

**Northwest Georgia Workforce Development Board
 Youth Committee Meeting–Noon
 Wednesday, September 9, 2020, 11:00 a.m.
 Via GoTo Meeting**

Minutes

Council Members Present:	Council Members Absent:	Guests & Staff:
LaDonna Collins Nancy Edwards Beth Kelley Molly Majestic	Ben Arp Curtis Kingsley Lynn Rousseau Eric Waters	Karla Conetta Derrick McDaniel Lesia Lambert Cindy Martin Terri Morgan Courtney Rouse Anthony Rucker

Beth Kelley called the meeting to order. Ms. Kelley informed those present that Minutes from the July 8, 2020 meeting had been emailed (attached). Nancy Edwards made the motion to approve the minutes. Molly Majestic seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Lesia Lambert provided those present with an update on staff and contractors’ response to COVID-19. She stated that staff and providers have worked together to come up with virtual training and meetings to ensure that information is provided and exchanged. She stated that staff has received information from the state indicating that a virtual component may be used for the youth work experience program. More information will be provided as it is received. Ms. Lambert informed those present that an online portal had been created for applicants to complete applications and the required forms and that staff continues to research ways to provide resources to applicants and providers. Additionally, through the COVID/Disaster Grant, 23 adults have been enrolled in work experience and six in training.

Anthony Rucker began with thanking the providers for emailing their invoices on time. He updated the Committee on the status of expenditures and available funds (report attached). Molly Majestic made the motion to approve the financial report. LaDonna Collins seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Lambert reminded those present that, due to reductions in funds, a fifteen percent, across-the-board cut to all contracts was made for this program year. Additional discretionary funds which could normally be requested from the state were greatly reduced this year and that staff had already made the state and other areas aware that Region 1 would be willing to accept any funds that could not be utilized by other areas.

Derrick McDaniel explained that, while COVID-19 has interrupted some of the workforce development initiatives in the Northwest Georgia area, staff has continued to support local youth contractors' efforts to train and educate older youth. One initiative is through the Youth Work Experience Program. The Youth Work Experience program prepares youth (ages 16-24) for successful careers through work-based learning. It is a planned, structured learning experience that takes place in a workplace and provides youth with opportunities for career exploration and skill development. However, due to COVID-19 work experiences for youth during this time period have become harder to provide. With the increase of COVID -19 cases and higher wages for low-level jobs, it has become increasingly difficult for Out-of-School youth contractors to fill their Work Experience slots. The current minimum wage (\$8.00) for out-of-school youth is the wage participants earned in the work experience component. Under WIOA regulations, 20% percent of program funds must be spent in a work experience component. The increase in wage will assist the youth program in meeting these regulations.

Mr. McDaniel stated that it was staff's recommendation to increase the wage amount for the work experience program from \$8.00 per hours to a minimum of \$9.00 per hour. The wage increase will assist in spending the 20% allocation for the work experience component and meet the need for serving out-of-school youth. Ms. Kelley asked if this would be sustainable, given that funds are a concern. Mr. McDaniel responded that, if needed, the total number of work experience hours could be reduced but that this component is mandated in the federal regulations and, therefore, very important to the Youth Program. Molly Majestic made the motion to approve the report. LaDonna Collins seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Karla Conetta provided a youth enrollment report (attached). She noted that our area met all areas of youth performance. She also added that enrollments were low due to the effects of COVID but that staff would provide technical assistance as needed. She also noted that the youth providers were working hard to think outside the box for ways to continue offering services as we continue to move through the pandemic.

Mr. McDaniel presented a handout, "WIOA Youth Program COVID-19 Session Lessons Shared" (attached). He stated that this document highlighted attendee input during a recent WorkforceGPS webinar where the audience consisted of nearly 1,700 youth workforce professionals from across the country. Those in attendance shared their solutions to some of the biggest challenges facing young people during COVID-19. Additionally, he asked that those present let staff know if they had information about grants that could assist in providing laptops/technology to students.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.