits begin. **Program expires December 31st.**
- **3. EXTENDED BENEFITS**
 - Federally funded Extended Benefits, additional unemployment benefits. **20 Weeks available.**
- **4. PUA**
 - Pandemic Unemployment Assistance benefits for self-employed and others not eligible for regular state benefits.
 - Created under the CARES Act – 46 week of benefits – **Program expires December 31st.**

UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT EXHAUSTION FORECAST:

Mr. Carbone stated that 581,874 Initial Claims were processed between March and August, but not all are eligible. A Benefits Cliff begins in January when over 200,000 will exhaust their benefits. We need a remedy for the long-term unemployed

AVOIDANCE OF LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYMENT IS PARAMOUNT:

The greatest challenge of workforce development is the avoidance of long-term unemployment. These cliffs are coming and The WorkPlace is ready to help overcome these challenges. People are waiting to go back to work. LTU begins 27 weeks after initial filing, and the adverse effects worsen at each extension level. That is the line between a fighting chance and becoming trapped in unemployment, subject to bias and victimization.

Lessons learned from the Great Recession:

- The recession creates a buyer's market.
- The adage is true that you need a job to get a job.
- A holistic approach in our AJCs through the Community Resource Center and partnerships that assist with providing safety net services.
- Keeping people connected to careers with virtual programming combats isolation and broadens the mind.

P2E 2.0:

Mr. Carbone stated that P2E 2.0 was designed specifically to focus on COVID-19.

- Moving P2E online is one of many steps that can be accomplished to grow and enhance services.
- We can expand our holistic delivery model.
 - Include services that help customers access assistance they may now qualify for.
 - Implement virtual, daily programming to enhance social interaction and build skills.
- Put more funds into hiring job developers.

Of the 12 who were placed in Work Experience – 12 were hired after Work Experience – 100%. The average wage was \$49,178.

P2E:

Mr. Carbone noted that there is growing discrimination for those 50+ who are trying to get back to work and are experiencing long-term unemployment across the state. We have completed the 6th year of our program with funding from the State of Connecticut.

Cohort 1 - 91% hired after work experience

Cohort 2 - 93% hired after work experience

Cohort 3 - 82% hired after work experience

Cohort 4 – 94% hired after work experience

State Legislators are very happy with our success.

P2E RE-ENTRY:

Classroom Cohorts - 68% secured employment

Online Cohorts - 64% secured employment

- 87 scholars received resources to overcome barriers to employment including transportation, housing supports, clothing and technology.
- 57 scholars received behavior health services.
- 8 scholars received additional occupational training.
- Recidivism rate less than 1%.
- Collaborating on the One Million Jobs Campaign (NAACP)

HEALTHCARE AND MANUFACTURING APPRENTICESHIPS:

Mr. Carbone thanked Governor Lamont and the Connecticut Delegation.

Apprenticeships have been around for a long time, limited to some trades. Apprenticeships are growing in the workforce development. From the US DOL ETA, we received \$1.9 million over 4 years for both in and out of school youth. Specific to the manufacturing industry. We are partnering with HCC, Ansonia Schools, Bigelow Team and Microboard. Sarah Lewis is the Director of our Apprenticeship Program.

DRIVEN TO SERVE: - THE AGGRESSIVE PURSUIT OF FUNDING TO SERVE MORE PEOPLE:

Mr. Carbone noted that at every Board of Directors meeting he show results of our entrepreneurial approach to our business. This approach to our work has brought in \$239,373.000. Our growth since September 2019 was \$20,520.00. This money is beyond our Formula Dollars. We have helped over 100,00 people with our services in one way or another. Mr. Carbone thanked the Board, Partners, Funders, Elected Officials and staff for their support.

BUSINESS:

MINUTES: On a motion made and seconded the Board of Directors accepted the Minutes of the June 20, 2020 Board of Directors meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA:

DECD RESOLUTION: A resolution required by the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) for the execution of a contract to provide job training under the CARES Act. On a motion made and seconded the Board of Directors accepted the DECD Resolution.

BOARD MEMBER: NEW AND RE-NOMINATIONS:

NEW MEMBERS:

Brian Truini, Secretary/Treasurer of Local 371, Exec. VP
Heather Cavanaugh, Pres/CEO, Stamford Chamber of Commerce
Monet Ferguson, Executive Director, Alliance for Community Development
Matt Seebeck, SoNo Properties
Bing Carbone, Modern Plastics
Dr. Dwayne Smith, Chief Executive Officer, Housatonic Community College

RE-NOMINATIONS:

Victor Fuda, Regional Job Center Director
Debra Watson, VP/Manager, People's Bank
Margaret Sheahan, Partner, Mitchell & Sheahan, PC
Fred Gill, Consultant, Transportation, Gateway Community College
Yesenia Acosta, DSS
Celina Hudson, Citibank Senior VP, Assistant Area Director
Michael LaBella, Regional Vice President, TD Bank
John Loeser, Sr. Business Consultant, M&A, CVS Health
Bruce Silverstone, Consultant, Nonprofits
Larry Bentley, Consultant, Finance & Banking
Cindy Rafael, Department of Rehabilitative Services

On a motion made and accepted, the New and Re-Nominated Members of the Board were unanimously approved by the Board of Directors.

MARKETING

WIOA REGIONAL WORKFORCE PLAN:

Tom Long reported that the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires each local workforce development board to develop a comprehensive four-year plan to the Governor. The local plan shall support the vision, goals and strategy described in the State plan and otherwise be consistent with the State plan. Due to COVID-19, the plan due date has been extended until October 5 but will be effective July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2024. The Planning Timeline:

- May – July: Draft Document
- July: Community Forums, Public Input
- August: Document Available for Public Comment
- September: Present to Executive Committee and Board of Director
- October: Present to State for Feedback/Approval
- November: New Plan in Place.

Mr. Long thanked Nestor Leon, Karen Hopkins, Shannon Rule and Melanie Blanco for their help and support.

The plan addresses future strategies and efficiencies for the continuing modernization of the workforce system and creation of a customer-centered system. The main areas of the plan include:

- Organizational Structure
- Environmental Scan
- Coordination of Service
- Description of Program Services
- Response to COVID-19

VISION:

To establish innovative collaborations that inspire success and support an environment conducive to economic development, while providing opportunities for lifelong learning and personal growth, that contribute to building a vibrant economy through increased employment opportunities.

GOALS:

- Increase access to and opportunities for employment, education, training, support services needed for success in the labor market, particularly for those with barriers to employment.
- Support alignment of workforce investment, education, and economic development systems to provide a coordinated, accessible and high-quality workforce development system.
- Enhance the economic health of the business community by developing and maintaining a high-quality workforce system that supports the skilled workers needed for businesses to succeed in a global economy.
- Increase opportunities for youth to participate in work-based learning through summer employment, apprenticeship, internships and similar experiences.

On a motion made and seconded, the Board of Directors unanimously approved the WIOA Regional Workforce Plan – July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2024.

UPDATE ON OUR NEW LOCATION:

Mr. Venditti showed pictures of various areas of our new offices. 99.9% of our space is ready (furniture/IT). Mr. Venditti thanked Allison Becker and Janet William for their help, and thanked Adrienne Parkmond with decorating and working with the architects.

OPERATIONS:

Ms. Parkmond presented on our American Job Centers – **PIVOT DON'T PAUSE.**

CONTINUING TO SERVE: - PROGRAM YEAR 7/1 – PRESENT:

CONNECTICUT: - Over 300 individuals have received services.

VIRGINIA: - 253 services provided

MASSACHUSETTS: Over 100 individuals per week are being served.

NEW YORK: - Over 700 individuals PY20

CONNECTICUT – AJC PLACEMENTS – JULY - AUGUST 2020:

Ms. Parkmond presented a list of 42 placements with an average wage of \$18.50 per hour.

PROGRAMS AT WORK:

- **SCSEP** – 346 trainees contacted in the past week
- **Summer Youth** – 175 youth served in virtual environment
- **Platform to Employment (Reentry)** – 120 served – 65% placed
- **Platform to Employment (LTU)** – Maintains 80% placement rate
- **Dress for Success** – 200 women participating in virtual services

WHAT'S NEXT? 2020:

- **Youth Apprenticeship Programs**
- **Military to Machinist**
- **WP Ventures**
- **Health Career Academy**
- **Youth Department Rebranding**

AJOURNMENT: There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 9:35 a.m.

The next Board of Directors meeting will be held on December 18, 2020.

Respectfully submitted, Mildred Brighindi, Executive Secretary