**Central Virginia Workforce Development Board**

**Youth Committee Meeting Minutes**

**Date:** February 25, 2025  
**Time:** 10:30 AM - 11:50 AM  
**Location:** Southern Air, Inc. - 2655 Lakeside Dr., Lynchburg VA 24501

**Attendees:**

* Sherie Fulcher (Chair)
* James Davis
* Dr. Annette Bennett
* David Sage
* Traci Blido
* Tim Saunders
* Jordan Johnson
* Keith Cook

**Meeting Minutes:**

**1. Welcome & Introductions**

* Sherie Fulcher opened the meeting at 10:30 AM
* Keith Cook announced that Rachel Jensen is leaving the Title I program in March. Interviews for a new youth career navigator are being held this week.
* Keith announced that he is taking on a new role within HumanKind (the Title I program operator) and that Shantel Crews, our current One-Stop Coordinator, will be replacing him as the new Director of Workforce Operations.

**2. Committee Business**

At the start of the meeting, Traci asked committee members to sign a card for board member Bryan Lyttle. Following this, Sherie provided updates on the Southern Air apprenticeship program, highlighting recent changes and improvements. She explained that new parameters have been put in place to ensure better monitoring of apprentices’ progress and completion rates. The program is no longer treated as an entitlement; instead, participants must earn their way in based on performance and commitment. Additionally, students who have taken Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses now have an easier pathway into the program, providing them with more opportunities to transition into apprenticeships.

Sherie also shared that Southern Air is actively working to encourage other employers to participate in apprenticeship programs, expanding opportunities across industries. She has been collaborating with Central Virginia Community College (CVCC), which is now a state-registered apprenticeship intermediary, to increase employer engagement and promote work-based learning initiatives. As part of these efforts, she herself has become a registered apprenticeship intermediary and encouraged others to consider pursuing this designation as well.

Dr. Bennett inquired about how students in the region can access information on which employers offer apprenticeships. In response, Sherie directed the committee to apprenticeship.gov, where a comprehensive list of registered apprenticeship employers can be found.

**3. Title I Youth Program Performance**

Keith Cook presented tables and charts detailing the current performance of the Title I Youth Program, emphasizing the program’s limited scope due to funding constraints. He explained that the program only receives enough funding to cover the federal requirement to expend 30% of overall WIOA youth funding on work experiences, which forces him to allocate all available resources exclusively to that component. Keith said this limitation has made it difficult to support additional training opportunities that could improve credential attainment rates. Keith noted that the out-of-school youth population has been particularly challenging to locate and engage, further complicating efforts to enhance program performance.

Keith expressed concerns that although funding is available to enroll participants in training, restrictions prevent him from using those funds effectively. Without the ability to provide vital skills training, many participants struggle to remain engaged and complete their programs. To address these challenges, Keith has been working to co-enroll as many youth as possible in the adult program, which allows for training costs to be covered under a different funding stream. He also explained that when a work experience can be directly linked to a training program, the participant can be enrolled in a credential program, which helps improve performance outcomes.

Despite these efforts, Keith acknowledged that the Youth Program is currently failing to meet state performance requirements, with some key metrics falling below 50% of the state’s negotiated performance levels. To address these deficiencies, he is actively working to enroll approximately 20 students currently taking classes at the Old Dominion Job Corps Center into the Title I program. By doing so, he hopes to use available funding to support work experiences for these students, ultimately improving overall program performance and compliance with state requirements.

**4. Discussion**

David Sage asked whether Keith could collaborate with training providers to offer vital skills training to youth participants. Keith acknowledged that there are ways to establish partnerships that could help address this gap. Tim highlighted that Keith and HumanKind, as the program operator, not only focus on serving eligible participants but also ensure that 100% of those served meet the priority of service requirement. While this approach aligns with policy, it also presents challenges in guiding participants toward program completion.

Dr. Bennett raised a concern that Appomattox is currently not being served by the program. Keith agreed, noting that both Amherst and Appomattox are among the least served localities in the region. He emphasized the need to explore strategies for increasing engagement and participation in these areas. Tim then asked Keith what additional support Title I needs to improve program performance. In response, Keith pointed to significant funding cuts of over $400,000 in recent years, which have severely impacted service delivery. He stressed the importance of forming partnerships with other agencies to identify and enroll more eligible individuals.

David Sage shared information about a new partnership between Virginia Technical Institute (VTI) and Central Virginia Community College (CVCC), which formalizes an agreement allowing VTI students to complete certain courses through CVCC. The two schools have signed paperwork enabling VTI students to access these courses with FastForward and G3 funding, making it more affordable for students to gain additional training and credentials while expanding their educational opportunities in the region. Toward the end of the discussion, James and Dr. Bennett requested a list of employers currently involved in work experience programs to gain a clearer understanding of available opportunities and potential areas for expansion.

**5. Next Meeting**

* Traci asked the committee if they can meet again on May 27 at 1 PM at the Virginia Career Works Lynchburg Center
* The meeting ended at 11:50 AM

**Action Items:**

1. James and Dr. Bennett to receive a list of employers involved in work experiences
2. Committee to explore strategies for better serving Amherst and Appomattox counties
3. Next meeting scheduled for May 27, 2025 at 1:00 PM at the center