**Communications Committee**

Thursday, August 20, 2020, 10:00 – 11:30 PM

Google Meet Link: [meet.google.com/jhy-mwsn-kwq](https://meet.google.com/jhy-mwsn-kwq?hs=122&authuser=2)

Call-in #: 567-331-0198‬

**MEETING MINUTES**

Attendees

*Virtual Attendees*: Alan Crawley, Jamie Harris, Susan Kaliush, Molly Mesnard, Katherine Morris, LiLi Taylor, Emma Wilson and John Lane.

Handouts

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| * August Meeting Agenda * Committee Updates for Global Workplan * Newsletter Content Ideas |  |

1. Opening and Partner Happenings

*Governor’s Workforce Development Board (GWDB)*

* The GWDB has worked in partnership with the Maryland Department of Labor’s (Labor’s) Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning (DWDAL), the Maryland State Department of Education, and local workforce boards around the state to prepare a grant proposal for a United States Department of Education grant. If awarded funds under the grant, the state will spearhead new remote learning opportunities.
* The GWDB is also working with Labor’s Division of Unemployment Insurance (DUI) to promote the Work Sharing program to Maryland employers. The Work Sharing program is a voluntary program that provides an alternative to layoffs for employers confronted with a sharp, temporary decline in business. The Work Sharing program allows employers to cut costs by equally dividing available hours of work among employees. An important component of the GWDB’s efforts in this area relate to a webinar jointly produced with the Small Business Administration. The webinar, which is designed to explain the Work Sharing program to employers, has been presented at multiple local chambers of commerce. Committee members commented that Business Services professionals working in various workforce system programs could benefit from information about Work Sharing. Molly Mesnard will speak with Bryan Moore in UI to determine whether it would be possible to post a link to the webinar in the next issue of the *Benchmarks of Success* newsletter.

*Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I – Adults, Dislocated Workers and Youth*

* Alan Crawley shared that the state’s American Job Center (AJC) network has been successful in quickly transitioning from what had been a largely face-to-face service delivery model to one that is effectively leveraging multiple technologies to maintain services for workforce system customers during the pandemic. Far from handicapping the ability to reach customers, statistics show that the remote approach has positively impacted services uptake. The statewide show rate for first appointments prior to COVID-19, when the primary customer contact method was in-person and through the mail, was 31.6%. When AJCs moved to mandatory telework and started providing services via email, text, and telephone, the show rate for first appointments dramatically rose to 68.4%. And Alan pointed out that his numbers at the local level (Southern Maryland) were even higher than the statewide average.
* LiLi Taylor noted that since the Committee’s last meeting in February, the United States Department of Labor awarded Labor’s DWDAL more than $6 million through an Apprenticeship Expansion Grant to provide significant additional support for Maryland’s fast-growing Apprenticeship program. Jamie Harris responded that Title II staff would be very interested in learning about any available pre-apprenticeship programs, as many individuals served through the Title II program do not meet the high school degree prerequisite that is a common requirement among Apprenticeship programs.

*WIOA Title II – Adult Education*

Like the AJC network already mentioned, Jamie Harris shared that the 25 adult education programs across the state have admirably risen to the challenge of delivering instruction exclusively via remote technology. She said that a survey conducted by Montgomery College Adult Education program indicated 47% of students are accessing programs through their cell phones.

1. Old Business

*WIOA Alignment Group Updates*

Susan provided the Committee with three updates from the July WIOA Alignment Group meeting:

1. The printing of collateral materials is completed. Materials are at Central Supply at 1100 N. Eutaw Street.
2. Regular newsletters had been put on a temporary hold since the special expanded April COVID issue.
3. The Communications Committee stands ready to assist other committees, on request.

*Newsletter: Content and Schedule*

The Committee discussed the recent disruptions to the newsletter schedule and agreed that a more consistent schedule is needed to maintain and grow readership. The group agreed to make a recommendation to the WIOA Alignment Group that the newsletter be released bimonthly.

The Committee reviewed the meeting handout that identified proposed articles for each of the newsletter sections and made the following decisions:

* The Partner feature story will focus on the Digital Literacy Framework. Jamie will share additional information on Family Literacy Week when content becomes available.
* We will include information on the new dedicated COVID-19 section on the Maryland Workforce Exchange, along with a screenshot, to raise awareness among partners about this resource.
* In addition to the items already proposed for the “Did You Know?” section, Committee members suggested including some statistics showing the improved service uptake since the pandemic-related closures and giving a shout out for the newly launched Department of Human Services COVID-19 Resource page.

*Collateral Update*

The printing of collateral materials is complete. The original plan was to use the collateral materials to build branding for a unified workforce system by posting them in AJCs, local Departments of Social Services, and other workforce system service delivery points throughout the state. The Committee explored possible alternative uses for the materials, given the fact that so much remains shut down. Committee members suggested COVID-19 testing sites and pop-up food banks as possible distribution locations. The Committee agreed to ask for suggestions from the WIOA Alignment Group on this topic.

1. New Business

*2020 Global Workplan*

The Committee discussed updates for the Global Workplan. LiLi agreed to build in updates, based on the bimonthly schedule for newsletter release.

1. Next Steps

* Molly will speak with Bryan Moore in DUI to see if it would be advisable/helpful to share the GWDB Workshare Webinar with partner programs via the newsletter, and will inform Susan/LiLi of the outcome of the discussion.
* Jamie will send LiLi the already-developed blog content for the Digital Literacy Framework.
* Susan/LiLi will carry the recommendations and questions noted in the minutes to the WIOA Alignment Group at next Monday’s meeting.

\* Meeting Adjourned\*