



## **Carroll County Workforce Development Youth and Young Adult Standing Committee**

Wednesday, April 19, 2023

Carroll County Workforce Development, 9:15am

Attendees: Zach Tomlin, Chris Abell, Bryan Zuber, Peg Ryan, Jenny Adcock, Elizabeth Baldwin, Leslie Chesley, Ashley Roper, Justin Bard, Chris Miller, Sterling Kelly, Heather Powell, Tammy Haines, Eileen Vozzella, Dominique Evans, Keith Claiborne, and Shelby O'Leary.

Mr. Tomlin started the meeting at 9:17am.

Mr. Tomlin and Ms. Powell welcome the committee to the inaugural meeting of the Carroll County Workforce Development (CCWD) Youth and Young Adult Standing Committee.

1. **Roles and Responsibilities-** Ms. Powell explained to the committee the role of the CCWD Board and the American Job Center (AJC) partners. The CCWD Board acts as ambassadors of workforce in Carroll County and have an active role in the community. The AJC partners work with CCWD to provide all the services that are required under WIOA to customers who walk into the American Job Center. They are Carroll Community College (Adult Education/ESOL), Department of Human Services (DHS), Human Services Program (HSP), Department for Rehabilitation Services (DORS), Maryland Department of Labor (MD DOL), and Center for Workforce Inclusion (SCSEP). Ms. Powell stated the youth of today play a vital role as the new workforce following a large talent exit in recent years.
2. **Youth and Young Adult Services Program Overview-** Ms. Vozzella presented the following information:

The Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) serves youth and young adults ages 16-24 years old with barriers to employment such as homelessness, in foster care, have low reading or math skills, are a high school drop-out, are low income (SNOP, TCA, or FARM), have a disability (IEP or 504 from high school), are pregnant or parenting, or have a criminal record. This grant is strict in its guidelines for who can qualify. The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) provides more flexibility by providing funding for those affected by COVID in some way. It also provides additional opportunities for WIOA qualified youth and expands CCWD connection in-school youth, particularly with Carroll County Public Schools high schools. The Summer Youth Program serves youth ages 16-

18 in a six-week work and learn experience. The youth team can also serve anyone who comes into the center with resume development and job search assistance, even if they don't qualify for federal funding.

The WIOA program consists of 14 elements: (1) tutoring, study skills, training, instruction, and dropout prevention, (2) alternative secondary school services or dropout recovery services, (3) paid and unpaid work experiences, (4) occupational skills training, (5) education offered concurrently with workforce preparation for a specific occupation, (6) leadership development opportunities, (7) supportive services, (8) adult mentoring, (9) follow-up services, (10) comprehensive guidance and counseling, (11) financial literacy, (12) entrepreneurial skills training, (13) services that provide labor market information, and (14) post-secondary preparation and transition activities. Although the WIOA program requires all 14 of these elements are offered, CCWD can partner with organizations that already offer these services.

The youth and young adult services program provides individualized case management by using the WIOA eligibility determination and assessment process, utilizing career exploration and developmental tools, developing individual service strategy, business partnerships, and by leveraging community partnerships to overcome barriers to employment. Case management is generally time intensive and is not linear.

Although the all-persons unemployment rate is trending lower since 2019, the youth unemployment rate is double to triple times higher than the all-persons rate for both Carroll County and the state of Maryland. The graduation rate is higher in Carroll County than the state of Maryland, but the rate is trending down since 2019. The dropout rate is lower in Carroll County than the state of Maryland, but that rate is starting to trend up since 2019. Carroll County post-secondary outcomes, or college enrollment, is about the same as the state, but are trending down since 2019 as well. Carroll County is consistently ahead of the state in percentage of 504 plans for students with disabilities in the school system, which could indicate that Carroll County has engaged parents, great educators, or increased awareness of students who need additional things to help them learn. This is also important because disability is among the top two barriers that the youth have when they qualify for WIOA services. The committee discussed the MSDE report card, which shows the number of ADA 504 plans, economically disadvantaged, FARM's (free and reduced meals), English-learners, and students with disabilities in high schools in both Carroll County and the state of Maryland. *(Reference slide 11 of the presentation)*

CCWD's number of customers and participants has been trending up since 2019 as well. The total number under the age of 24 includes people who meet the age criteria but may have been referred to an adult employment consultant as opposed to the youth

program. The committee discussed possible factors for this trend: change in name (previously BEREC), increased outreach initiatives, adding more youth staff, effects of covid-19, etc. The percentage of youth participants who completed training and credential programs have been trending up as well. *(Reference slide 13, 14, and 17 of the presentation)*

CCWD also awarded ARPA-funded grants for Carroll County Public Schools internships. This program started in the winter of 2022. So far, CCWD has awarded 97 grants of \$750 or \$1500 each. The first year 31 students received an award (\$45,750 total) and the second year 66 students are scheduled to receive an award (\$76,500 total). *(Reference slide 16 of the presentation)*

Participants in the Summer Youth Employment Program participate in a 6-week work and learn experience. They also have value-added programming where they meet as a cohort at CCWD to go over soft skills, life skills, financial literacy, etc. This program can support approximately 11 youth under current funding. Youth needs to qualify based on WIOA barriers to employment. Youth are individually placed with employers based on interest, skill sets, and other factors. *(Reference slide 15 of the presentation)*.

The paid work experience (PWEX) program allows a youth or young adult out of school to be placed with employers for direct hands-on training for 6 months. Carroll County Government pays the salary of the participant, so the employer doesn't contribute financially. The committee discussed how this program might be beneficial to businesses with the future raise in minimum wage.

There is an overall rise in registered customers and a slight rise in WIOA participants, but they are less work ready. The amount of non-white registered customers is 30.3%. There has been consistency over the last 4 or more years in the top three barriers to employment: (1) Disability (2) Basic Skills Deficient and (3) Low Income. The committee discussed how CCPS handles low math skills. Ms. Chesley stated that a possible future presentation topic for this committee could be a member from the CTE committee coming to speak on the math curriculum and how it affects workforce.

Some challenges facing the youth and CCWD are: (1) Spike in mental health challenges for youth and young adults (2) limited availability of apprenticeships in Carroll County, (3) current funding limitations, limiting application of WIOA and declining ARPA funds, (4) siloed youth services, and (5) engaging youth before they exit the school system. Some opportunities that those challenges provide: (1) expand community partnerships, (2) awareness of the value of apprenticeships, (3) seek additional funding sources and the potential help from Blueprint for Maryland's Future, (4) staffing and retention, (5) the youth standing committee.

Ms. Vozzella shared the story of two students from Carroll County Career and Technology Center that had paid summer internships at Flowserve in Taneytown. These internships led to these students both being offered full-time positions post-graduation. The manager at Flowserve is also regularly visiting the teacher of the Welding program at the Career and Technology Center to help the teacher adopt the curriculum to the real-world.

3. **Committee Direction-** Mr. Claiborne began the committee discussion of the following three questions: (1) With organizations that supports youth and young adults, how can this committee expand opportunity in Carroll County? (2) What do you see as the goals and projected outcomes for this committee? (3) How do you see your organization contributing to CCWD youth and young adult services?

The committee discussed the importance of communicating with businesses to learn what their barriers are and to make sure to consider that as well. They also discussed how to increase awareness and knowledge of the CCWD Youth and Young Adult Committee, acting as ambassadors in the community. They agreed that there is a challenge with the length of the PWEX programs and the value the business holds in it. The idea of pre-placement training, extending the PWEX time but only having the last 6 months be paid, or utilizing the upcoming Blueprint plan to help solve the lack of training that some youth face. The challenge of the transportation barrier was also acknowledged. Mr. Abell has been doing research on ways to help solve that problem and may present at a future date.

Ms. Vozzella stated that the committee will hold three meetings a year: an in-person meeting in April, a virtual meeting in July, and another in-person meeting in October. She adjourned the meeting at 11:03am.