

Interagency Collaborative Team (ICT)

December 19, 2024

10:00 a.m.

GOOGLE MEETS

Attendees: Scott Adkins, Alyce Almond, Danika Brown, Jonathon Compton, Josh Cox, Amanda Cranfield, Michael Crown, Barb Dawes, Amanda Dawson, David Dyer, Tina Faber, Erin Kittle, Chad Ketchum, Lisa Lilly, Tara Martinez, Criss McCauley, Nick Nunnery, Emily Pearson, Maureen Persons, Ashley Puffenbarger, Andy Richardson, Jason Roberts, David Rogers, April Saunders, Carrie Sizemore, Lorrie Smith, Marsha Stowers, Lori Turner, Dan Gates, Maria Larry, Melissa Bias, Mike Ferrari, TJ VanMeter

- Michael Crown opened the meeting at 10:03am. He asked all to sign in for attendance purposes and asked for updates.
 - Maureen Persons - We had over 1000 job seekers again at the virtual job fair and 180 employers. We are receiving more feedback from employers now. We have had 19 hires that employers have reached out to say they hired someone from the job fair. The next Virtual Job Fair is January 8th, 2025.Michael then turned the meeting over to DoHS.
- Ashley Puffenbarger, DoHS - Every three years the clock restarts on the work requirements of Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDS). That restart will be January 1, 2025. That means anyone who previously closed on SNAP benefits due to ABAWD policy is eligible to reapply. That's important because over 20,000 individual people closed in the last year and a half due to ABAWD policy. We will probably have a lot of folks needing to reregister as job seekers in the MACC. Last year we launched the summer EBT program. We are going to be extending that program this year. It is going to be built into our state wide eligibility system. This is a big project to undertake but it's going to really help those with children have more access to this benefit.
- Marsha Stowers, Family Assistance Policy Interim Director, DoHS - update on the LIEAP program. LIEAP stands for Low Income Energy Assistance Program. We are in our LIEAP season, regular LIEAP closed December 13. We have until January 13 to process those applications. So far we have helped 35,000 families. In the latter part of January we will open Emergency LIEAP and it will run through March 15, 2025 or until funds are exhausted. LIEAP has a maximum benefit of \$2,000. Some families will be able to receive regular and emergency LIEAP. For emergency LIEAP the customer must have a disconnect notice. LIEAP does not generally cover the whole cost of the utility.
 - Emergency assistance is also available. This program covers more than just heating/cooling. It is available once every twelve months and the income guidelines are lower than LIEAP.
- Tina Faber, Division of Family Support, Bureau for Family Assistance. This is the newest division in the bureau, formed in January 2024. The division oversees TANF and family support programs. We are focused on supporting families through holistic services. There is a family support center in every county with the exception of Jackson county, and we hope to pick that up this year. The family support centers have been working in their communities to provide a variety of services such as parenting, education, outreach activities, as well as concrete

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support such as pantries related to food, hygiene and baby items. Link to the family support centers page : <https://dhhr.wv.gov/bfa/communityresources/Pages/Family-Support-Centers.aspx>

- Ashley Puffenbarger - You can access BFA's policy manual and State plan through our website - <https://dhhr.wv.gov/bfa/policyplans/Pages/Income-Maintenance-Manual.aspx>
- April Saunders, DoHs - we are starting a cohort with Champs. Amanda will share the flyer.
- Daniel Gates, Job Corps - Job Corps specializes in working with individuals aged 16 - 24. It is a free job training program. The Charleston Job Corps has about 10 different programs such as hvac, industrial painting, maintenance, medical, office, and business. Some of the programs can help set up young adults with union employment before they leave. We are a residential program, meaning participants can come and live in dorms here while they are in training. We can house 300 individuals at a time. We are fully funded by the Department of Labor and there are many ways an individual can qualify. We also issue a cash stipend every couple weeks. We also offer driver's education and diplomas through Penn Foster. Participation must be voluntary, although several chose Job Corps over other alternative options. We can also send participants to other states to attend training that we don't offer here in Charleston. This is a completely free option. We provide housing, food, clothing etc. Several of our participants are kids aging out of the foster care system.
- Jonathan Compton - there was bipartisan agreement for WIOA reauthorization for what they're calling the Stronger Workforce for America Act. The bill is pretty much finished and we expect it to be attached to something after the first of the year. Here are some bullet points that are being talked about
 - removing some requirements around State Plans, no two year refresh.
 - require the Governor's office to review alignment of local areas every eight years, any realignment would have to be approved by CLEOs.
 - establishes a process for multiple local areas to form regional consortiums
 - legislative and Governor option to designate the state as a single service area
 - adds additional positions to local boards for educators
 - increases the share of local workforce participants
 - clarifies local boards authority over their own budgets and admin of all of their programs
 - updates local plan guidance
 - update how performance negotiations are handled
 - several updates to performance measures
 - clarification about sharing wage data
 - several changes to the ETPL
 - changes for out of school youth
 - 50% training requirement for adult and dislocated worker with 10% for supportive services and case management
 - provision for flexible pilot authority (basically a broad waiver)

All of this can change before reauthorization happens, but we wanted to share some of the more interesting bullet points.

- Michael Crown closed the meeting at 10:41am.

The next ICT meeting will be January 23, 2025 at 10:00am via Google Meets.