

**New York State (NYS)  
Workforce Investment Board (SWIB)  
Quarterly Meeting Minutes**

**Call to Order**

A quarterly meeting of the NYS SWIB was held on January 24, 2024 at the NYS Department of Labor (NYSDOL) in Albany, as well as at public videoconference sites in Buffalo, New York City, and Syracuse. The meeting was called to order at 3:04PM, and in the absence of Chair Dawn Burlew, was presided over by NYS Department of Labor (NYSDOL) Commissioner Roberta Reardon.

**Attendees**

**Voting Members in Attendance:**

- NYSDOL Commissioner Roberta Reardon
- NYSED Deputy Commissioner Ceylane Meyers-Ruff (Proxy for Commissioner Betty A. Rosa)
- Amber Rangel-Mooney (Proxy for ESD Commissioner Hope Knight)
- Lauren Andersen (Proxy for CUNY Chancellor Félix V. Matos Rodríguez)
- Daniel Chase (Proxy for Governor Kathy Hochul)
- Fiormelissa Johnson (Title II Representative)
- Assemblyman Al Stirpe
- Harold King
- Katie Geise
- Norb Fuest
- John Durso
- Amy Desjardins
- Rose Duhan
- Florence McCue
- Rudy Wynter
- Rick Plympton
- Patricia Fusco
- Annmarie Lanesey Payette
- Tony Baird
- Melissa Fleischut
- Zach Arnold
- Dan McGraw
- Todd Trantum (via videoconference in Buffalo)
- Jessica Johnson-Cope (via videoconference in NYC)
- Shawna Papale (via videoconference in Syracuse)
- Kim Townsend (via videoconference in Syracuse)

**Members Not In Attendance:**

- SUNY Chancellor John B. King
- OCFS Commissioner Suzanne Miles-Gustave
- OTDA Commissioner Barbara C. Guinn
- Chair Dawn Burlew
- Assemblyman Harry Bronson
- Matthew Ossenfort
- Sergio Esteban
- David Mathis
- Albert Catalano

**Announcements**

1. **Welcome and Introductions** – NYSDOL Commissioner Reardon thanked fellow Board members for their continued dedication to the SWIB and to the people of NYS. The Governor’s Office is still in the process of appointing additional SWIB members, but there are now enough appointed members to reach quorum, which is 25 members. The meeting was live streamed and there was no public testimony during this meeting.

2. **Board Chair** – Governor Hochul has appointed business member Dawn Burlew as the new Chair of the SWIB. Dawn was unable to attend this meeting, but will lead SWIB meetings moving forward. Dawn is the Director of Government Affairs and Business Development at Corning.
3. **Federal Partners** – Members and proxies around the room and via videoconference introduced themselves. Commissioner Reardon acknowledged the federal partners in Washington DC and at the regional office in Boston, and thanked them for being one of the major driving forces in the reconstitution of the SWIB.
4. **Danielle Worthen-Ramos, United States Department of Labor (USDOL)** – Danielle Worthen-Ramos, Director of the Office of Strategic Investments and Demonstrations for the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) Employment and Training Administration (ETA) Region 1, joined the call virtually. She discussed and acknowledged the tremendous effort NYS has taken to re-assemble the SWIB, and also thanked the commitment and desire of all members to further the workforce vision of NYS. She then offered USDOL’s continued support and interest to see where the SWIB moves in the future.
5. **SWIB By-Laws and procedural process for conducting meetings** – By-Laws and procedures must be adopted by a majority vote of the SWIB in an open meeting. By-Laws drafted by NYSDOL staff were distributed to SWIB members for review prior to the meeting. NYSDOL’s Director of the Bureau of Workforce Innovation and Quality, Kerry Douglas-Duffy, discussed key points of the draft By-Laws, which include:
  - a. Members attending in-person and via videoconference were provided with printed copies of the By-Laws and the By-Laws Reference Document. SWIB members should fully review the By-Laws following the meeting, which will be formally voted on during the next quarterly SWIB meeting on April 24, 2024.
  - b. The purpose of the By-Laws Reference Guide is to list sections of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) that are referenced within the draft By-Laws.
  - c. SWIB meetings are held at least four (4) times each year and the meetings are publicly announced and live streamed for the public to attend.
  - d. The majority of SWIB members constitute a quorum at any meeting of the SWIB. Members may only be counted towards quorum if they are meeting in-person or attending via a publicly accessible videoconference location. Quorum is established by all of the members of the Board, even if they are not appointed yet. Therefore, if there are 49 members on the SWIB, then quorum is established from the 49 members. The same goes for a majority vote; majority vote is a majority of the 49, not the majority of the members in the room. This is why attendance is so critical.
  - e. Special meetings of the SWIB can be called at any time. Each member is entitled to cast one (1) vote and votes shall be by voice or by show of hands. The SWIB Chair shall not vote except to break a tie. SWIB members are expected to participate in 75% of official meetings each year, whether in-person or via videoconference.
  - f. There were no major edit suggestions to the By-Laws from the SWIB, but Board members should reach out to Kerry Douglas-Duffy ([Kerry.Douglas-Duffy@labor.ny.gov](mailto:Kerry.Douglas-Duffy@labor.ny.gov)) with any comments.
6. **2024 State of the State Address** – NYSDOL Deputy Commissioner for Workforce Development, Chris White, discussed Governor Hochul’s 2024 State of the State address. Key workforce development proposals include:

- a. Establishing a youth apprenticeship model in NYS – The creation of apprenticeships for younger people while they are still in high school;

**Amy Desjardins** – Will this model be discussed as part of the SWIB subcommittees? Building trades have approved apprenticeship models in the schools which can be targeted to high-need school districts, but there is a disconnect as we have to go from school district to school district. But if we could work with our partners at the NYS Education Department (NYSED) then it could really go a long way.

**Response** – It is the Governors directive to work with NYSED and yes, it is vague for a reason because we still have to figure out the details.

- b. Launching registered apprenticeship programs at NYSDOL – Becoming the first State agency with apprentices that lead to permanent State jobs;
- c. Establishing a new Office of Workforce Data; and

**Annamarie Lanese Payette** – Will the new Office of Workforce Data be within NYSDOL?

**Response** – We think so, but office is also a collaboration between the State University of New York (SUNY), NYSED, the City University of New York (CUNY), NYSDOL, Empire State Development (ESD), and many other agencies involved in workforce. The partnership is key to really figuring this out.

**Katie Geise** – How will data system collaboration help with streamlining other things such as the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL)?

**Response** – There is a proposed subcommittee for the SWIB that will likely be tackling this topic. Subcommittees will be discussed further at the next meeting.

- d. Making a connection between the P-12 system, higher education, and workforce data.

**Jessica Johnson-Cope** – There are reports of academic loss as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Are there any priorities that potentially address how to fill the learning/skills gap that was created by the pandemic?

**Response** – One of the priorities that this data office should focus on is finding out where people fall out of the process and why. We have to figure out why the barriers exist and how we can collectively overcome them.

Additional workforce proposals include:

- a. Expanding access to higher education in the prison system through a NYS Department of Corrections and Community Supervision proposal;
- b. An ESD proposal called the One Network for Regional Advanced Manufacturing Partnerships or ON-RAMP, to create four (4) new workforce development centers around advanced manufacturing;
- c. An agriculture proposal, in partnership with Cornell, to help businesses in agriculture access regulatory information; and
- d. The Governor will also announce an Executive Order in which NYS will become an [Employment First](#) state.

**7. Asylum Seeker Update** – NYSDOL Associate Commissioner for Workforce Development, Dana Politis, discussed the NYS asylum seeker initiative. Key points include:

- a. In October 2023, NYSDOL launched a portal where businesses can sign up to express interest in hiring migrants and recent arrivals. To date, over 40,000 Statewide jobs came through the portal and about 1,000 businesses have signed up. The portal is still open, and individuals are signing up on a regular basis. Please reach out to Dana Politis ([Dana.Politis@labor.ny.gov](mailto:Dana.Politis@labor.ny.gov)) for information on how to sign up on the portal.
- b. NYSDOL has made contact for initial appointments with over 3,700 individuals. We work with these individuals in legal clinics and tell them that we are here to help them find jobs. If they are willing to work with us, we begin the case management process. Writing resumes and linking individuals to [Coursera](#) has really helped these individuals. Currently, we are dealing with a heavily-dominated Venezuelan population because of temporary protected status, but as they move toward asylum, we will make sure to connect these individuals to the right jobs that match their interests.
- c. NYSDOL has committed to internally hiring asylum seekers to assist with this work. Ten (10) positions are open in NYC to assist the Business Engagement team, recruit individuals at clinics, and be spokespeople to connect with community members. NYSDOL also commends its NYS Department of Civil Service colleagues as we are working with them to review government jobs and civil service opportunities for these individuals.

It is important to note that the 40,000 jobs that have been identified by employers are not being held aside solely for asylum seekers; they are jobs in the NYS Job Bank that are open to anyone who is authorized to work in NYS. The services provided to asylum seekers are the same services provided in the Career Centers and virtually.

**Patricia Fusco** – How can we participate in some of the job fairs being held in NYC?

**Response** – Please reach out to Chris White ([Christopher.White@labor.ny.gov](mailto:Christopher.White@labor.ny.gov)) to further discuss this opportunity. Even if SWIB members are not based in NYC, NYSDOL would still love to work with you as this is a Statewide effort.

**Rick Plympton** – Is there any support for housing of asylum seekers?

**Response** – NYSDOL's partners at the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) are working on a program called the Migrant Relocation Assistance Program (MRAP), which connects predominately families to move to other regions, so there has to be children in the family unit. Right now, they are focused on five (5) main areas; Suffolk, Westchester, Monroe, Erie, and the Capital Region. They work with landlords to identify apartments for asylum seekers and will help them with rental assistance for up to one (1) year. NYSDOL is working with OTDA to make referrals and OTDA is also starting to look at other high-need areas.

**Rose Duhan** – Are there any connections to health insurance for asylum seekers?

**Response** – NYSDOL's partners at the NYS Department of Health (NYSDOH) are working on the health insurance aspect. Health insurance is one of the many supportive services we are trying to connect people to as much as possible during the one-on-one appointments. SWIB members can reach out to Dana Politis ([Dana.Politis@labor.ny.gov](mailto:Dana.Politis@labor.ny.gov)) for further information.

8. **Teacher Ambassador Program** – NYSDOL Associate Commissioner for Workforce Development, Dana Politis, discussed the Teacher Ambassador Program and how it has become a permanent program at NYSDOL. Key points include:

- a. In 2023, the first year of the program, 30 teachers were hired as NYSDOL employees for the summer. These teachers were hosted by specific Career Centers to learn about NYSDOL, the services offered, and how to connect to businesses in the local workforce system.
- b. In the summer of 2024, NYSDOL will expand and double the number of participants to 60 grade 6-12 teachers, guidance counselors, work-based learning coordinators, and/or librarians from across NYS in order to bridge the gap between workforce and education. The recruitment process for 2024 has begun and the link to apply can be found on the NYS Job Bank [webpage](#). Please reach out to Dana Politis ([Dana.Politis@labor.ny.gov](mailto:Dana.Politis@labor.ny.gov)) with any questions.

**9. Career Center Overview** – Partnerships are at the core of NYS’s 95 Career Centers. NYSDOL’s Albany Career Center Manager, Deanna Simon, and Executive Director of the Capital Region Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB), Brian Williams, explained how Career Centers operate. Key points include:

- a. The functions of Career Center staff are to engage individuals and conduct an assessment, as well as make warm handoffs to different service providers that can assist in the employment of the individual.
- b. Service Delivery consists of one-on-one appointments, both in-person and virtually, with resource rooms on-site and computers for customers to use. Virtual tools also help customers obtain the same level of service from their home or location of choice.
- c. The biggest selling point is the Career Center staff, which help customers navigate their definition of success. The fundamentals need to be taken care of with the customer, which consist of knowing where to find job leads and providing support with interviewing tips and techniques.
- d. Listening to businesses is key, as well as helping job seekers know what a long-term career looks like within an industry.

**Zach Arnold** – The COVID-19 pandemic drove down foot traffic in the Career Centers. How are you marketing services to individuals to draw them back into the Career Centers?

**Response** – Yes, the COVID-19 pandemic really did impact service delivery. Pre-pandemic everything was in-person for the most part, but since the pandemic, things changed and there was a need to engage virtually. Career Center appointments are now made both in-person and virtually based on the customer’s need and meeting them where they are at. We think most about the credible messengers in the community and how to bring the services to the customers.

**Tony Baird** – Regarding resume building, what if a person’s resume from back then is not the same as the resume they have now? As a small business, how do you relate to making sure that not only the people doing the resume but that the people receiving the resume, are understanding of what someone decided is the better way to organize it?

**Response** – A lot of it has to do with the job a customer is applying for. We would make sure the skills for the job are included on the resume. We are finding that skills-based resumes are the best. We also have Business Services staff that can meet with the business to make sure they understand the process.

**Jessica Johnson-Cope** – If the biggest benefit of the Centers is the staff, are there any best practices that can be shared across Career Centers to ensure a level of consistency from Center to Center? And are there any incentives being made to attract and retain the best staff people to assist customers on both sides?

**Response** – We meet regionally with all the Career Center Managers, who meet with their staff. We have ongoing training and information sharing and there is a whole network of best practices and learning materials. We also do all-staff meetings regularly. It is a passion that drives people to do what they do and to help people make a difference in their lives. NYSDOL also just started a Workforce Synergy Forum to bring together workforce development leadership from across the State to share best practices on a different topic each month.

**10. Virtual Career Center (VCC) Overview** – NYSDOL Workforce Programs Manager, Justin Heinbuch, provided an overview of the [VCC](#). The functions of the VCC include:

- a. Job Seeker – Profile editing, resume upload, job search, and job applications; and
- b. Businesses – Posting and editing job positions directly on the platform.

**Patricia Fusco** – Where are the jobs on the VCC being pulled from?

**Response** – If they have an account, a business can post jobs directly on the VCC. Some jobs also come from postings on the National Labor Exchange ([NLx](#)).

**Ceylane Meyers-Ruff** – If a job seeker has a disability and requires an accommodation, how do they navigate the system?

**Response** – That would be something that the Career Counselor who is guiding the customer would want to talk them through. [Eightfold](#), the oversight entity for the VCC, is very accommodating and adapts to many of our needs with the VCC. The website is fully accessible and we are open to other suggestions with accommodation.

**Ceylane Meyers-Ruff** – Because we have Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselors as a partner in the Career Centers, if an individual has a disability, would that referral be made to assist them?

**Response** – Yes, in every appointment with the customer we demo the VCC, so we are building the relationship as a trusted resource. If the customer needs any support to utilize the VCC, we are going to make sure they have it. So, if there is a VR need, then we will make that warm hand-off for the customer. If the customer requests to work on a computer and have staff sit with them, then we will do that too. We will meet the customer where they are at.

**Annamarie Lanese Payette** – Is there any type of concierge for helping smaller businesses utilize the VCC and enter the jobs on the website?

**Response** – The NYSDOL or local business service team will walk the business through the job posting process and how to set up their profile.

**Annamarie Lanese Payette** – Is there an automated way to get everything into the VCC website so that it is not so manual?

**Response** – Eightfold is very good with working with us on modifications to the website. Most of the suggestions come from our staff out in the field working with

the platform. Please let us know if you have any suggestions for the VCC by reaching out to [Virtualcareercenter@labor.ny.gov](mailto:Virtualcareercenter@labor.ny.gov).

**11. Program Year (PY) 2024-2027 Combined State Plan** – NYSDOL Bureau Manager for Workforce Development and Strategic Planning, Liz Martin, discussed the PY 2024-2027 Combined State Plan. Key points include:

- a. WIOA requires that every state and territory develop a full State Plan every four (4) years, with a two (2)-year modification. The current four (4) year NYS Combined State Plan covers the timeframe of July 1, 2024-June 30, 2028. The Plan is due March 4, 2024, and is submitted through a State Plan Portal where the federal partners conduct their reviews. The Plan was posted on the NYSDOL Workforce Planning webpage for a 30-day public comment period from January 8, 2024-February 7, 2024.
- b. One of the main functions of the SWIB is the development of the State Plan. Sections within the NYS Combined State Plan that are of importance for SWIB members to review include:
  - Strategic Elements – Includes both Economic Analysis and Workforce Analysis;
  - State Vision, Goals, and Strategies – How NYS envisions moving workforce development toward the future; and
  - Implementation of State Strategy – The ways the partners will move that vision forward.
- c. Following the public comment period, the partners will make any necessary edits and the Plan will then be reviewed by the NYS Board of Regents and the Governor’s Office. Once approvals are received, the Plan will be entered into the State Plan Portal. Federal partners have until June 30, 2024, to approve the Plan or request edits.

**Rick Plympton** – I will comment formally through email, but in the Plan, there is a reference to creating good jobs, and I would like to see that tied back to the [Job Quality Toolkit](#) launched by the Department of Commerce/Department of Labor in August 2022. I worked on the committee that helped create the toolkit and there are eight (8) different areas on what it means to create a good job. It is a good tool for creating metrics for good jobs and NYSDOL can leverage the toolkit to make sure funding is being used effectively.

**Response** – We will review and update the Plan accordingly regarding this.

## Main Motions

**Approval of Secretary to the SWIB:** Commissioner Reardon moved to appoint Kerry Douglas-Duffy as the formal Secretary to the SWIB. The motion carried with 25 in favor and 0 against.

## Adjournment

NYSDOL Commissioner Reardon moved that the meeting be adjourned, and this was agreed upon at 5:07PM.