

**Central Western Maine Workforce Development Board
Operations Committee Minutes
June 12, 2024**

Approved by Operations
Committee

July 10, 2024

Board Members Present: Razell Ward, Secretary; Laurie Glidden, At-Large Member/Youth Committee Chair; Grant Provost, Chair of Recruitment

Board Members Absent: Cathy Witherspoon, Chair; Chris Winstead, Treasurer/Chair of Resources

Others Present: Erin Benson, Executive Director; Carrie Parker, Administrative Assistant; Sara McLaughlin, Contracted Financial Advisor; Patti Saarinen, EMDC Director of Workforce Services

Call to Order

Grant Provost called the meeting to order at 8:32am.

Review and Approval of the Last Meeting Minutes

Voted: Approval of the April 10, 2024, meeting minutes. There was no Operations Committee meeting in May.

Motion: Laurie Glidden

Second: Razell Ward

Vote: All present in favor

Provider Update--Patti

Patti provided an overview of enrollments and other updates that EMDC has been working on since the previous meeting in April. Patti mentioned that despite seeing low numbers in Youth enrollment, with three weeks left and multiple projects in the works she feels confident that EMDC will meet the 100% in enrollment before the timeline arrives. There has been outreach with affiliates of Maine and the Android Family Recovery Court Rehab without Walls and Goodwill homes and community-based services forming new partnerships that will see increases in enrollment numbers as well.

The new Youth program Director, Sam Giasson, that is coming on board is very familiar with WIOA funding and youth programs and is working with staff on different outreach efforts that will see improvements in youth enrollment numbers. Erin commented that Sam is phenomenal and has been with EMDC in prior years before a lack of funding created layoffs, she has come back and is currently working as a back-up to Tom and knows the WIOA and our needs inside and out.

Enrollments:

<u>WIOA Title</u>	<u>Planned for 4th Qtr.</u>	<u>Actual (as of 6-7-24)</u>
Adult	137	116
Dis. Wkr.	50	56
Youth (In school)	32	15
Youth (Out of School)	96	63
QUEST	145	77

While Youth enrollment numbers continue to be low, we have added 10 new enrollments. Adult enrollments have increased by 9 this quarter so far. We are getting more referrals from MEIRS and WMCA, 2 of the community-based organizations that CWM board has contracts with.

There have been few layoffs in our 5-counties, which is good. The latest list since last report includes: Gagne Foods: 29 temporary; all of the Dollar Stores statewide; Wayfair: a few people; still doing Rapid Response every Wednesday at ND Paper; Job Corps in Bangor; Commonwealth Poultry: numbers unknown; Afro Taste: state is checking; and a Nursing Home in Milbridge: most workers have moved to other positions. We have sent staff to all the scheduled Rapid Response sessions. We have enrolled 9 more dislocated workers since our last report.

So far this quarter, April 1st – June 7th, we've had 266 referrals of which 58 were youth specific and 3 were QUEST. We had 68 new registrations of which 24 were Adult, 11 were Dislocated, 12 were QUEST, and 14 were Youth.

Every referral is contacted but many never respond back; if they do, they are referred to a workforce development specialist; however, even then a fair portion do not follow through. We are once again revisiting our process to see if there are better ways for us to engage them in our programs. There are 3 weeks left in this program year, and we are continuing to enroll.

QUEST Grant:

We are at 48.7% of our QUEST enrollments with 10 new QUEST referrals since last quarter. As stated above, many referrals qualify for both QUEST and Adult, and we try to determine which program will serve them best.

Please see Other News for a list of places staff have visited this past month; many of these have possible QUEST referrals.

Employer Projects:

Foundation/PSS/CNA Healthcare Pathway with Lewiston Adult Education; this is a registered apprenticeship training. MOD 3 C N A cohort started 6/4/24. EMDC is supporting 4 students all Adult.

AGC Construction Pre-apprenticeship. Two cohorts have started: one at KVCC with 8 students; EMDC is supporting 3 1 QUEST and 2 Youth. Sacopee Valley – 15 total; EMDC is supporting 5: all ARPA. Oxford Hills – 16 listed but not all students have been contacted and/or turned in AGC paperwork; still waiting for final count; class begins in July.

January 23 – Spruce Mountain CCMA. EMDC is supporting 6 people: 4 Adult, 2 Quest. All have been registered and enrolled in WIOA. Classroom training ended mid-May. Participants are in clinicals.

Upcoming/In Discussion:

Oxford Hills/Nezinscot Adult Education Certified Nursing Assistant training. This is a class for Maine Health and will begin in July. Classes and clinicals are to be held at Stephens Memorial Hospital. Expectation is 5 – 8 students.

AFL-CIO Pre-apprenticeship Construction Academy. Start date is early July. EMDC has received 3 referrals.

Oxford Hills CDL training. Start date is 7/15/24. EMDC has 10 referrals; looks like all will be Adult.

Possible construction cohort with Lewiston Adult Education. The Adult Education office and Strengthen LA have potential candidates; upcoming meeting to discuss.

Meeting with CMH, Lewiston Adult Education, MCCS, and MAP to explore a Surgical Tech program. Looks like CMH is going to work with MCCS to develop a program at the college.

Completed:

Reed & Reed Construction Pre-apprenticeship. The new round started 4/22/24 and ends 6/7/24. EMDC is supported 3 students: 2 QUEST, 1 Adult. One student dropped out. The others have completed their OJTs.

Oxford Hills/Nezinscot Adult Education Certified Nursing Assistant training. 3/4/24 – 5/22/24. EMDC supported 3 of the 6 students: 2 Adult and 1 DW. All successfully completed.

Lewiston Adult Education. Teller training started 12/14/23 – 4/15/24. EMDC is supporting 5 students: 4 Quest, 1 adult.

All 5 passed the class and the National exam.

January 23 – Oxford Hills CDL training. EMDC is funding 4 people: 1 OSY, 3 Adult. Two of the adults are currently working at Schiavi's. The employer has agreed to pay for half of the tuition cost. Full tuition is \$5700.00. Schiavi will pay \$2850.00. Waiting for updated information.

February 12 – Oxford Hills CDL-A Daytime class; 4 students: 3 Adult and 1 Youth. Several of these students had tuition paid in part or full by their current employers. Waiting for updated information.

Other News:

Staff attended the conversation with Franklin County Adult Education, Mt. Blue school system, and the Commissioner of Education in Farmington.

Three staff presented information regarding WIOA programs to Community Concepts, Inc. staff at their monthly staff meeting in Oxford County.

Met with Fozia Robleh, the New Mainers Resource Center Coordinator, located at Lewiston Adult Education to discuss WIOA programs and opportunities to collaborate on mutual customers.

Staff attended the Maine Employer Summit on May 14th in Bangor; they assisted with the mock interviews and resume reviews for students.

Staff attended the Workforce GPS webinars on Business Services Representatives (BSR) Assessment Findings and Strategies for Improvement and Tools for older Job Seekers-Onestop.

Staff attended the Fair Chance Hiring Event sponsored by the Somerset County Substance Use Task Force.

Staff met with Mohamed Khalid, Co-Founder & Chief Operating Officer, at COA Maine. Mohamed wanted to connect to talk about youth referrals.

WDS staff met with Hannaford's in Augusta (Kennebec) to discuss them being a possible WE site.

Staff met with the Extended Learning Opportunities coordinator at Buckfield High School, Oxford County, to enroll youth through the ARPA grant, but also discuss opportunities for WIOA youth referrals.

All CWM WIOA staff attended the Lewiston CareerCenter, which also included Wilton, partner meeting. Staff attended from BES, VR and EMDC and gave program updates.

Been meeting with an organization called FreeWorld about possible CDL training for DOC residents.

Erin stated that we have until June 30th to spend the PY23 budget, which is about 2 weeks away. She has been monitoring the budget since January with concerns about the spending to meet the expiration and not have funds that are unspent and get sent back. She is mostly concerned with adult spending; she was not aware that rent due to MDOL came in and the vast majority of that \$80,000 due was put toward adult spending. Dislocated worker funding has been spent, and Erin is sure the adult funding will be finished out as well, but to meet the needs of the adult program we will need to go into PY23 and with about \$60,000 remaining in youth funding and repurpose the rent so that the payment is split between adult and youth funds to use as much of the youth money as possible. She spoke with Suan about it again yesterday and she feels strongly that both adult and youth PY22 monies will be spent by June 30th. Erin wants to continue not to leave money on the table as has been an issue in the past.

Board Updates

Erin gave brief updates on two possible board members that she has been in contact with recently. When she went to the MAME summit on May 24th, she spoke with a gentleman in the manufacturing sector who is in Gardiner, which is Kennebec County, where we need members. He expressed an interest in joining the board, so she is reaching out to schedule a time to visit his facility and discuss the board and his possible membership.

She also received an email recently from former board member Kelly Aho. Kelly left the board when she took on a major role in various areas and needed more time to devote to those projects. She recently began the process of downsizing her role in those projects and is interested in discussing returning as a member with Erin. Erin will be meeting with her soon to finalize her possible return knowing that the situation with a lack of staff and the responsibilities that fell to the board during that time are quite different now.

Despite Jim Trundy leaving the board, with these two new members the board membership would be at full capacity of 11 members. Laurie stated that Erin had a very tough road and had done an amazing job. Erin stated that communication and networking has been key to success, as well as travel and relationship building.

Financial Update—Sara

Sara shared her screen to review the budget that was previously emailed to everyone for review. The goal today is to show everyone how we are doing thus far in the current fiscal year and to show the draft of the upcoming fiscal budget that needs a vote to approve and send to the full board. Due to the timeline, the vote to approve needs to be completed prior to the June 30th end of year and July 1st beginning year dates for the old and new budget.

Sara reviewed the Actuals with everyone, she said that there was nothing noteworthy outside of the discussions and review that have been done up to this point which is to spend the last of the PY22 WIOA funds. Looking at the programs as of yesterday, EMDC has \$71,633 still to spend from the PY22 funds which Susan feels strongly will all be spent within the expiration timeline. The Career grant ends in a few months and EMDC has already spent all their funding, we have a small amount left to cover close out activities. Quest is underway with us spending 21% of our funds and EMDC spending 26%, this currently has an expiration of 9/30/24 but Sara expects an extension for that. On the surface the budget looks like we are behind on spending, but though not official, September 2024 is not going to be the actual end date which gives us plenty of time to spend down those funds. Similarly with ARPA an extension until 9/30/26 will be given which provides ample time for spending the remaining funds in that area. The \$200,000 for ARPA will become \$500,000 with the addition of program funds we will manage internally. The current PY23 WIOA funds have begun to be spent by the board, EMDC will need to spend out their PY22 funds before they can begin taking from the PY23 funding. Most of the spending for EMDC has been via Youth.

Sara reviewed the admin details with a budget this year of \$449,000 and we are currently at \$242,000 in spending through the end of May. This indicates about a 92% spending ratio, the budget shows only a 54% spending due to the skew in numbers from the QUEST and ARPA contractual funding that is not usually part of the budget and if taken out of the equation the totals add to where Sara expects to find them at.

Sara presented the proposed local board budget for July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025, fiscal year which looks similar to other reports Sara shares with funding sources broken down into what has already been spent and a projection of what will be spent to create the budget. Sara put in the estimated end dates for both QUEST and ARPA assuming they will be extended as expected to help determine how long these funds will need to last to ensure reserved funds are set aside. One important note is that the number expected to be spent was put into the budget to make the numbers work, this means that we have new WIOA formula money but only need to spend \$65,000 of it because we have discretionary funds that are absorbing a lot of our costs and with permission from the board allow us to go over our expected spending on the budget. This would provide us with the opportunity to carry over funds into the next fiscal year that do not have an expiration within that current year.

Our funding sources currently that are already being spent have an estimated spending total of \$188,170 with about \$80,000 carrying into next year. The WIOA formula funds are down slightly from last year, despite receiving the highest allocation of funds for the three boards in the state. We received approximately \$181,000 and Sara expects to use about \$65,000 of that. We will need to spend the

majority of both the QUEST and ARPA funding prior to expiration, which is quite a lot of funding to spend and is why we are not using as much of our formula funds next year. It looks different as well with most of the budget for salaries related to QUEST changing from the current take from formula funds that are being used.

There are a few other funding sources within the proposed budget as we are applying for the WANTO grant and will change things significantly. We will not hear on this prior to the start of the fiscal year so it has been added as a placeholder and Sara will update and present changes to the budget if this grant is awarded to us. The Career funding will end on 9/23/24 and is carrying over in the budget for the fiscal year as well. EMDC has spent out the funds here and we will spend our funds there as well and will not be spending any money next year so Sara will hide this funding source at that time.

She finished the presentation of the budget with a look ahead at expectation of estimated costs for next year and what that budget will look like. She usually makes this a flat budget and expects formula funding equal to that of this year. She feels the budget going into next year and beyond continues to look comfortable with no concerns that she is seeing at this time. The challenge will be how to spend all the money we have within the timeline we need to spend it. For reference she showed everyone what we've spent year to date through May and what we propose to run going forward which was reviewed and updated with Erin. There will be areas of spending that were increased and decreased as needed for a permanent increase to the fixed costs so that when the discretionary contracts go away, we are not left with someone or something to fund that needs to be removed or fired. Examples of this were an increase in travel and a decrease in supply spending. Payroll expenses will also decrease as the new Paylocity program was installed and that took a large part of the budget for payroll this year. Erin questioned if the budget allots for the \$200 a month fee for the program which Sara confirmed is included in the figures. While going through the budget Sara found a few errors around the professional fees due to the audit and changed the budget figures as needed, she made the changes live and sent the updated budget to everyone for review.

She completed the review of where spending lies currently and feels that the proposed budget is very flat and there are no concerns, she once again reiterated that the WANTO grant if received will make significant changes to the budget that she will make and then re-propose to the committee and the full board for approval.

Grant asked about the availability in rolling over funds or spending funds down quicker in the beginning of certain areas of the budget and if looking at something like that would be advantageous to look at areas to be fiscally conservative or monetarily conservative until 2025 given the change in administration and the changes to the WIOA funding. Sara reviewed a few changes to areas in spending that could be different using travel and supplies as examples and found that though there are areas that would save dollar in the end the changes to spending would not be greatly beneficial enough to make a major difference in the budget and the monies being spent. She explained that some areas are proportionate with EMDC spending, we cannot spend those funds if they do not spend their portion. The expiration for some contracts makes spending difficult as well, we do not want to wait on spending funds with short term expirations so that we don't risk not spending it all and sending money back. Erin explained that when looking at the ARPA grant, most of the funds are going to other areas and we are

only expected to spend a small \$60,000 portion of it. Some of the other spending outlets like the CBO's and the marketing campaign are already in the process of using the funds given to them and the only pieces we can spend would be salary. Sara took a moment to break down the budget section by section to show everyone how she uses the figures in each area to create the budget presented once she inputs all the data and calculates the costs and expected spending.

Erin will send the recording of the meeting to those committee members not present to review and a vote to approve the budget to meet the July 1st timeline will be completed via email confirmation and then the budget will be presented and reviewed by the full board during the July meeting.

Updates

- **Reauthorization:** WIOA Reauthorization was a centerpiece during the National Association of Workforce Boards' conference and in subsequent weekly email blasts. They have been encouraging boards across the country to contact their senators regarding the House's bill on reauthorization, even sharing other board responses. HR 6655, which passed the House on April 9, 2024, has some concerning passages. It is currently in the Senate's Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions committee which has a live hearing today at 10 am as they deliberate WIOA reauthorization. The three boards and their service providers worked together to research how House version would affect our regions. NWDB and CWMWDB penned a letter that was signed by both board chairs. I can email it to you if you would like. It was sent to Senators Collins & King and Representative Golden on May 22. I have reached out to all of their representatives in our region and am setting up meetings. I meet with Senator Collins rep on June 26.
- **MOU/IFA:** A meeting to discuss the MOU/IFA that was held in May went very well and Erin has asked for information so that this can be completed before the end of the month deadline, but the nonresidents that she needs information from are not responding to her requests. We have proposed that rather than take the amount of money owed and equally divide it among the nonresidents, we will divide it from a tiered level system. For instance, the community colleges, who are one of the required partners for the comprehensive one stop, and have a huge budget compared to others so to have them pay equal amounts seems unfair. So, we asked the six nonresidents for their budgets for administration and the number of people. Erin and Galan are going to take this number to tier level the costs, which currently everyone is agreeing to.
- **WANTO/WORC:** The WANTO grant was submitted Monday at 5:07pm meeting the midnight deadline. Sam Dinah was a huge help, along with staff getting information and data needs and helping through the process to get this application completed. New Ventures Maine could not take the lead on the grant application due to the requirements, so Erin took the lead on it after being asked by the Commissioner. One issue with submitting the grant was a section on financial risk, so we had to submit the high-risk letter and notification of resolution and the audit. These may be red flags for receiving the grant.

Erin is also working with Mike Routin, Executive Director for the Manufactures Association of Maine on the Work Opportunities in Rural Communities (WORC) ETA grant. Mike is the lead on this with Erin helping. During the previous meeting in July Josh mentioned a need for specialized E&I electricians and automation specialists. The goal is to work with businesses to create

curriculum that addressed these needs and trains people in these areas and then provide further training and apprenticeships in the manufacturing industries.

The WORC grant would not provide any funding for us, but if we get the WANTO grant that would provide about \$67,000 in admin funds to us which is why Sara mentioned the placeholder for the grant that would create changes to the proposed budget.

- **ARPA Proposal 3:** We had a contract for \$200,000 for the CBO and the marketing campaign and went back for the other \$300,000 and was sent a contract. Erin had some concerns with the contract which was worked through and resent. The contract will allow \$60,000 for Fit First to do the assessments for five Oxford contracts as the pilot project and then work with anyone on it. There is \$200,000+ for transportation RFA for businesses and community organizations on a van pool. We will pay \$1,300 for 18 months of use for a van. KVCAP in Gardiner are closing their vans so this would be a great area for a van pool. Once the contract is complete Erin will network with businesses and organizations to plan on getting transportation up and running in those areas.

Marketing Campaign: The marketing campaign was approved, and a contract was drawn up, and the kickoff meeting is Monday, June 17th and will begin with the focus groups, one in each county focused on youth. Our region has a higher number of youth and youth not in the labor force which we are hoping to reach with the campaign.

- **D&O Insurance:** The insurance that covers the directors and officers, which is the only one that does not automatically renew came in the mail this week. Erin called and told them that we wanted to increase and pay the total due which Sara has done so that is covered, and we will continue to track it for renewal each year.
- **Advancing Job Quality:** Celeste Banda from Main Street Skowhegan was hired for the Re-Compete grant and found an “Advancing Job Quality” Academy online that is through MDOL, but you need to have a workforce board working with you. She contacted Erin and asked if we would want to join this for a few hours each month, which Erin agreed to do.

Open Discussion/New Business

Laurie and Grant thanked Erin for once again doing all the networking and hard work that she has been accomplishing. Erin said that people are beginning to reach out to us, and that she received an email from ACAP who were interested in the WORC grant as well as CCI. She pointed them to MAME and the RFA being done by the Maine Apprenticeship Program, which the CCI staff wanted to do an apprenticeship for childcare so she said she will notify them when that becomes available.

Adjourn

Grant Provost adjourned the meeting at 9:33am.

Motion: Laurie Glidden

Second: Razell Ward

Vote: All present in favor

Next meeting: Wednesday, July 10, 2024, 8:30am-9:30am via ZOOM

Next full board meeting: Thursday, July 25, 2024, 8:30am-10:30am in-person at the Career Center in Hinckley

