



Onondaga Workforce Development Board Meeting & Retreat
April 10, 2026 - 9:00 AM
960 James Street, Syracuse NY 13203

Board Attendees: Tony Baird, Aimee Durfee, Eric Ennis, Deka Eysaman, Meghan Fountain, Jessica McCarthy, Anne Napper, Peter Naughton, Kate Oja, Eric Peckham, Ann Marie Talierno, Matt Tarolli, Jim Thompson, Christopher Tuff, Nancy Williams, Randy Wolken

CNY Works Staff Attendees: Rosemary Avila-Ticio, Sheryl Bowman (remote), Susan Cooley, Christelle Marpaud, Darlene McCann, Mary Parry

Guest Attendees: Joanna Palladino and Renae Townsend, New York State Department of Labor

One-Stop Operator: Mari Ukleya

The meeting was called to order at 9:10 AM

BOARD MEETING

ONE STOP OPERATOR REPORT

Mari is meeting with priority partners one-on-one. Mari and Rosemary met with Amanda Perrine, the Executive Director of the Onondaga County Public Libraries, and Northside Learning center to learn how to better partner with our community.

We will do monthly newsletters. We hope partners will share information that Mari can disseminate. The Email came from Jackie Wiegand at OCM BOCES. If you didn't get it let Mari know.

We will start Lunch and Learn sessions with our Workforce and other community frontline staff.

We will have Frank Ridzi from Central New York Community Foundation come in in June to find how to streamline the referral process and see if providers like the Life Needs Assessment.

ACTION ITEMS

- **Approve February Minutes**
Kate Oja made a motion to approve. It was seconded by Tony Baird. All in favor, none opposed; motion carried.
- **Approve Kelly Burkett as a new stakeholder member of the Program Committee**
Aimee Durfee made a motion to approve. It was seconded by Christopher Tuff. All in favor, none opposed; motion carried.
- **Approve Kate Oja as a new member of the Program Committee**
Kate Oja recused herself from voting

Eric Peckham made a motion to approve. It was seconded by Anne Napper. All in favor, none opposed; motion carried.

- ***Approve Anne Napper as a new member of the Governance Committee***

Anne Napper recused herself from voting

Ann Marie Taliercio made a motion to approve. It was seconded by Tony Baird. All in favor, none opposed; motion carried.

- ***Approve Meghan Fountain as a new member of the Governance Committee***

Meghan Fountain recused herself from voting

Ann Marie Taliercio made a motion to approve. It was seconded by Nancy Williams. All in favor, none opposed; motion carried.

- ***Approve Eric Peckham as the new Chair of the Audit Committee***

Eric Peckham recused himself from voting

Jessica McCarthy made a motion to approve. It was seconded by Anne Napper. All in favor, none opposed; motion carried.

- ***Approve Christopher Tuff as a new member of the Audit Committee***

Christopher Tuff recused himself from voting

Eric Peckham made a motion to approve. It was seconded by Tony Baird. All in favor, none opposed; motion carried.

CFO UPDATES

- ***Accumulated Expenditure Report – through February 28, 2026***

PY24 - We spent almost all of it.

PY25 – I've highlighted some items that will impact fiscal year end:

- Summer program overspent by \$350k, we are trying to get other funding to cover that.
- Empire State Development (ESD) grant denied \$204k. We are trying to see if we can mitigate it
- NYSCION hasn't paid us yet.

- ***Balance sheet – through February 28, 2026***

- The M&T operating balance shows negative because of the February 27th payroll being towards the end of the month and the cash reimbursement was in the beginning for March.
- We have \$2M in assets, \$1M in liabilities, which should be \$400k/\$500k.

- ***Income statement – through February 28, 2026***

- This is through February 2026, then projecting out the next four months to calculate the projected cumulative fiscal year expenditures.
- We are projecting to receive \$8.6M because the QUEST grant does not come into play
- Vacancies help with the dollars, but creates a stress on staff, Sheryl is working on filling those vacancies.
- We do a budget spent based on last year's trend. We have overspent; we think we will end up with \$500k/\$550k loss, but we may be able to mitigate some of it.

- **Budget plan -high level**

- Directors will get the budget by the end of day today. They will have until April 27th to get back to Sue so she can combine everything and present it to the Executive and Finance Committee at the May 5th meeting and the Board at the June 12th meeting so that it is in place in July.
- Sue works with Sheryl regarding salaries and benefits, it is very detailed and close to accurate.
- Occupancy costs are fixed
- Directors will have input on Program supplies, trainings, etc. They will also have input on any initiatives.

Aimee asked if there is a plan to fill the vacant treasurer position. Rosemary said yes, we will be discussing that at the Governance Committee meeting on May 20th.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATES

- **QUEST Bootcamp Update**

We had 9 individuals graduate from the second cohort on April 6th. To date, we have had a 95% completion rate. Please pass the word if you know anyone who is eligible. Construction, trades come in discuss and what it is like to work there. Looking ahead we want to have five additional cohorts. We would like to include healthcare and partner with Loretto also. The participants are paid a stipend of \$16/hour, \$320/week, and they receive a bonus of \$320 for perfect attendance.

- **TANF Applications**

TANF applications went live on April 1st. If your business would like to be a worksite, let Bruce or Rosemary know.

- **Development Days**

We have implemented development days on the last Friday of each month. In March we had a Professor from OCC facilitate a 3-hour training course on communication styles. It was very interactive and leadership and staff really enjoyed it.

- **NYATEP Youth Practitioners Conference**

Rosemary and most of the Youth Team attend the NYATEP Youth Conference in Saratoga Springs March 9th - 11th and found it to be very informative.

- **211 Advocacy Day**

Rosemary sits on the board and attended the 211 Advocacy Day in Albany on February 10th. One of the items Rosemary advocated for was for the benefit cliff, which means when a small raise in income leads to a sudden loss of benefits, leaving a person or family worse off financially. Public benefits last over 6 months after they are working.

- **Construction Careers Information Session**

On March 31st we hosted an information session focused on Construction Career Pathways. We had 45 people sign up, and 36 attended. This was in partnership with CenterState CEO. NYSDOL's Deputy Commissioner for Workforce Development gave some remarks, and we also had Empire State Development attend the information session. We also had Gilbane who is contracted by Micron to build the fabs. They heard directly from Gilbane and from Jeff, who is the Director of the NY Site Construction for Micron and also one of our Board members. Sara Newton-Klitz, previous Board

member from Micro was there as well. They received information about all the workforce constructions programs and entries in the community, what entails, etc. .

- **Meeting with Mayor Owens**

Rosemary, Sue and Randy met with Mayor Owens and Eric Ennis on March 30th. The Mayor pledged \$50k for admin and unrestricted funds. We will meet with the County Executive soon to make the same request.

COO UPDATES

- **Quarterly Annual Turnover Report**

Sheryl is providing this to point out how SYEP affects the turnover rate. So far no turnover 1st quarter 2026.

BOARD RETREAT

NYSDOL PRESENTATION

Joanna Palladino and Renae Townsend from NYSDOL presented an overview of Board responsibilities and duties under WIOA.

If you have questions, you can send an email to lwdb@labor.ny.org

Aimee Durfee asked how the State does their evaluations. There are monitoring guide tools on the website: one for consolidated annual fiscal review, and one for program monitoring. Within those there is a list of what we look at. We Look at rules and regs and performance. Get performance from one stop operating system. Reports are made available to the local area. However, sometimes reports are flawed due to us having an old system that collects the data. We are creating a new data reporting system in Cognos.

NYSDOL program monitors do quarterly desk reviews from OSOS. Let us know if there are reporting issues. Sometimes staff just struggles to put the info in correctly, sometimes training refreshers are needed, and sometimes staff turnover can affect this as well.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

This document provides a synthesized overview of the major themes, priorities, and strategic signals shared by the Board of Directors during the meeting. It integrates discussion across **career pathways and no-wrong-door systems, partnerships and funding diversification, and operations, governance, and staff development** into a cohesive narrative intended to guide leadership and strategic planning.

1. Defining Success: Outcomes Over Activities

Across all discussions, the Board emphasized that success must be defined by long-term, high-quality outcomes, not short-term outputs.

- Job placement alone is insufficient; success includes retention, wage progression, and sustained attachment to the workforce.

- Measurements should extend beyond initial placement to include 2nd- and 4th-quarter employment and stability indicators.
- Board members are signaling a shift from activity-based compliance toward impact-driven performance management.

Strategic Signal: The organization should consistently frame decisions, funding, and reporting around long-term workforce outcomes rather than program volume.

2. Career Pathways and the No Wrong Door System

The Board's discussion reflected strong support for a **no wrong door philosophy**, paired with concern about implementation consistency.

- **Key Themes**
- A no wrong door approach requires **coordination, shared expectations, and accurate referrals** across partners.
- Without system-wide visibility, staff risk sending customers to the wrong service or creating unnecessary handoffs.
- Pathways must be **clear, navigable, and milestone-based**, allowing jobseekers to see progress from entry to employment stability.
- **Role of CNY Works**
- Board members questioned whether CNY Works can or should be the single front door.
- The emerging consensus supports a **hub-and-spoke model**:
- CNY Works as the **regional coordinator, standards-setter, and connector**
- Multiple access points (affiliate sites, co-locations, mobile access)

Strategic Signal: Leadership is expected to strengthen alignment and standards across entry points while preserving flexibility for customers.

3. Partnerships as System Infrastructure

Partnerships are viewed not as optional collaborations but as **core infrastructure** for service delivery, funding resilience, and participant success.

- **Community-based organizations** are essential for outreach, trust, and wraparound supports.
- Employer and labor partnerships are critical for ensuring pathways align with **real labor market demand**.
- Cross-sector collaboration reduces duplication, increases scale, and strengthens regional impact.

Strategic Signal: Partnerships should be managed as long-term system relationships, not transactional or grant-specific arrangements.

4. Funding Diversification and Resilience

The Board expressed concern about overreliance on limited funding streams and emphasized diversification as a priority.

- Reliance on a single funder creates risk and limits adaptability.

- A balanced mix of **restricted and unrestricted funding** is necessary to support:
 - Innovation
 - Pilots
 - Rapid response to emerging needs
- Engagement with public-sector leaders and advocacy is seen as a pathway to new funding opportunities.

Strategic Signal: Funding strategy should support organizational flexibility and long-term sustainability rather than short-term stability alone.

5. Addressing Basic Needs as a Workforce Strategy

The Board reinforced that employment success depends on **addressing basic needs first or in parallel**.

- Priority areas include:
 - Childcare
 - Housing stability
 - Transportation
 - Food security

These needs must be addressed through intentional partnerships and braided funding, not treated as peripheral issues.

Strategic Signal: Workforce outcomes and social supports must be integrated rather than siloed.

6. Operations, Data, and Technology

Operational systems were identified as both a constraint and an opportunity.

- Existing data systems limit visibility into customer progress, partner coordination, and outcomes.
- The Board supports investing in **internal tools, dashboards, and performance management systems** that go beyond minimum compliance.
- Clarity is needed between governance responsibilities and operational execution.

Strategic Signal: Data should be used as a tool for learning, accountability, and improvement—not solely reporting.

7. Governance, Alignment, and Accountability

Board members emphasized the importance of alignment across governance, leadership, and frontline practice.

- Clear roles and boundaries between the Board and operations are essential.
- Staff at all levels should understand how their work connects to strategic goals.
- Performance data should inform decision-making, resource allocation, and support.

Strategic Signal: The Board expects stronger top-to-bottom alignment and intentional use of performance information.

8. Staff Development, Culture, and Retention

People were consistently identified as the organization's most critical asset.

- Structured onboarding, ongoing training, and internal career pathways are needed.
- Emphasis on **soft skills, cultural competency, and customer experience** is central to effectiveness.
- Turnover and wellness are recognized as organizational risks that require proactive attention.

Strategic Signal: Investment in staff development and culture is viewed as foundational to long-term system performance.

Overall Board Message

Taken together, the Board is signaling a desire to move the organization toward:

- **Systems thinking over program silos**
- **Outcomes over activities**
- **Coordination over fragmentation**
- **People-centered operations over compliance-only approaches**

The expectation is not simply to add programs, but to **lead alignment, clarify pathways, strengthen partnerships, and build a resilient, outcome-driven workforce system for the region.**