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**Workforce Development Board of Oswego County
Partners Roundtable Committee Meeting
Wednesday, March 6, 2024
Via Teams Video Conferencing**

“The Partners’ Roundtable shall focus on services to customers that would reduce duplication and save money that could be reinvested into the system; identify and implement “best practices” customer service strategies to a universal population; oversee public relations for the partners; and annually negotiate and prepare the MOU and cost allocation plan among the partners.”

Minutes

Present: Zoë Vandermeulen, Patrick Sheppard, Kim Sizemore, Rachel Pierce, Amanda Quaile, Gidget Stevens, Abby Jenkins, Candy Herbert, Diane Cooper-Currier, Tianna Porter, Heather Snow, Carla DeShaw, Alexis Cummins

“Creating pathways to better careers and economic growth.”

Zoë Vandermeulen called the Partners Roundtable Committee Meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

1) Approval of Meeting Minutes from August 23, 2023

Zoë asked for a motion to approve the minutes from August 23, 2023 Partners Roundtable meeting. Kim Sizemore made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Patrick Sheppard seconded the motion. All in favor. The motion was carried.

2) Welcome & Introductions – Zoë Vandermeulen

- Roundtable introductions of all participants on the call.

3) New Opportunities- Oswego County Department of Workforce Development

- Updates and Group Discussion
 - As of January 1, 2024 OCWNY has officially split from the Department of Social Services and became the Department of Workforce Development. The Workforce Development Board and the OCWNY Career Center now operate under the new department. We are still primarily WIOA funded but we now have access to County Funding which will allow us to develop Workforce Development programs based on what we see is the need in the county.
 - So far, we have developed a High School Senior Work Experience program that we are testing out with CiTi BOCES and Oswego HS and Fulton HS. We are looking to give

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these students the experience they need when they graduate to help them be more successful in the workforce.

- We have also expanded some of our supportive services program., especially the Car Repair Program. Before, we were restricted to the TANF 200% guidelines when offering car repair services to individuals, but now we can open that service to individuals who are still low income, and work a minimum of 30 hours a week, but they do not have to meet with minor child in the household requirement. The 200% program is still being offered at DSS under the previous guidelines.
- Zoë asked if we have heard from other businesses of what their needs are? So far from what we have heard, businesses are interested in the upskilling of their current employees.
- Oswego County is now a Work Ready Community under ACT WorkKeys (1st in NYS and the Northeast)! We are working with BOCES, the Legislature and the Shineman Foundation to make an announcement to the public in June. We have already had some success with students getting the credential through BOCES and will be working with the Veterans office to make it available to veterans. It will be important to get the word out to businesses to gain their support and get them to recognize the credential. (OCO has 1 staff member who can administer, and Cayuga has a few).
- We are working with Centerstate CEO on a CDL initiative for a regional strategy to expand training for CDL Drivers at all levels. We have been reaching out to providers and employers to see what is available and what we can do to fill in the gaps. Starting in May we will be doing a cohort with BOCES for CDL training where we expand services and case management available to students and expand their interaction with potential employers. (Students will be able to interview with potential employers before they even start their training).

4) Referral Process- Updates and Feedback

- A referral process between partners is part of the legislation requirements for WIOA
- OCWNY created a referral form and implemented a process to streamline referrals from DSS to OCWNY once the departments were split. Overall, since the process has been implemented, we have only seen a handful of referrals for Metrix learning or young adult services. The process seems to be running smoothly between the two departments. We could look into expanding the form to make it a universal referral form between different agencies. For the August Partners Roundtable meeting we will follow up on getting a common form for information and formalizing ideas on how we think referrals work.

5) Roundtable – All

Zoë Vandermuelen- Next Partner & Staff Forum will be held on 3/19 with a focus on Housing & Homelessness in Oswego County. Please encourage staff members to attend. After that, the next forum will be on 5/21. Idea suggestions for future forums- workforce development services, transportation, youth focused services.

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Diane Cooper-Currier- Previously partnered with CiTi BOCES on an Adult Education Workforce Grant with case management, but it was only available for a very limited population. They struggled with getting enough referrals for the program so the program has been discontinued and returned to the state. Literacy Zone projects and Family welcome centers are doing well.

Patrick Sheppard- ACCES-VR is currently fully staffed with counselors for Oswego County. They have some positions open in their Syracuse district office. Patrick shared that ACCES-VR will not be requiring proof from applicants that they are eligible to work in the country before services are provided which as change from previous regulations. Their Core Rehabilitation contracts have not been fully executed yet, and they are continuing to focus on transition age youth and are hoping to see an increase in referral #'s.

Carla DeShaw- OnPoint has been approved to offer paid internship opportunities for Oswego County Students and it can now be opened to underemployed or unemployed individuals (before it was only focused on college students) to get them on a career track. They are hoping to have at least 15 internships completed and are hoping to have an hourly rate of \$18.00. They are also working with school districts in Oswego County on shared service models out of BOCES for districts to buy into.

Candy Herbert- Continue to need people to be referred to services. On the employment front they have a new training coordinator and will be hiring a training specialist and an Executive Director. They are ramping up their opportunities for people to be trained as an advocate and a CASAC and they have different scholarship opportunities available. Contact Candy or Megan for more information- mwaldrath@farnhaminc.org , cherbert@farnhaminc.org they are also always looking for RN's and counselors.

Tianna Porter- Tianna is new to this position but excited to jump in and provide services. Their focus is on getting referrals to their agency as they can offer a wide range of WIOA services.

6) Wrap-up & Goal Setting- Group Discussion

Zoë reiterated that she will send the registration link for the 3/19 Partner & Staff Forum. There was nothing further to report at this time. The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 a.m. **Next Meeting: will be in August (date TBD) at 9:00 via Teams Video Conferencing.**