



# New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission

Dennis M. Bone, *Chairman*

Philip D. Murphy, *Governor*

## State Employment and Training Commission Meeting Minutes

February 3, 2021 ~ 10am – 12pm  
Online (GoTo Meeting Platform)

### **I. Welcome & Introductions**

Chairman Dennis Bone called the meeting to order at 10:06am and welcomed members and guests. He announced that, in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act of 1978, notice of this meeting was submitted to the Trenton Times and the Star Ledger and was posted on the SETC website, [njsetc.net](http://njsetc.net). Chairman Bone stated that with more than 80 attendees now joining the meeting, no roundtable introductions will take place; members and guests were asked to place their names in the Chat feature instead. The agenda was reviewed; time is made available for public comment, if needed.

The draft minutes of the November 17, 2020 Commission meeting were presented. Tapas San made a motion to approve the minutes; the motion was seconded by Bob Wise. The minutes were approved by voice vote.

### **II. Chairman's Report**

Chairman Bone discussed the State Plan requirement to update the Commission membership; this is in process with the Governor's office and is moving forward. The SETC staff is working directly with the NJDOL Commissioner's office to ensure compliance with new membership recruitment.

### **III. NJDOL UPDATES:**

Commissioner Robert Asaro-Angelo, NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJDOL), indicated that he was thrilled to join Jane Oates in presenting to the Commission today and thanked all those in attendance. The new NJDOL [careerservices.nj.gov](http://careerservices.nj.gov) website was launched last week; an uptick in jobs and training is anticipated, but will not happen overnight. Congress will hopefully act soon, as many COVID relief unemployment benefits are set to expire next month. Drive-through job fairs were successfully conducted in a number of local areas, with major partners like Amazon, UPS and PSE&G.

Commissioner Asaro-Angelo shared that the NJDOL staff is thrilled to work with a vibrant new team under President Biden. The nominee for Secretary of Labor at USDOL is Marty Walsh, a strong force for workforce development. The USDOL regional offices were recently combined; New Jersey is ranked third in the new Northeast region for the RESEA program. And New Jersey has the best job protection for workers of any state in the country, bar none. Commissioner Asaro-Angelo noted that

he is particularly proud of the work done in New Jersey to strengthen the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) protections and other benefits for our workers.

Commissioner Asaro-Angelo also shared that Suzi LeVine has joined the USDOL Employment and Training Administration (ETA), and is a renowned expert on apprenticeship. Ms. LeVine was formerly Ambassador to Switzerland and Liechtenstein. NJDOL looks forward to continuing its great work to expand apprenticeships. To date under the Murphy administration, New Jersey apprenticeship programs have been expanded by 63 percent, with two times as many women, African-American and Hispanic apprentices taking part.

Work continues with local workforce areas, who are sharing their innovative practices and new projects with each other and with the NJDOL team. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused many struggles and hard times, but the local areas have done an amazing job responding to these challenges.

In response to attendee questions, Commissioner Asaro-Angelo reported that the Unemployment Insurance (UI) programs are being updated daily, and the unemployment benefits have been expanded to cover those who would not normally be eligible. In New Jersey, 92 percent of UI claimants have received all the benefits to which they are entitled. New Jersey's UI data system is being updated by the NJDOL Information Technology (IT) department to address ongoing issues; however, it is also a manpower issue and the ultimate goal is to get our residents back to work and reduce demand for unemployment benefits. All states are experiencing similar UI challenges due to the record-high demand for services, even those states which had previously updated their IT systems. The NJ team is working to get our UI data system moved from a mainframe to a cloud platform; additional efforts are underway to upgrade the RCC telephone system. There is also hope that with the efforts of the Biden Administration, the federal government will take action to create a streamlined federal system that all states could access and tailor to their specific needs. Currently, 50 states and territories have different IT systems and different service delivery processes.

Members and attendees discussed additional funding that may be available to local workforce areas promoting One-Stop Career Center (OSCC) services to the general public, and providing virtual services to those who have digital/literacy barriers. Commissioner Asaro-Angelo indicated that the OSCC services will continue to be promoted, and that staff are trained to assist customers who have barriers to accessing services. Commissioner Asaro-Angelo concluded by thanking everyone for their hard work that is put forth every day, to support the citizens of New Jersey. Chairman Bone thanked the Commissioner for his detailed report and his transparency in sharing this information.

#### **IV. National Perspectives**

Jane Oates, President of Working Nation, opened her discussion by thanking everyone for their hard work and dedication to New Jersey. The PowerPoint presentation highlighted COVID-19 trends from around the country, including skill-based hiring, STARS (Opportunity@Work) and employer-led initiatives, such as the Greater Washington Partnership between Maryland, Virginia and Washington DC. In this effort, 12 colleges and universities partnered with 14 businesses (including American Express, JP Morgan, Lockheed Martin, etc.) to embed Incident Response (IR) credentials for cybersecurity within a degree program. Ms. Oates suggested a similar partnership could be established

in New Jersey, based on industry-specific credential needs, with little associated cost. Members and attendees discussed adding public workforce partners to a similar network in New Jersey.

Ms. Oates also discussed the critical importance of digital skills in the new economy. Digital skills are particularly needed by entrepreneurs and small businesses; many states are focusing on supporting upskilling for these groups. Ms. Oates then discussed diversity and inclusion; a number of populations were dramatically impacted by the pandemic, including people of color, young workers from the class of 2020, and women of all ages. Ms. Oates highlighted the OneTen project that seeks to build one million careers for Black talent in America within 10 years, through a coalition of leading companies ([oneten.org](http://oneten.org)). Ms. Oates also noted the critical need for colleges to re-engage with their recent graduates and connect them with companies that are hiring.

Economic triage is needed to address the many impacts of COVID. A top priority is UI fraud prevention; Ms. Oates noted that Commissioner Asaro-Angelo had already discussed the great work being done by NJDOL in this area. New Jersey has many strengths and outstanding partners to support a COVID triage network, including strong state leadership, the Heldrich Center, the One-Stop system and the universe of public and private colleges, HESSA and others. This network could identify the populations most negatively impacted in New Jersey and the sectoral/regional pain points, and work together to address these challenges. Ms. Oates encouraged New Jersey leaders to think regionally and design partnerships that put work at the center. Ms. Oates noted that New Jersey is in good shape due to both our expertise and good fortune, and geography; the state can use county-wide approaches to identify and explore demand jobs, economic drivers, and other opportunities going forward.

Ms. Oates stressed that defining the new normal will help ease the minds of all those affected; providing a safe workplace and more people getting vaccinated will help with this process. She emphasized the need for investments in frontline workforce staff to strengthen customer service and provide professional development. Investment in small businesses and entrepreneurs will also be vital to our recovery. A number of resources were recommended, including the Ad Council, various Federal Reserve initiatives and tools, including a Federal Reserve unemployment claims monitor that looks at the whole unemployment picture (<https://www.frbatlanta.org/cweo/data-tools/unemployment-claims-monitor>). Chairman Bone thanked Ms. Oates for her insightful presentation and for sharing her expertise with New Jersey.

Chairman Bone then welcomed Secretary of Higher Education Brian Bridges to the Commission and invited him to share remarks with the group. Secretary Bridges discussed the economic, education and workforce ecosystem and indicated his enthusiasm for working with this group to strengthen the outlook for New Jersey.

#### **V. SETC Dashboard for WIOA Data:**

SETC Deputy Executive Director Sheryl Hutchison presented the updated WIOA Dashboard, available on the SETC website at: [njsetc.net/performance](http://njsetc.net/performance). Ms. Hutchison provided background information on the Dashboard goals: to demonstrate the size and scope of WIOA programs to both the Commission and the public in a transparent and easy-to-understand format; to enable the Commission to identify trends and areas for further exploration; and to support data-driven policy development. Only published data is used for the Dashboard.

Ms. Hutchison thanked the NJDOL Office of Research and Information (ORI), led by Assistant Commissioner Lesley Hirsch and Director David Ramsay, for their outstanding support of the dashboard. Specifically, Ms. Hutchison recognized Seetha Vaidyanathan and Alexandra Kvarantan on the ORI team for their efforts to organize, collate and display the data in a format that clear and user-friendly. David Ramsay, Director of Workforce Research and Analytics oversees this work and he also thanked Ms. Vaidyanathan and Ms. Kvarantan for their outstanding work. He noted that while today's dashboard review will show some early COVID impacts, many participants who have entered and exited services during COVID will be reflected in the first two quarters of PY 2020 data, so that future data will show even more impacts.

#### *Program Year (PY) 2019 Updates*

Ms. Hutchison reviewed the updated data from PY 2019 with the Commission. Specifically, PY 2019 data has been added for Funds and Outcomes and Demographics charts across all WIOA titles. An important addition is the ability to view local workforce (WDB) area outcomes data; this has been added as a drop-down menu option for both PY 2018 and PY 2019. The Title II Adult Education and Literacy program's detailed slide also now has information for PY 2018 and PY 2019 available.

#### *Early COVID Impacts*

Ms. Hutchison noted the disruption to both funds expended and numbers served across programs. The data reflects the reality of PY 2019, which ended June 30, 2020; many fewer participants were enrolled during those last two quarters of PY 2019. Also, participants who exited services and were looking for work from March to June 2020 were likely deeply impacted by the pandemic shutdown. It is important to note that WIOA programs are not being compared against each other, rather it is more helpful to compare funding, participation and outcomes of one program area against itself, year-over-year. The Demographics slide data can help us explore both who we are serving and who we need to serve. When compared with PY 2018, the impacts of COVID can be seen across all program areas.

The SETC Dashboard will continue to be built out, with additional programs and grants data to be added and more trending analysis to be incorporated. Ms. Hutchison thanked the great state and local partners who serve on the SETC Performance Committee – this group reviews and considers all the data to be presented, and the state program managers help the team access and understand their data. These partner roles are vital to the Dashboard's development. The Dashboard is posted on the SETC website at [njsetc.net/performance](http://njsetc.net/performance). Commission members are encouraged to send their feedback to [Sheryl.Hutchison@dol.nj.gov](mailto:Sheryl.Hutchison@dol.nj.gov). Chairman Bone and the members expressed their appreciation for the SETC Dashboard and commented positively on its value to the SETC and the workforce system.

## **VI. Public Comment and Adjournment**

No public comments were offered. The next Commission meeting will be held on April 7, 2021. The meeting was adjourned at 11:52am.

### **Next SETC Meeting:**

**Wednesday, April 7, 2021 – online meeting**

**10am – 12pm**

*Use GoTo Meeting Webinar Platform to join on 4/7:*

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/394439821>

**ATTENDEES: February 3, 2021**  
**PRESENT MEMBERS and ALTERNATES**

Asaro-Angelo, Robert	Milone, Catherine
Bone, Dennis	Moody, Melissa (for Johnson)
Bridges, Brian	Nadler, Sally
Butler, Kate (for Oliver)	Safrin, Michele (for Blake)
Colton, Tara (for Sullivan)	Sen, Tapas
Duda, Teri	Wade, Carolyn Carter
Ferrera, Anthony	Wise, Robert
Glover, Erskine (for Allen-McMillan)	

**ABSENT MEMBERS**

Brown, Kevin	Reisser, Clifford
Carey, Michael	Rice, Ronald
Donnadio, John	Wilson, McKenzie A.
Gacos, Nicholas	Wimberly, Benjie
Hornik, Stephen	Wowkanech, Charles

**OTHER ATTENDEES**

Allen, Yolanda	DiLeonardo, Christy	Kurdziel, Kevin	Schaeffer, Janine
Alpart, Davidene	Dunigan, Janet	Kvarantan, Alexandra	Schimanski, Torsten
Apple, Emily	Donovan, Brittney	Levandowski, Andrea	Schlosser, Craig
Anochi, Eva	Drakeford, Shamira	Liu, Helen	Seavers, Diane
Baden, Almonor	Enright, Patricia	McLean, Michael	Sharp, Jon
Bailey, Hugh	Ferrera, Anthony	Milano-Sumalingog, S.	Soberanis, Roberto
Bicica, John	Gatling, Kerri	Molinelli, Tammy	Soto, Luisa
Blanco, Francis	Gehrke, David	Moran, Patricia	Sternbach, Larry
Bobo, Linda	Gerson, Amanda	Morrison, Angelique	Swartz, Jeffrey
Breeden, Larry	Gonzalez, Diana	Murphy, Lauren	Taguwa, Denise
Brown, Melissa	Grzella, Paul	Meyer, Cheryl	Tabassum, Zainab
Bogert, Duwan	Harrington, Laurie	Myers, Curtis	Taylor, Yolanda
Cacace, Mark	Hartman, Sharon	Oakman, Jeffrey	Thompson, Cheri
Carvajal, Allyson	Hiller, Nanci	Ochse, Maureen	Yuen, Paul
Caramelo, JoAnne	Higgs, Justin	Odeneye, Jobi	Vail, Les
Carroll, Karen	Hollenbeck, David	Pierre, Eric	Vaidyanathan, Seetha
Cassese, Jason	Howard, Donald	Quast, Sarah Singer	Weir, Barbara
Connolly, Rob	Jose, Helen	Rodgers, Beth	Weil, Robert
Crawford, Jim	Jubanyik, Danielle	Ramsay, David	Williams, Albert
Custard, Donna	Levitt, Jill	Sabater, Julio	Williams, Allen
Davidene, Alpart	Kennedy, John	Sabir, Zahira	Williams, Leslie
Davis, Patti	Keuper, M.	Sandelier, Nikki	Wright, Tom
DeBaere, Greg	King, Kia	Satchell, Bridgette	Wolf, Lynda
Diaz, Julie	Kuhn, Fran	Scalia, Donna	

**SETC STAFF**

Gary Altman

Sheryl Hutchison

Maureen O'Brien Murphy

Kyree Robinson

Courtney Santarsiero