

MEETING MINUTES
NYC WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
QUARTERLY MEETING
 Friday, December 8, 2023
 9:00 A.M. - 11:00 A.M.

Board Members Present:

Laura Anderson (Designee)	Laurice Arroyo	Donnel Baird
Scott Berger	Adda Birnir	Dave Bolotsky
Daniel Bustillo (Designee)	Edwin Christian	Saudia Davis
Colleen Galvin	Laura James	Angie Kamath
Caress Kennedy	Joseph Kenner	Eliana Palmay
Adria Powell	Jocelyne Rainey	Edgar Romney
Sen. James Sanders	Marvin Holland (Designee)	Keith Kinch (Designee)
ShehilaRae Stephens (Designee)		

Board Members Participating Remotely:

Lenore Friedlander	George Ntim	
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Guests Present:

Paula Bailey	Tammy Underwood	Michelle Clark (virtual)
Christina Curry	David Berman	Cherise Davis
Kseniya Palishchuk	Porsche Dames	Justin Gale
Daniel Garcia (virtual)	Emilio Garcia	Dynishal Gross
Saudia James	Sharon Kawall (virtual)	Greg Morris
Valerie Mulligan	Yurij Pawluk	Emma Pfohman
Je'Nean Jones-Seo (virtual)	Robert Taylor (virtual)	Tony Tseng

Staff Present:

Adolpho Casillas	Tim Currier	Doug Lipari
Elizabeth Murtin	Chris Neale	Abby Jo Sigal
Joseph Rhoades	Daniel Liss	
Jayson Swain	Matthew Walker	

Welcome

Board member Maureen Anderson, acting on behalf of Board Chair Adria Powell, began the meeting by welcoming attendees, then introducing the speakers and agenda items. Out of 29 board members, 17 were in attendance, meeting quorum.

Director’s Report

WDB Director Chris Neale started his Board update by announcing the departure of Board Member Mohamed Azzat Elkhashab (Reach Media Inc).

Director Neale also summarized the proposed funding transfer resolution—which sought to transfer \$8,800,000 in Program Year 2022 funds from Dislocated Worker funding to Adult Program funding to align the amount of funding with the proportion of customers served. The Board voted yes unanimously and the resolution took effect immediately.

Director Neale offered a tribute to the life and contributions of Melinda Mack of the New York Association of Training and Employment Professionals, who had recently passed away. The Board recognized a moment of silence.

Overview of City’s Strategy on Asylum Seekers: Work Authorization and Connection to Jobs

Portia Dames, Senior Advisor to the Deputy Mayor of Housing, Economic Development, and Workforce, provided an overview of the City’s strategy to provide as much support as possible to asylum seekers arriving in New York City. Emma Pfohman, also a Senior Advisor to the Deputy Mayor, described the Administration’s efforts to build a process to help asylum seekers apply for and obtain work authorization.

Yurij Pawluk, Deputy Commissioner of the Workforce Development Division at the NYC Department of Small Business Services (SBS) described the agency’s strong commitment to reaching all asylum seekers eligible for Temporary Protected Status, especially Venezuelans, who are the majority of recent arrivals. At the same time, Workforce1 can help businesses by recruiting, screening, and referring qualified candidates, thereby saving businesses time and money. SBS launched an American Dream Works website to enable new New Yorkers to express an interest in Workforce1 services and for businesses to express an interest in hiring new New Yorkers. Workforce1 staff conduct individual outreach to each person or business that expresses interest. They also provide training for shelter directors, personalized outreach, and coordination with NYSDOL. Workforce1 Career Centers have been enhanced to better meet the

needs of new New Yorkers, offering dedicated orientations, assessments, workshops, employment services, financial empowerment services, and an updated staff language bank. This also includes expanding construction site safety training and collaborating with CUNY.

Update on Youth Programs

Valerie Mulligan, Deputy Commissioner of the Youth Workforce Connect division within the NYC Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) gave a youth update. New York City's three largest youth-serving institutions – New York City Public Schools (NYCPS), the City University of New York (CUNY), and DYCD, along with the Mayor's Office of Talent and Workforce Development (NYC Talent), have collectively developed an Action Plan to guide New York City's efforts to ensure that all its young people reach adulthood well-prepared for career success. This Action Plan – described in the 2023 [Pathways to an Inclusive Economy](#) report – outlines a commitment to prioritizing the transformation of public schools and workforce development programs in New York City, including significant investments in career-connected learning, job opportunities for youth, and the City University of New York (CUNY) system. The goal is to ensure that every young New Yorker is equipped with the necessary tools for a successful adulthood.

The Action Plan includes five goals:

- Expand Career-Connected Learning
- Ensure Young People Remain Connected
- Re-engage Out of School & Out of Work Youth
- Improve Data Collection and Analytics
- Improve and Expand Employer Engagement:

The report underscores the importance of skills beyond formal education in the Action Plan. It introduces “career-connected” learning as a model that combines classroom instruction with real-world experience, promoting skills like communication and problem-solving. The Action Plan aims to enhance collaboration between education and workforce systems, and support young adults through transitions, focusing on postsecondary transitions to improve outcomes and reduce disconnection from school or work.

Update on Adult Programs

Yurij Pawluk from the NYC Department of Small Business Services (SBS) described how his division is working to connect New Yorkers with job and training opportunities through key government agency partners, such as the Mayor's Office of Talent and Workforce Development, the Human Resources Administration, and the New York State Department of Labor. Deputy Commissioner Pawluk also provided highlights about adult system performance. Occupational Training experienced a decline due to pauses in programming for contracts and agreements. The Workforce1 Career Centers helped connect nearly 24,000 individuals to jobs during Fiscal Year 2023. Additionally, full-time hires increased to 91% and average wages increase to \$18.61 per hour on average.

Overview of Plan to Advance Career Success of New Yorkers with Disabilities

Three Mayors Offices collaborated to develop and implement a Plan to Advance Career Success for New Yorkers with Disabilities. These offices include the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD), the Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity (NYC Opportunity), and the Mayor's Office of Talent and Workforce Development (NYC Talent). Representatives from each office spoke about their key elements within the plan: Commissioner Christina Curry from MOPD, Martha Jackson, Executive Director of the Center for Workplace Accessibility and Inclusion within NYC Talent, and David Berman, Director of Programs and Evaluation from NYC Opportunity.

Commissioner Curry described the low employment rate among people with disabilities: about 37% work, whereas nearly 70% of New Yorkers without disabilities work. This figure has changed little in at least the past 15 years. Additionally, 30% of New Yorkers with disabilities live in poverty, compared to only 12% of non-disabled New Yorkers. Commissioner Curry also described how MOPD is expanding NYC: ATWORK, a direct services employment program for people with disabilities, into the Workforce1 Career Centers, starting with the Brooklyn Workforce1 Center.

Martha Jackson from NYC Talent described how the City recently launched the Center for Workplace Accessibility and Inclusion. This Center has started establishing an Advisory Council comprised of employers, providers, funders, government partners, agencies, advocates and members of the disability community. The Center will focus on systems change and work to help employers make their workplaces more accessible and help workforce providers make their programs more accessible. Additionally, the Center will identify, promote and scale best practices within the business community. NYC Talent will also seek to better align public and private funding on employment for people with disabilities.

David Berman of NYC Opportunity described his office's data-driven investments in anti-poverty initiatives over the years, including Jobs-Plus with the Human Resources Administration and Advance & Earn with DYCD. Director Berman stated that his office is working on a concept paper that will seek input on a "co-design" program approach, an approach that values the lived experience of people from a specific community – in this case, people with disabilities – during the process of building a service model with their input. NYC Opportunity would plan to select a design firm experienced at facilitating co-design discussions, as well as several providers who would ultimately deliver the services developed through the co-design approach.

Closing

Board Chair Adria Powell called for a motion to close the meeting. Board Member Eliana Palmay motioned and Board Member David Bolotsky seconded. The meeting ended at 10:50 a.m.