

**MINUTES OF THE  
CAREERSOURCE FLAGLER VOLUSIA  
CAREER PATHWAYS COMMITTEE  
April 5, 2018**

A meeting of the CareerSource Flagler Volusia Career Pathways Committee was called to order at the Administrative Office of the organization located at 329 Bill France Blvd., in the City of Daytona Beach, in the State of Florida, at 9:00 a.m. on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of April 2018, pursuant to written Notice fixing said time and place; the same being filed and attached to these minutes.

Mr. David Dougherty Chaired the meeting and Ms. Jennifer Gosling served as the Recording Secretary.

The following members of the Career Pathways Committee were personally present:

Ms. Kelly Amy, Coordinator, Career & Technical Education and the Arts - Volusia County Schools  
Ms. Nancy Bradley, Administrator – Daytona College, LLC  
Mr. David Dougherty, CPA – Taxes & Financial Services  
Mr. Dan Hunt, Business Manager – IBEW Local Union 756  
Mr. Mark Lanham, Store Manager – Walgreens  
Ms. D.J. Lebo, Executive Director – Early Learning Coalition of Flagler and Volusia  
Mr. Artie Leoffler, CEO/CFO – American Radionic Company  
Mr. Andrew Spar, President – Volusia United Educators  
Mr. Chris Wimsatt, Vice President of Business Recruitment – Team Volusia

The following guests were also present:

Ms. Jenn Hale, Program & Monitoring Manager – CareerSource Flagler Volusia  
Mr. Charlie Howell, Vice President of Business Development and Technology – CareerSource Flagler Volusia  
Mr. Howard Johnson, Data/EF Manager – Eckerd Connects  
Ms. Robin King, President & CEO – CareerSource Flagler Volusia  
Ms. Velma Lowe, Managing Director of Operations – Career Steps, Inc.  
Ms. Donna Runge, Region 11 Administrator – Department of Economic Opportunity  
Ms. Christine Sikora, Vice President of Innovative Workforce Solutions – CareerSource Flagler Volusia  
Ms. Kathy Spencer, Director of Business and Career Services – Case Management, Inc.  
Mr. Brian Willard, Program Manager – Road to Success  
Mr. Ralph Yourie, Store Manager – Walgreens REDI Program  
Ms. Jennifer Gosling, Executive Assistant – CareerSource Flagler Volusia

Mr. Dougherty called the meeting to order and stated that the minutes of the previous meeting had been sent to the Committee in advance for review. Mr. Dougherty called for a motion to approve the minutes from the February 8, 2018 meeting.

1. After discussion, upon motion duly made, seconded and unanimously carried, the Career Pathways Committee approved the minutes.

The next item on the agenda was a review of the Ticket to Work program. Ms. Christine Sikora introduced the Director of Business and Career Services, Ms. Kathy Spencer, and explained that Ms. Spencer's team is contracted to provide case management to our customers, including Ticket to Work individuals. Ms. Sikora asked Ms. Spencer to provide an introduction to the program. Ms. Spencer reported that the Ticket to Work program is overseen by the Social Security Administration (SSA). The purpose is to allow individuals with disabilities receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) to return to work without losing all of their benefits immediately upon obtaining employment. She advised that the SSA mails a ticket to these individuals, and they may bring the ticket to any organization within the Employment Network; CareerSource Flagler Volusia is one of the service providers within this network.

Ms. Spencer advised that when someone with a ticket comes to our center to receive services, we assign their ticket to us in the SSA system. She noted that assigning the ticket usually happens at the first appointment when an Individual Work Plan (IWP) is created. Ms. Spencer explained that the purpose of the IWP is to outline the goals and long-term plans of the individual. She advised that some customers prefer to attempt part-time work first in order to gauge their abilities, and others want a full-time position as soon as possible. Ms. Spencer reported that some individuals may not be able to return to the field of work that they have done in the past, and so these individuals may be faced with a career change as well. She advised that after their initial appointment, we assist them with updating their resume, navigating the Employ Florida system, and accessing our online workshops.

The benefit for customers for the Ticket to Work program is a more gradual loss of benefits as their self-sufficiency increases. Ms. Spencer advised that the program protections are different depending on whether the customer is receiving SSI or SSDI. She explained that those receiving SSI may lose their cash benefits early on depending on their wage rate; however, they will keep their medical benefits. For individuals receiving SSDI, the SSA provides a nine-month trial period where participants can work and keep their cash benefits. As a member of the Employment Network, Ms. Spencer advised that by placing these individuals in jobs, we receive an incentive for the placement in addition to future milestones that allow us to earn up to \$15,000 in unrestricted funds per participant if they remain employed.

Ms. Robin King reported that last year, we earned approximately \$90,000 from the Ticket to Work program incentives. She asked Ms. Spencer to explain to the Committee how the Ticket to Work participants are matched with our services. Ms. Spencer replied that we are listed on the SSA website as a member of the Employment Network, and her contact information is provided. When individuals contact Ms. Spencer indicating an interest in the program, she connects them with a Disability Navigator that will schedule

their first appointment. Ms. King noted that we recently completed the application for the Partnership Plus program with Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and asked Ms. Kim Houghton to explain the Partnership Plus program. Ms. Houghton explained that VR has contracted out to agencies that will help an individual maintain their employment after their case with VR has been closed. She advised that the agencies within the Partnership Plus program can help with supportive services up to nine months after case closure. Ms. King advised that the selection of an agency in this program is entirely driven by customer choice; there are a series of Employer Networks within the area and each may be better suited to assist certain individuals. Additionally, if a participant wants to change providers, they have the option of taking their ticket back and reassigning it to another agency.

A question was raised on how individuals learn more about this program and if the SSA website explained the program. Ms. Spencer advised that the website does explain the program; however, many individuals receive a ticket before they fully understand what it entails. Another question was raised regarding the difficulty level for participants to sign up for the program. Ms. Spencer confirmed that it was a simple process that only requires individuals to go to the SSA website to sign up.

Ms. Sikora stated that the benefit to the unrestricted incentives is that the funds could be used to fund things that program funds cannot; it is currently funding one staff position. Ms. King advised that the incentives were also funding some services to the participants that regular allocations would not provide, and the goal was to create a self-sustaining, self-funded program that would serve customers with disabilities.

The next item on the agenda was a presentation of the Retail Employees with Disabilities Initiative (REDI) Program by Mr. Ralph Yourie, Store Manager for Walgreens. Mr. Yourie advised that Walgreens has a long history of supporting diversity at all levels, and the REDI program was created six years ago to create more opportunities for persons with disabilities. He advised that the program evolved from an idea from Mr. Randy Lewis; the retired head of Walgreens distribution centers. Mr. Yourie explained that Mr. Lewis has a son who is autistic, and he would put his son to work in the distribution centers. He stated that Mr. Lewis eventually decided to look into other opportunities, which led to the creation of a special distribution facility in Anderson, South Carolina that where approximately thirty percent of the workers have disabilities. Mr. Yourie reported that it cost the company four times what a normal distribution center would cost because it had to be outfitted with the appropriate accommodations, software had to be rewritten, and they worked with countless agencies to see this to fruition. He stated that the project worked well and in another few years, they repeated the process in Connecticut and since the groundwork had already been done with the first facility, they were able to cut the costs of the Connecticut distribution center in half. Additionally, the Connecticut facility has had upwards of approximately fifty percent of employees with varying levels of disabilities.

Mr. Yourie reported that Walgreens wanted to take this inclusion a step further and expand the use of disabled workers in their retail stores. He advised that a distribution center is an enclosed environment, and that a public environment presents a different set of challenges. Mr. Yourie explained that he co-managed a store in Connecticut a few miles away from the distribution center, and in 2012, Walgreens asked them to pilot the REDI program within their store. He advised that the program was a tremendous success and is now implemented in thirty states and in over two hundred stores. Mr. Yourie noted that he is currently assisting stores in Michigan and New Mexico to bring the program into their states as well. He reported that the REDI program is in Florida, but it has not received the support or success that other states have experienced.

The REDI program accepts persons with physical, cognitive, and emotional disabilities. Mr. Yourie advised that there are a few exceptions and concerns. He stated that in his own experience, he has worked with individuals with epilepsy, traumatic brain injuries, Asperger's, hearing and visually impaired, and bi-polar disorder among others. Among the possible exceptions, he advised that someone that is one hundred percent deaf or blind would not be a good candidate for the program. Mr. Yourie reported that as of 2012, he has personally assisted forty-seven program participants, thirty successfully passed the program, and twenty-six of those participants were hired by Walgreens within thirty days of program completion. He stated that company-wide, approximately sixty percent of participants successfully complete the program and are recommended for hire.

Mr. Yourie advised that the REDI program is a well-structured, three-week, unpaid internship program that provides work experience, skills assessment, and the opportunity for possible employment with Walgreens. He advised that the program is not a charity; to be considered for hire, interns must prove themselves capable of functioning as comparable to other entry level employees and reasonable accommodations will be made where appropriate. Mr. Yourie stated that employees with disabilities are paid the same wage, are expected to perform to the same standards, and are eligible for the same opportunities for advancement as any other employee. He advised that the program's advantage to Walgreens is that it expands the pool of work-ready candidates while also providing opportunities for individuals that may otherwise not have those opportunities, especially considering the unemployment rate for persons with disabilities is ten times higher than the national average. Mr. Yourie clarified that the REDI program does not guarantee employment for participant who pass the program, though they are considered eligible for hire. He advised that there are several reasons why an individual may not be hired, such as the candidate decides Walgreens is not their preferred career path, there is no available position at that time, or the candidate cannot work the scheduled hours that a store has available.

The REDI program does not pay the participants or the trainers. Mr. Yourie advised that in a partnership, CareerSource Flagler Volusia (CareerSourceFV) would prescreen and provide candidates for the program. He stated that typically, there are one or two interns in each group to ensure that interns receive the specialized attention needed. Mr. Yourie

advised that CareerSourceFV would provide the trainers, and Walgreens would train the trainers to perform all of the functions that they would be overseeing. He stated that the program would take place at his store in New Smyrna Beach since he has the most experience with the program.

Mr. Yourie explained that participants are acclimated to the program in the first week and then begin working on the sales floor. They would learn the layout of the store, stocking shelves, and looking for outdated merchandise and general housekeeping. Mr. Yourie advised that the most important aspect of the first week is that participants would begin interacting with customers and often it is the social aspect that becomes a stumbling block for some participants. The second week of the REDI program is cash register training. Mr. Yourie advised that Walgreens will seldom hire anyone that cannot operate a cash register, and so this week of the program is crucial to success. The third week is to review the skills learned, revisit any areas that need reinforcement, and the final consideration for advancement. He stated that if a participant performed exceptionally well, they may be introduced to new or additional skills such as inventory management.

Ms. King asked if other companies knew of the REDI program and whether they were hiring some of the participants that do not find employment with Walgreens. Mr. Yourie replied that the same program has been implemented in some T.J. Maxx stores, and he believed some Lowe's Home Improvement and other retail stores may have implemented the program in other parts of the nation. A question was raised about whether this program had been implemented in other parts of Florida. Mr. Yourie replied that it had, but it has not reached the level of success as other parts of the country. Ms. Houghton asked if all of the training for the area is taking place at his facility in New Smyrna Beach. Mr. Yourie replied that the program has not been implemented yet, but that they would be initiating the program in his store first since he has the most experience with the program.

The Committee inquired what barriers to success has the REDI program faced in Florida. Mr. Yourie responded that he believed no one has championed the program. He stated that shortly after relocating to Florida, he saw that the program did not exist here, and soon after, the Corporate office asked him when he would bring the program to the Daytona Beach area.

A discussion ensued regarding the forty percent of the participants that either did not complete the program, or were not hired as a result of successful completion. Mr. Yourie advised that occasionally, the screening process may have missed someone that would not have benefitted from the program or the individual would have been better suited to a distribution center environment. He noted that some individuals have become so entrenched in the system of support that they cannot see themselves at that higher level of independence. The Committee asked about the participants that exit the program successfully, what is the hiring ratio compared to other hires. Mr. Yourie replied that the answer varies widely depending on the location, localized demographics and the current economy. He advised that with unemployment relatively low, they are more likely to see

higher turnover. Another question was raised on what is the perceived resistance for other companies to adopt this program model. Mr. Yourie responded that he does not know. He stated that Walgreens has been approached by other companies interested in the program, and they have been generous in sharing the information.

The next item on the agenda was an update presented by Ms. Kelly Amy regarding the Career Connections Cadre. Ms. Amy reported that the Cadre is partnering with CareerSourceFV to hold two job fairs for high school seniors that are not seeking post-secondary education. The job fairs will be held at Atlantic High School on April 23<sup>rd</sup> and University High School on April 26<sup>th</sup> and both will be held in the evening.

The Committee members were provided copies of the flyer that was being distributed to students. Ms. Amy advised that the event would begin in the auditorium with Mr. Jesse McGee, from CareerSourceFV, who would inform students about the resources available to them. After the presentation, students will transition to the cafeteria where employers who are currently hiring and other education programs will be set up to engage with the students. She advised that the Cadre is currently considering a larger scale career exploration event to be held next spring possibly at the Volusia County Fairgrounds. Ms. Amy advised this would be similar to the Annual High School Showcase, which is an exploratory event that is geared towards middle school students. She explained that the Cadre felt there needed to be more opportunity geared towards 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students, and this new spring career exploration event would become an annual tradition for seniors before graduating. Ms. Amy advised that the Cadre will be putting together committees that will assist with the planning efforts for next spring, and she stated that she hoped many of the Career Pathway Committee members would come to the event or set up tables to engage with the students.

Ms. Amy advised that the Cadre has been in a transition to become more sector-driven, and they are waiting for the jobs data from the State to be able to break into sector groups to directly support the career and technical programs and academies. She advised that with the data and emerging trends, the Cadre can determine what areas are lacking and readjust their focus to ensure they have the right resources in the schools. Ms. Sikora stated that the Spring Focus Groups will be held after the data is released from the State, and the discussions will be facilitated by representatives of the Small Business Development Center and the Business Assistance Center. Ms. King advised that the Executive Committee met and decided that the focus groups would be attended only by industry and business leaders so that the conversations were strictly business-driven. The information from the focus groups would be provided to CareerSourceFV and community partners through the third-party facilitators.

Mr. Andrew Spar asked what was being done to prepare the high school students attending the job fairs to dress for success, bring resumes, and the etiquette for conversing with businesses prior to the event. Ms. Amy advised that the Cadre is working with school counselors to identify the students that would be good candidates to

attend. Ms. Sikora advised that the link listed on the flyer is a workshop created by us on how to successfully navigate a job fair and it discusses many of those points.

Ms. King advised that we are looking for businesses actively hiring to participate in the job fairs. She stated that she has emailed the flyer to all Board and Committee members and has reached out to the electrical and plumbing trade organizations. Mr. Dan Hunt discussed the electrical apprenticeship program and thanked the school system and its partners for connecting the apprenticeship program with the right youth ready to enroll. Ms. Amy mentioned that the Cadre, in conjunction with the Volusia Building Industry Association, has been working on developing their own in-house construction pre-apprenticeship program that is tailored to specifically address the skills gap within our area. She advised that this partnership will allow 11<sup>th</sup> grade students that are not 18 to work over the summer at an approved business to receive the mentoring they need. Ms. Amy advised that all child labor laws will be strictly followed and businesses will need to be willing to work with their insurance providers to ensure proper Worker's Compensation coverage.

The next item on the agenda was to inform the Committee of the upcoming renewal of provider contracts. Ms. Sikora advised that every year, this Committee is responsible for reviewing the performance for both adult and youth services contracts as well as the Career Center Operator. She reminded the Committee that we went out for bid in 2016, and contracts can be renewed three times for a total of four years. Ms. Sikora stated that May 10<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m. was the date for the next Career Pathways Committee meeting. She advised that this would be an important meeting since the Committee would be reviewing contractor performance and making recommendations to the Board on whether the contracts should be renewed for another year. Ms. King noted that with the continued implementation of the Opportunity Act, we are now accountable to the new performance measures for the first time this year and reports are slow coming from Tallahassee. Recently, we received performance reports for the first time this year and it measures activities that happened a year ago, and we are not meeting those thresholds. Therefore, staff are looking at more timely indicators of performance.

Ms. Sikora asked the Committee how soon they wanted the performance materials sent to them. The Committee agreed that one week in advance would provide sufficient time for review.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned.

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Recording Secretary