



Executive Committee Meeting
Tuesday, November 14, 2023, at 11:00 a.m.

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AGENDA

- I. Welcome and Opening Remarks Mr. Thomas Freeland, SWDB Chair
- II. SC Works Secret Shopper Findings.....Ms. Teria Coleman, MPH
- III. Approval of Meeting Minutes for August 30, 2023*Mr. Freeland
- IV. Request for Waiver Authority*Ms. Sheleena Rios
- V. Unified State Plan ReviewMr. Charles Appleby
- VI. Committee Activity Reports Committee Chairs
- VII. Other Business/Adjourn.....Mr. Freeland

*Denotes voting item

Executive Summary

The Secret Shopper pilot program is an initiative by the South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce (DEW) and the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB). The program's goal is to assess the customer experience when interacting with the SC Works system. Information from implementing the Secret Shopper pilot program will aid in identifying exemplary practices and opportunities for improvement within the SC Works system. Target SC Works centers were selected based on the type of center (comprehensive or affiliate), foot traffic, geographic location, and customers' demographics. The centers selected were Aiken Center, McAllister Square (Greenville) Center, Charleston Center, and Coastal (Conway) Center. The data collection strategy for the Secret Shopper pilot project included two approaches: 1) a customer survey for businesses and job seekers, and 2) Secret Shopper visits to selected SC Works centers.

The Business Customer survey administered from January 24– February 13, 2023, received 41 responses. The Job Seeker survey administered from February 8 –23, 2023, received 407 responses. The major themes that emerged from the survey were:

- Businesses rated SC Works phone, online, and in-person services highly on average between 6.6 to 10 out of 10.
- The majority (83%) of businesses felt the resources received from SC Works online were valuable to their business. Most businesses (80%) also felt the services they received from SC Works through in-person interactions were also valuable to their business.
- Job seekers gave SC Works in-person customer experience a medium to high rating, ranging from 5.0 to 9.4 out of 10.
- Job seekers indicated that the information they received from SC Works was useful to their job search.
- Overall 21% of business customers and 18% of job seekers reported difficulty navigating the SC Works Online System services (<https://jobs.scworks.org/>).

The Secret Shopper pilot program utilized five (5) Secret Shoppers to visit the four targeted centers. Each of the four centers had three (3) different Secret Shoppers who visited each of the centers on different days and times. Three (3) profiles were developed for Secret Shoppers based on background data of actual job seeker customers who visit SC Works centers. The overall findings from the Shopper visits were:

- Professional and courteous staff
- Good physical environment and short wait time
- Low level of engagement by staff during visits
- Lack of personalized assistance during visits

Recommendations provided for the scale-up of pilot project include:

- Scale up and implement the program statewide to establish representative baseline data.

- The Secret Shopper model provides reliable data for the job seeker experience but does not allow the business customer experience to be assessed. In order to capture the business customer's experience SC Works should disseminate surveys and conduct interviews or focus groups with a representative sample of business customers.

Recommendations for customer satisfaction improvement include:

- Require a universal protocol or checklist for all SC Works center staff to be utilized during a job seeker in-person visit.
- Require a universal training module for front-end staff on how to engage with job seekers.
- Ensure brochures and the hot jobs board are mentioned and readily available for job seekers.

**Governor's State Workforce Development Board
August 30, 2023, Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Ms. Valerie Richardson
Mr. William Floyd
Mr. Warren Snead
Mr. Charles Brave, Jr.
Mr. Pat Michaels

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mr. Thomas Freeland
Dr. Windsor Sherrill
Mr. John Uprichard

Welcome and Opening Remarks Ms. Valerie Richardson, SWDB Vice-Chair

Ms. Valerie Richardson, SWDB Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. A quorum was present.

Approval of Minutes from June 7, 2023* Ms. Richardson

Mr. Pat Michaels motioned to approve the June 7, 2023, meeting minutes. Mr. Warren Snead seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously approved the meeting minutes.

SNAP/E&T Program Ms. Tamara P. James

Ms. Tammy James, Director of Employment Services at the SC Department of Social Services (DSS), presented an overview of the services and programs offered by the Division of Employment Services, including the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T). In compliance with the US Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service (USDA FNS), Ms. James consulted with the Executive Committee on program improvements and alignment with SWDB priorities.

SC@Work: Photo Contest Ms. Dorothy Weaver

Ms. Dorothy Weaver, Director of Communications, provided instructions to the Executive Committee on how to vote for SC@Work: Photo Contest winners. SC@Work is an initiative to celebrate hard work and dedication in South Carolina by showcasing "SC at work." Employers across the state photographed their employees working and submitted their entries to DEW. Ms. Weaver explained there will be five winners, one from each workforce region and an overall winner for the State. SWDB members were asked to participate in the voting process. The winners will be announced at the 2023 Workforce Development Symposium on September 19, 2023. Voting closed on Tuesday, September 5, 2023, at 11:59 p.m.

Committee Activity Reports Committee Chairs

Board Development Committee – Pat Michaels, Chair

Mr. Pat Michaels reviewed the Board Development Committee priorities:

Carryover PY'22:

- *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Training*
 - The Committee will host the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion training for SWDB members on October 5, 2023, at 11:00 a.m., during the 2nd quarter Committee meeting.

New Priorities for PY'23:

- *High-Performance Board Initiative*

*Denotes voting item

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- The development of an initiative to reward Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDB) for achieving high-performance levels and utilizing innovative practices that align with State Board priorities. Local areas will have the opportunity to provide feedback via a survey, helping to determine the incentive criteria.
- *2023 Workforce Development Month/ Workforce Development Symposium*
 - The Committee reviewed the 2022 Workforce Development Month activities. SWDB members were encouraged to participate in 2023 Workforce Development Month activities in their local areas.
 - The Committee reviewed a draft of the agenda for the 2023 Workforce Development Symposium on September 19, 2023, at the Williams-Brice Stadium. Board members were encouraged to attend the Workforce Symposium, noting that Mrs. Val Richardson will be one of the speakers.

Workforce Committee on Innovation – Dr. Windsor Sherrill

Ms. Pamela Jones presented the Workforce Committee on Innovation activity report.

The Innovation Committee reviewed the status of PY'23 priorities:

- *Shared Case Management System to Support Intake, Referral, and Co-enrollment*
 - The State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) allocated \$250,000 to procure a vendor to conduct a feasibility study during PY'22. The vendor would work with partners to determine the needs and options to create a Shared Case Management System. A vendor has been selected, and Staff will continue to provide updates on this priority.
- *Investment for In-Demand Training*
 - The SWDB allocated \$1M in funding to expand the utilization of Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) to include occupational skills training, on-the-job training, and customized training strategies. Local areas can determine the type of training to offer, aligning investments with training in high-growth industries and preparing for emerging-demand occupations.
 - Local areas were encouraged to submit requests for all training funds needed within their areas by August 15, 2023. Staff is currently reviewing requests from each of the 12 areas. The training funds requested totaled \$2.5M.
- *Career Exploration through Virtual Reality*
 - Staff is in exploratory conversations with the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) around career exploration and training utilizing Virtual Reality Technology. We will continue to explore this and other opportunities.
- Ms. Bridgette Coates, Pee Dee Workforce Program Developer, and Ms. Ann Skinner, Upper Savannah's Workforce Development Administrator, shared an overview of the H-1B Rural Health Grant they received from the Department of Labor to expand healthcare occupations in rural areas. Target occupations include CNAs, Phlebotomists, and EMTs. The total grant award was \$2.2M. Since the grant award on February 1, 2021, the grant has served over 341 participants.

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- Ms. Amy Hill, Work Opportunity Tax Credit and Federal Bonding Programs Manager, provided the Innovation Committee with an overview of the Work Opportunity Tax Credit and the Conditional Certification Initiatives available to employers. Employers can receive a tax credit between \$1,200 to \$9,600 for each employee.

SC Works Management Committee – Warren Snead, Chair

The SC Works Management Committee did not meet during the 1st quarter. In alignment with the Committee's soft skills certificate priority, the Committee hosted the SC Professional Skills Certificate Employer Forum. SWDB members who serve as 'representatives of business' were invited to participate in the virtual demo and feedback session, at which WIN Learning demonstrated Digital Literacy and Essential Soft Skills Courseware and Assessments. Attendees were able to provide feedback on the value of the credential and offer suggestions for how to encourage employer utilization in recruiting and hiring decisions.

The Office of Adult Education asked those invited to complete the SC Digital Skills for Employment survey. The additional information gathered will be used to enhance the remediation classes offered through Adult Education programs.

Other Business/Adjourn..... Ms. Richardson

Ms. Richardson reminded SWDB members and guests that the 1st quarter full board meeting has been canceled to encourage attendance at the 2023 Workforce Symposium on September 19, 2023. Members were asked to RSVP by August 31, 2023, by emailing swdb@dew.sc.gov to register. The next full board meeting is scheduled for December 12, 2023, at 11:00 a.m. Ms. Richardson also reminded members, that the Board Development Committee is hosting the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Training for all SWDB members on October 5, 2023, at 11:00 a.m. Last, she asked members to vote for their favorite photo for the SC@Works: Photo Contest by Tuesday, September 5, at 11:59 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:47 a.m.

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Henry McMaster
Governor

William H. Floyd, III
Executive Director

STATE INSTRUCTION NUMBER 21-05, Change 1

To: Local Workforce Area Signatory Officials
Local Workforce Area Board Chairs
Local Workforce Area Administrators

Subject: Requesting a Waiver of State Specific Requirements

Issuance Date: DATE

Effective Date: DATE

Purpose: To provide guidance on requesting Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) waivers of state specific requirements.

Change 1 Revision: Changes to this state instruction include the following:

- This revision clarifies that, upon waiver request approval, a Local Plan modification is required.
- The default rejection of all requests made in the 4th Quarter for the current Program Year is amended to allow for reasonable cause, so long as approval will not obstruct other workforce system priorities.
- DEW will report to the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) all request approvals and denials in lieu of annually requesting approval authority.

Background: The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is designed to help job seekers secure the employment, education, training, and support services necessary to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. WIOA and its implementing regulations establish federal requirements for WIOA programs and allow states to set additional requirements as needed to reach state goals for WIOA programs. LWDA's are encouraged to develop promising and innovative practices or initiatives to achieve these goals; however, state specific requirements may limit a LWDA's ability to implement a new practice or initiative. In such a situation, the Department of Employment and Workforce (DEW) may consider a waiver of a state specific requirement. In addition to exploring available flexibilities to facilitate the achievement of LWDA goals, waivers of state specific requirements are a tool DEW may use for reducing barriers to WIOA implementation of innovative programming options.

Policy: In an effort to spur promising and/or innovative practices by local areas, LWDAs may submit a request for a waiver of a state specific requirement that may be a barrier to implementation. Once a LWDA has set local goals and identified barriers to implementing state requirements that may impede achievement of those goals, including the corresponding state policy, LWDAs are encouraged to reach out to DEW Workforce Support to discuss plans for a waiver request. This allows the LWDA to share its goals and ideas for innovation with DEW and provides the opportunity to explore any existing flexibilities and waiver options.

Innovative practices or initiatives may be identified by the following criteria:

Initiative is, or will be, implemented in partnership with other education, workforce, economic development, social service, or non-profit entities.	Lead entity is a Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) or LWDB's service provider.
Initiative focuses on creating talent pipelines in high-growth, high-demand industries.	
Initiative targets priority populations and/or underserved communities.	The LWDB is willing to assist other LWDBs or entities with implementing the promising practice.
Initiative met or exceeded target outcomes or is on track to do so.	

Requests for a waiver must be in writing and include the following elements, as applicable:

1. Detailed description of the nature of the project/initiative to be developed
2. State specific requirement that the LWDA would like waived
3. Actions the LWDA has undertaken to remove local laws and/or policy barriers, if any
4. LWDB strategic goals relevant to the project/initiative to be developed
5. Projected programmatic outcomes resulting from implementation of the waiver
6. Alignment with state policy priorities, such as supporting employer engagement, connecting education and training strategies, supporting work-based learning, or improving job and career results
7. Individuals, groups, or populations affected by the waiver
8. LWDA plans for monitoring waiver implementation, including collection of waiver outcome information

The waiver request must include the completed “LWDA Waiver of State Requirement(s) Request Cover Sheet,” with appropriate attachments. LWDAs may submit waiver requests as part of their Local Plan or as a separate request; ultimately, an approved waiver requires a modification of the Local Plan regardless of how it is submitted. The waiver request must include documentation demonstrating that the LWDB and Chief Elected Official(s) (CEO) are aware of the waiver request and the project/initiative. LWDA’s must submit requests for waivers of state specific requirements to WorkforceSupport@dew.sc.gov.

NOTE: A LWDA must meet all state specific requirements, even though a waiver request has been submitted, until the LWDA has received an approval letter outlining the waiver terms. Depending on the nature of the waiver request and the needs of the initiative, a waiver request may be approved retroactively.

LWDA waiver requests will be reviewed within 90 days of receipt of submission of the waiver request. Review of waiver requests will be expedited when possible. Upon approval of a waiver request, DEW will send an approval letter identifying the effective date and the duration of the waiver.

NOTE: Waiver requests submitted in the fourth quarter for the current program year (PY) will not be approved unless reasonable cause is presented by the LWDA and this exception would not obstruct other workforce system priorities.

While an approved waiver is ongoing, LWDAs should regularly assess whether the waiver is successfully achieving LWDA goals. LWDAs must report specifically on waiver impact and outcomes. DEW will consider outcome information as part of the criteria for granting renewal of a waiver, if requested.

Authority for Waiver Approval

Waivers approved by DEW are only granted for state specific requirements issued in State Instructions. Waiver approval cannot be granted for any requirements governed by federal or state laws and regulations, including federal performance measures. DEW will approve or deny waiver requests, as appropriate, and report all decisions to the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB).

Action: Please ensure that all appropriate staff receive and understand this policy.

Inquiries: Questions may be directed to Workforce Reporting and Compliance (WRC) at WRC@dew.sc.gov.

Nina Staggers, Assistant Executive Director
Workforce Development Division

Attachment: LWDA Waiver of State Specific Requirement(s) Request Cover Sheet