



**Benchmarks of Success for Maryland's Workforce System**  
Policy Committee  
November 18, 2021 1:00 – 2:30 PM  
Virtual Meeting

**Attendees:** Brit Ayers, Lura Bozarth, Natalie Clements, Lloyd Day, Lauren Gilwee, Charles Hunt, Erin Inman, Kenneth Lemberg, Ellie Marts, Patti Morfe, Tina Turner, and Wesley Wilson

**Handout:** Agenda and Policy Committee 2021 Recommendations

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**Minutes**

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**I. Welcome and Meeting Overview**

- The committee used this meeting to look through the takeaways from the 2021 panels to lift items up for the Policy Recommendations Report.
- The committee welcomed MD Labor's new employee, Ellie Marts. Ellie is the Special Assistant for the DWDAL Office of the Assistant Secretary.

**II. Debrief of 2021 Panels: Top Recommendations**

- The committee walked through each point of the *Policy Committee 2021 Recommendations* summary document. Overarching themes are the need for flexibility and partnership.
- Topic: Intake and Assessments
  - Lauren Gilwee attended a national webinar on adult education and learned that Kentucky continued their classes by partnering with their Farm Board because they have wifi available at their buildings. In order to meet the need for technology and wifi, partnership is key.
  - The committee agrees with the recommendations listed in the summary document.
- Topic: Access and Participation
  - One Baltimore For Jobs (1B4J) was a grant program established by the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL), MD Labor, and Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Employment and Development in direct response to the civil unrest that Baltimore experienced in April 2015. The 1B4J initiative provided training and job placement as well as built back infrastructure.
  - The committee recommended adding in suggested methods for communicating with individuals: e.g. Mail Chimp, flyers, mobile units, etc.

- Topic: Staff and Business Engagement
  - This panel spoke to the transition in terms of staffing and how to support staff in an evolving hybrid environment.
  - The recommendations focus on what is a healthy balance of in-person and virtual tasks. This includes cost effectiveness (e.g. mileage, time, and food for conferences).
  - The committee can frame this in terms of professional development for staff learning how to work in a hybrid environment. The virtual *Raising the Bar* conference was cost effective. A mix of in-person with optional virtual attendance could meet the needs of all staff. Having virtual options also provides the ability to record sessions, so staff can review sessions later that occurred at the same time.
  - Recording professional development sessions enable new staff to view them, and current staff to go back and view them.
- Topic: Performance
  - One big takeaway from the panel, not necessarily a recommendation, is that the data reported during the pandemic is delayed. The report should capture an alert for leadership that the full impact of the pandemic has not yet been captured in the data. Leadership should be prepared for that down the road.
  - There is a renewed interest in shared data systems. There has been a new investment into MD THINK, and MD Labor has secured the Workforce Data Quality Initiative to pull in WIOA Titles I and III as well as community college data workforce data into the Maryland Longitudinal Data System. The Data and Dashboard Committee may have recommendations about shared data as well.
  - Perhaps the state could better capture successes if there were defined measurable skill gain processes (e.g. what counts as a measurable skill gain). A recommendation could be to develop a comprehensive measurable skill gain policy for the workforce system.
  - For some WIOA Title I partners, credentials are more difficult to capture and define to successfully meet performance than measurable skill gain. State guidance should not limit measurable skill gain, to make sure that there is flexibility for locals. Information sharing between Local Areas that take a broad and those with a more narrow interpretation of measurable skill gain could be beneficial. Guidance would broaden the scope of measurable skill gain, not narrow it. Frederick's measurable skill gain process would be a great tool to use in the development of statewide guidance.
- Topic: Participant Engagement and Outreach
  - Making sure that websites are updated is an important recommendation to make sure that customers can easily find information to engage with the system.
  - Customers should have the option to continue to participate in a virtual way, such as sending photos of their eligibility verification documents and using electronic signatures.
  - A recommendation for continued infrastructure would be to purchase technology and connect customers to the internet.
  - After Hurricane Katrina, Louisiana used an inquiry-tracking system that did an initial triage before staff conducted a triage. These systems are helpful in times of disaster.

- The recommendations should highlight mobile units.
- The Maryland Workforce Exchange does serve some of the purpose as a central repository of information for job listings. It would be helpful to have a virtual dashboard or central contact person for each agency's flyers and information about their programs.
- Ken Lemberg attended a webinar of the National Governors Association on digital skills and learned that there is a Governor's Office of Statewide Broadband. The workforce system can share information and recommendations about digital literacy and access with this office.

### **III. Policy Committee Findings and Recommendations Report**

- Lauren, Tina, and Natalie will revise the items from the *Policy Committee 2021 Recommendations* summary document into recommendations.
- Members will get the chance to review the report and submit comments, and then the Policy Committee will meet next in early February to review a draft of this report before the committee presents it to the WIOA Alignment Group at the end of February.

### **IV. News and Notes**

- Debrief from last month's WIOA Alignment Group meeting:
  - The Communications Committee's November-December newsletter focused on Registered Apprenticeship and will highlight some of the events that were held during National Apprenticeship Week.
  - The Data and Dashboard Committee is involved in the policy development process for DWDAL's data validation policy and invited the Professional Development and Technical Assistance Committee to their meeting to discuss how they can collaborate.
  - The Professional Development and Technical Assistance Committee released a module on WIOA Title I on September 20<sup>th</sup>. Their next module on WIOA Title II is scheduled to be released November 22<sup>nd</sup>. The current training series is scheduled to be finished by summer 2022. The committee is open to future training suggestions.
- Baltimore County is piloting a digital literacy webinar with the Community College of Baltimore County. Their first class was last week. There will be four classes in all (individuals take each class in order). The next class will be at the Liberty Center November-December. Their new mobile career center should be running in December, and they will have another mobile unit will be up and running soon after that.
- Baltimore County had an event at their Hunt Valley center for National Apprenticeship Week to connect jobseekers and employers.
- The next Governor's Workforce Development Board meeting will be on December 8<sup>th</sup> at 3:30 PM. The meeting will likely be virtual only.
- Maryland is drafting the WIOA State Plan and plans to send the draft plan for public comment December 13 through January 7. The WIOA Alignment Group will meet to discuss feedback received.

- All 24 Local Departments of Social Service are now fully transitioned into the Enrollment and Eligibility System.

**V. Next Steps and Action Items**

- Lauren, Tina, and Natalie will revise the recommendations and share a draft of the report with the committee for review.
- Natalie Clements will cancel the December 16<sup>th</sup> committee meeting and schedule a new meeting in early February.
- The committee will present the Policy Recommendations Report to the WIOA Alignment Group at the end of February.