

MEMORANDUM

July 23, 2021

TO: Education and Culture (E&C) Committee
Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee

FROM: Gene Smith, Legislative Analyst

SUBJECT: Update: American Job Centers

PURPOSE: Briefing and discussion, no votes expected

Those expected for this worksession:

Anthony Featherstone, CEO, WorkSource Montgomery (WSM)
Camille McKenzie, Director of Programs, WSM
John Hattery, Director of Special Initiatives, WSM
Sarah Van De Weert, Director of Communications, WSM

The E&C and PHED Committees requested a follow up with WorkSource Montgomery during the FY22 Operating Budget review about the County's American Job Centers (AJC). WSM staff will brief the committees on AJCs, and the organization's efforts to assume operational duties of the centers. Previously, WSM contracted with a third-party to operate the centers.

Background

The U.S. Department of Labor states that *American Job Centers are designed to provide a full range of assistance to job seekers under one roof*. These centers include multiple federal, state, and local resources to assist local job seekers. Generally, the centers offer training referrals, career counseling, job listing, and other employment-related services. The AJCs were original authorized in the Workforce Investment Act and were reauthorized in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act of 2014 (WIOA). The County's AJC is in Wheaton and also operates two satellite AJC sites in Germantown and in the Clarksburg Correctional Facility.

Council staff requested that WSM provide information in advance of this meeting. WSM's responses are on ©1-7. Below is a summary and highlights from this information.

Summary of services offered at the County AJCs is on ©1. Broadly, there are 16 services or programs offered by the AJCs. In addition, WSM notes it is working to integrate additional partners in Section E ©3, including a Financial Empowerment Center with United Way and Capital Area Food Bank.

Details about which entity is responsible for service delivery and whether those services may be accessed virtually is on ©5-6. As detailed by WSM, there are nine separate entities that operate and provides services to job seekers at the County's AJCs.

Details about WSM's efforts to assume full operational duties of the AJC is on ©2-4. WSM has filled 31 of the 33.5 full-time equivalents to assume operations of the AJCs. A list of the broad types of positions is on ©7.

Details about WSM's and the County's Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DOCR) efforts to reopen the AJC inside the facility is on ©4. The program's start date remains undefined, but WSM anticipates that operations will begin later in 2021. WSM is working with DOCR to define the 2.5 FTEs that will operate within the facility and has allocated resources for positions and assistance for those returning to the community outside of the facility.

This packet contains:

WSM's responses for AJCs

Circle #

1

- A. **Can you provide an overview of the programs and services offered at each AJC? Including,**
- **Identifying the general types of services offered.**

General services offered at the AJC include:

1. Resource rooms with phones, free internet, and resume writing tools
2. Employment plan development
3. Job training services
4. Job search assistance
5. Career counseling
6. Practice interviewing
7. Skills testing
8. Labor market and employer information
9. Employment workshops
10. Supportive services (which can include information about SNAP, financial assistance, Medicaid, training services, childcare, emergency funds, and other benefits)
11. Hiring events and business service information
12. Accessibility and special accommodations for people with disabilities
13. Referrals to community resources and other agencies, and more
14. Access to CareerOneStop's Worker Reemployment website for laid-off workers
15. Access to your state's job bank, Maryland Workforce Exchange
16. Unemployment insurance information

- **The agency/partner that provides that service, if not WorkSource.**

See Attachment A

- **Whether that program/service is available online or in-person only.**

See Attachment A

- **If there are any differences between the Germantown or Wheaton site for any of the above.**

The Wheaton AJC is the county's comprehensive center; therefore, the level of partners present at the Germantown AJC is significantly less than those present at the Wheaton AJC. Currently, WSM and MD Department of Labor are the partners located at the Germantown AJC. Although, the level of partners present differs between locations, the offerings for the Germantown AJC are consistent with the 16 services listed above.

B. Can you provide a couple of examples the process/timing/outcomes of different ways residents can receive services through the AJC? For example, what does the process/timing look like if an unemployed resident enters the AJC? A displaced worker? A resident looking to reskill? Etc.

1. Job Seekers seeking General Career Services: services can be accessed immediately and at the frequency of the job seeker's preference e.g., daily.
2. Job Seekers seeking Training Services require additional assessments and eligibility determination. Job Seekers seeking training services seeking (occupational skills) training services should generally receive approval for individual training accounts within 1-2 weeks from their initial touchpoint.

C. Can you list the metrics that WorkSource is required to report to the State and/or other partners regarding the operations/outcomes of the AJC? How often are these reports submitted?

The following is reported quarterly to the Maryland Department of Labor for WIOA¹:

1. Employment Rate in 2nd Quarter After Program Exit (includes education for youth)
2. Employment Rate in 4th Quarter After Program Exit (includes education for youth)
3. Median Earnings – 2nd Quarter After Program Exit
4. Credential Attainment
5. Measurable Skills Gains
6. Effectiveness in Serving Employers

Additionally, WSM is in the process of developing a performance management dashboard to capture real-time performance measures. Once implemented (NLT Oct 1), WSM will provide universal reporting to the Local Workforce Development Board, WSM Board of Directors, Montgomery County Government, and other stakeholders e.g., Montgomery Moving Forward. Measures may include but are not limited to: Total Served (by demographic), Employment Placements, Average Wages, Enrollment by Program, Occupational Skills Training (enrollment & completion), etc.

D. What performance improvements does WorkSource plan as it assumes operations of the AJC?

1. Employer Partnerships: WSM has recently onboarded a team of 4 Business Service Consultants (BSC), that will grow to 6 by October 1. With each BSC focused on an in-demand industry, WSM expects robust employer/business engagement with the American Job Centers. As such, there will be an increase in the following areas: hiring events, industry sessions, job orders/candidate referrals, wage subsidy program usage, etc.

¹ [WIOA Performance Indicators and Measures | U.S. Department of Labor \(dol.gov\)](#)

2. Sector Connector Programs: Sector Connector programs are occupational training and employer partnerships which align with specific local and regional in-demand industries.
3. Mobile Services & Community Impact: WSM will no longer rely solely on bringing job seekers to the AJC. In early 2022, WSM will deploy the first mobile job center, managed by WSM's Community Impact Manager. Mobile services will allow WSM to connect with harder to reach residents who may benefit from employment and training services. Furthermore, the Community Impact Manager will develop strategic partnerships with community-based, faith-based, and other organizations to ensure awareness of AJC services. The Community Impact Manager will also participate in community events, Citizen Advisory Board meetings, etc.
4. Virtual Reality Career Exploration: WSM will launch a virtual reality lab in Fall 2021. Included with the virtual reality lab will be a battery of career exploration modules to bolster the AJCs assessment process. Customers will also be able to participate in virtual reality work experience and occupational skills training opportunities.
5. Data Reporting: WSM has procured an additional management information system and performance management dashboard to ensure all outcomes not tracked in the state Maryland Workforce Exchange system are captured. As a result, WSM will have the ability to provide standardized comprehensive reports to the Workforce Development Board, WSM Board of Directors, Montgomery County Government, and other stakeholders.

E. Are there additional programs/service that WorkSource believes need to be included/contracted for the AJCs?

Montgomery County's AJC partner network currently includes 14 partners required by WIOA legislation. Additional to the current set of partners, WSM continuously evaluates service gaps and potential partners to edify the menu of services offered through the AJC network. Currently, WSM is coordinating the addition/integration of following additional partners:

United Way (Financial Literacy) – Financial Empowerment Center

WSM is partnering with the United Way to establish the Wheaton AJC as a Financial Empowerment Center (FEC). Once complete, residents will be able to receive group and individual financial literacy counseling 5 days a week from a certified financial coach co-located at the AJC.

Capital Area Food Bank (Food Plus)

WSM is currently coordinated with the Capital Area Food Bank to include food security services for participants of all AJC programs. Through the program individuals will be able to receive incentives based on program participation. Incentives will include grocery gift cards and whole food baskets.

F. How many positions will WorkSource hire to operate the AJCs?

WSM currently has 33.5 FTE slots. As of July 15, 2021, WSM has filled 31 of the 33.5 positions.

Program staff to operate the AJCs include 23 FTEs to include: Director of Programs (1), Director of Business Solutions (1), Business Service Consultants (4), Career Services Manager (1), Career Advisors (9), Instructional Coordinators (3); Performance & Data Manager (1), Quality Assurance Coordinator (1), Intake Coordinator (1); Community Impact Manager (1)

WSM's FTEs will increase with addition of ARPA funding and the re-opening of DOCR job center.

G. Can you provide the broad types of positions (e.g., management, admin, client services, etc.) and the number for each type that WorkSource intends to hire to operate the AJCs?

See Attachment B

H. What is the current progress and timeline for WorkSource to fully staff the AJCs?

WorkSource has filled 31 of 33.5 FTE slots necessary to staff the AJC and operate/execute federal, state, and local programs. As such, WSM was able to re-open the AJC to the public on Monday, July 12.

I. Can you provide an update on the AJC in the Correctional Facility (e.g., timing of resuming operations, staff insides/outside the facility specifically devoted to returning clients, etc.)?

The WSM and DOCR program teams have engaged bi-weekly since April '21. Most recently (June '21), the WSM team was able to tour the facility and view the job center layout in person. To-date, WSM has developed a program outline and has procured an innovative learning management system to utilize once the program restarts. The DOCR and WSM team are currently refining the job descriptions for the 2.5 FTEs who will be located within the facility, as well as discussing the KPIs for the center.

Although the program's start date is still undefined, WSM and DOCR expect to resume operations in calendar year 2021. DOCR will notify WSM of their approval for WSM to begin staff recruitment and identify a target start date once their operational status allows for the resumption of services in a safe manner.

WSM has also hired a Business Services Consultant who will focus on second chance employment opportunities. Additionally, WSM will utilize ARPA funding for the creation of a subsidized employment program specifically for ex-offenders. The program will consist of a Career Advisor, Business Services Consultant, and Instructor. In sequence, participants will receive, career counseling, professional development training, subsidized & unsubsidized employment opportunities.

Attachment A

Key:

Type of Service

1. Core Services
at the Montgomery County Job Center
2. Supplemental Services provided to participants
provided virtually or off-site

Location of Service

J – Service provided

V- Service only

MD DOL – Maryland Department of Labor – services include universal access in the Montgomery County Job Centers, ROW and RESEA workshops for Unemployment Insurance recipients, Veteran Services, and Trade Adjustment Act Services

DORS – Division of Rehabilitation Services

GRANT - D.B. Grant and Associates – provides WIOA Title I adult, dislocated worker, and youth programming.

HHS – Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services – services include Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and FSET employment programs

HOC -Housing Opportunity Commission – services include Family Self-Sufficiency employment and training enrichment activities.

JCA – Jewish Council for the Aging – provides SCSEP programming

LCMC – Literacy Council of Montgomery County – services relate to WIOA Title II programming only

MC – Montgomery College – services relate to WIOA Title II programming only

Job Corps – provided through Management Training Corporation – relates to Job Corps admissions and center offerings out of county

	DOL	DORS	Grant	HHS	HOC	JCA	LCMC	MC	Job Corps
<i>Basic Career and Education Services</i>									
Outreach, intake and orientation to information and services	1 J	2 J	1 J	1 V	1 V	1 V	1 V	1 V	1 J
Eligibility determination	2 J	1 J	1 J	1 V	1 V	1 V	1 V	1 V	1 J
Initial assessment of skill levels, abilities & support services	2 J		1 J	1 V	1 V	1 V	1 V	1 V	1 J
Job search services and job referrals	1 J	1 V	1 J	1 V		2 V		2 V	1 V
Labor market information	1 J	2 V	1 J	2 V			2 V	2 V	1 V
Job searches and work readiness workshops	1 J	1 V	1 J	1 V				2 V	1 V
Referrals and coordination of services within Job Center partners and other workforce development programs	1 J	1 J	1 J	2 V	1 V	2 V	1 V	2 V	1 J
Information on eligible training providers	2J	2 J	2J	2 V	1 V	2J	2J	2 V	1 J

	DOL	DORS	Grant	HHS	HOC	JCA	LCMC	MC	Job Corps
Referral to community resources	1 J	1 J	1 J	2 V	1 V	2 V		2 V	
Provision of information in understandable formats and languages regarding services	1 J	2 J	1 J	1 V	1 V	2 V		1 V	
Intensive Career Services									
Comprehensive assessment of skill levels and service needs	2 J	1 J	1 J	1 V		1 V	1 V	1 V	1 V
Development of individual employment plan	1 J	1 J	1 J	1 V				2 V	1 V
Career planning and guidance	1 J	1 J	1 J	1 V				2 V	1 J
Pre-vocational services		1 V	1 J	2 V			2 V	1 V	
Work and learn activities		1 V	1 J	2 V		1 V			
Financial literacy services			2 J	2 V	1 V		2 V		2 V
English language acquisition and adult basic skills	2 J		1 J	2 V	1 V		1 V	1 V	
Workforce preparation activities	1 J	1 V	1 J	2 V	2 V	1 V		1 V	
Wrap-around services			1 J	1 V					
Job Retention	2 J	1 V	1 J	1 V					1 V
Training Services Available									
Occupational Skills Training		1 V	1 J	2 V	2 V				1 V
On-the-Job Training (OJT)		1 V	1 J	2 V					1 V
Contextualized learning			1 J		2 V		2 V	1 V	
Skills upgrading and retraining		1 V	1 J		2 V				
Entrepreneurial training		1 V	2 J						
Adult Education and Literacy			2 J		1 V		1 V	1 V	
Customized training		1 J	2 J						
Supported or transitional employment		1 V	2 J			1 V			
Business Solutions									
Talent development services	1		1	2					
Retention services		2	1						
Career progression development	2		2						
Industry Alliances	2			2					
Incumbent Worker Training			2				1		
Consultation, planning and growth services	2		2						
Recruitment, screening and placement services	1		1	2	2				

Strategic promotion of job openings	1		1	2	2				
Applicant screening and matching services	1	1	1	2	2				
Train-to-Hire options			1		2				
Rapid response services	1		2						

Attachment B

Allocation	Category	Status
1	Executive Director	Filled
1	Administrative Coordinator	Filled
0.5	Policy & Compliance Manager	Vacant
1	Director of Programs	Filled
1	Director of Business Solutions	Filled
1	Director of Government Relations	Filled
1	Director of Communications	Filled
1	Director of Human Resources	Filled
1	Director of Finance & Administration	Vacant
1	Director of Strategic Initiatives	Filled
1	Performance & Data Manager	Filled
1	Career Services Manager	Filled
1	Community Impact Manager	Filled
1	Communications Coordinator	Filled
1	Staff Accountant	Filled
1	Quality Assurance Coordinator	Filled
1	Grants Coordinator	Filled
1	Career Advisor	Filled
1	Career Advisor	Filled
1	Career Advisor	Filled
1	Career Advisor	Filled
1	Career Advisor	Filled
1	Career Advisor	Filled
1	Career Advisor	Filled
1	Career Advisor	Filled
1	Career Advisor	Filled
1	Business Services Representative	Filled
1	Business Services Representative	Filled
1	Business Services Representative	Filled
1	Business Services Representative	Filled
1	Instructional Coordinator	Vacant
1	Lead Instructional Coordinator	Filled
1	Instructional Coordinator	Filled
1	Intake Specialist, WIOA Title I	Filled