



**NEW ORLEANS  
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

NOWDB Full Board  
JOB1 Business and Career Solutions Center  
1307 Oretha Castle Haley – New Orleans, LA  
August 14, 2024 | 11:00AM  
Meeting Summary

**Attendance**

**Members Present**

Gregory Curtis  
Melissa Sparks  
Claire Jecklin  
Mikal Anderson  
Charlene Bonck  
Jerry Repka  
Allyson Wilson  
Rachel Mackey  
Peter Pappas  
Rodney Wallis  
Andrew O’Brien, Sr.  
Desiree Stelly Bordenave  
Stacey Shepperson  
Chris Bardell

**Members Absent**

Allen Square  
Thelma French  
Floyd James  
Arlanda Williams  
Dottie Belleto  
Jeffery Martin  
Suri L. Duitch  
Danielle Garrett  
Runiaja Vicksbrown  
Jeffrey Schwartz  
Connie Carlson

**Staff and Guest**

Sunae Villavaso  
Neia Limar  
Tammie Washington  
Leonard Zanders  
Lori Boissiere

**I. Call to Order**

Board Chair Gregory Curtis called the meeting to order at 11:20AM

**II. Roll Call**

Board Chair Curtis forewent roll call and confirmed a quorum.

Board Members who attended the meeting virtually: Allen Square, Arlanda Williams

**III. Board Chair Updates**

Chairman Curtis opened the meeting with a brief summation regarding the success of the WDC Best Practices convening in Boston, MA. centered around the Summer Youth Program.

### **Board Staff Updates/Program Oversight Report**

Director Villavaso expounded on the outcomes of the WDC Best Practices convening. She described the takeaways related to the MSYEP, specifically implementing some of the practices utilized by similar workforce development departments from across the country. One of the initial steps to be taken is to deconstruct the current structure of the MSYEP in an effort to maximize the number of students eligible to participate in the program. Another key initiative is to use a third-party vendor to manage payroll for the program. Additionally, OWD will look to partner with the Audubon Institute and other employee partners in the area to create more of an internship style opportunity for youth participants wherein they would work 3 days at their assigned job post and 1-2 days would be reserved for professional development to gain fundamental soft skills.

Mrs. Villavaso elaborated on the ARPA funds allotted to support the Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) program goals of Prevention, Prepare and Connect. The Prevention component surrounds partnering with New Orleans Public Schools with aims to cut the current high school dropout rate of 20% in half. We have an in-house JAG program that is coupled with the HISET program for opportunity youth. These students will also have priority consideration for the Fall Internship Program. The Connect component of the ARPA funds encompasses sectorial partnerships which is crucial to providing opportunities regionally that establish a benchmark of at least 60% of our residents having access to high-wage, high-demand jobs. We are currently at 47%. Director Villavaso reported on the Program Monitoring Report for PY22/F23 which resulted in 3 findings which are currently being mitigated in-house on the programmatic side of WIOA.

Director Villavaso notified the group that the reauthorization of WIOA is in limbo. Per a conversation with Tina Roper, Workforce Development Director of 10 surrounding parishes, it appears that if no legislation is passed in September or October's session, the reauthorization ceases and we continue to operate under WIOA as it stands until the reconvening of the next session.

Mrs. Villavaso also reported that the Living Wage has increased to \$15.56 which dictates that all city funded contracts must pay their employees a minimum of \$15.56. Additionally, OWD has partnered with GNO Inc. in a \$20K grant to conduct job fairs in advanced manufacturing. ARPA funds have been approved for the Youth Pilot Program in partnership with the Tuskegee Airman, the 4 sectorial partnerships in the amount of \$1.6 million, the JAG Program for \$3 million, and Equus for supportive services for \$1 million.

Circling back to the WDC Best Practices convening in Boston, another notable takeaway is how heavily the State of Louisiana depends on WIOA funds and the need to find alternative funding streams to support the initiatives of workforce development. Mrs. Villavaso invited the board to communicate with their connections at corporations and foundations on behalf of the programs that the OWD provides.

Director Villavaso reported that she and the NOWDB Secretary Allen Square, were both in attendance on a call for the kickoff meeting of the Transportation and Electrification Plan; Net Zero, Zero Emissions Meeting. Allen Square will be leading the workforce and training component of this plan.

Mrs. Villavaso concluded her report advising the group that the OWD participated in a day long Professional Development workshop with Dr. Toya Barnes-Teamer of the Teamer Strategy Group on Monday, August 12<sup>th</sup> in the effort to continue the work of fostering a positive work culture and to return to the understanding of the Purpose, Mission and Vision of OWD. One of the resulting products of this workshop was the goal to create a portfolio of the accomplishments OWD has realized since the start of the current administration.

A question/suggestion was raised by NOWDB member Desiree Bordenave regarding the proposed reconstruction of the MSYEP to not only focus on involving the student participants but rather also include the participant's family in the process.

A question was raised by NOWDB member Angelle Hava asking if a curriculum already exists for the implementation of the professional development component proposed for the MSYEP internship. She continued by advising that Delgado Community College offers an 8-week, 6-hours per week Customer Service Certification that is equivalent to a Business class that could address the need.

Director Villavaso also noted for the group that the OWD is partnering with Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services.

A comment was offered by NOWDB Youth Committee Chair Claire Jecklin of the New Orleans Career Center stating that agrees with the idea of utilizing an outside vendor for the MSYEP payroll so that paycheck distribution can be customized to align with the program dates rather than City payroll dates. She added that it will also reduce the strain imposed on the City's payroll system during the span of the program.

#### **Approval of the NOWDB Full Board Draft Meeting Minutes June 12, 2024**

**Motion by: Andrew O'Brien**

**Second by: Claire Jecklin**

**No Opposition**

**The motion was approved by unanimous decision.**

#### **Operator Report**

Director Zanders provided a slide deck containing the End of Program Year data for board members to reference during his report. He first reported on the Adult Dislocated Workers focused on training, specifically the Earn & Learn Program in

partnership with total Community Action (TCA) which offered a stipend to participants. Next highlighted was the National Dislocated Worker grant, specifically the Careers grant, met its placement goals and will be concluding in September 11<sup>th</sup>. Additionally, the final “reverse job fair” will be held this month.

He also reported that from the area of Business Solutions, specifically Walk-In Wednesdays, has been a growing success averaging more than 50 participants each Wednesday. Youth Works Program had a culmination ceremony where 25 young people graduated from training programs including 3 college graduates and 8 HiSET graduates.

Director Zanders concluded by sharing a success story regarding Ms. Courtney Moses, the Work Readiness Facilitator. The final Work Readiness Program of the 2024 program year was hosted in June which had the largest graduating class celebrating 16 graduates; 11 of which were successful in finding employment.

**IV. Public Comments**

There were no comments from the public.

**V. Open Discussion**

A question was raised by NOWDB member Peter Pappas regarding the status of the survey proposed and created by the Business Engagement Committee for program participants and business/employer partners. Dr. Arlanda Williams advised the group that it is expected to be released into circulation by the end of August.

**VI. Adjourn**

**Motion by: Melissa Sparks**

**Second by: Andrew O’Brien**

**No Opposition**

**The motion was approved by unanimous decision.**

The meeting adjourned at 12:03pm.