

**Alabama Apprenticeship Council
Minutes of the Last Meeting
Wednesday, January 19, 2022 – 2:00pm**

*****MEETING HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS***
*The meeting was recorded by audio and video.***

Council Members Present Virtual: *Mr. Ed Castile* for Governor Kay Ivey, Mr. Cole Wagner for Lt. Governor Wil Ainsworth, Superintendent Eric Mackey, *Ms. Audrey Webb* for Chancellor Jimmy Baker, Ms. Robin Ricks, *Mr. Nick Moore* for Mr. Tim McCartney, Ms. Mary Albritten, Mr. Jerry Grissom, Representative Napoleon Bracy, Jr., & Ms. Amber Turner & Mr. Casey Shelton (by phone).

AOA Staff Present: Josh Laney, Sophia Guan, Tawanna Robinson, Meredith Smith, Kristen Holder, Michael Bridier

Documents provided to the Council: Agenda for January 19, 2022, Minutes of Last Meeting for November 17, 2021, Apprenticeship Council Quarterly Report

Sophia calls the role – We have a quorum. Attendees: Ed Castille (Rep for Governor Ivey), Audrey Webb (Rep for Jimmy Baker), Nick Moore (Rep for Chairman McCartney), Mary Albritton, Representative Napoleon Bracy Jr., Jerry Grissom, Robin Ricks, Amber Turner, Cole Wagner (Rep for Lt. Governor), and Eric Mackey.

- Approvals:
 - Approve Agenda - Motion by Jerry Grissom, second by Amber Turner
 - Approving Minutes - Motion by Robin Ricks, second by Jerry Grissom

- Board Elections:
 - Vice Chair - Lt. Governor Ainsworth
 - Pro Temp – Rep. Napoleon Bracy Jr.
 - Josh said that if there are any changes to alternates, please email Josh and Katanga will make that change to the roster.

- Director's Report: Josh gave the Director's Report.
 - Quarterly Report
 - New Programs:
 - Hardy Corporation – Occupation: Pipefitting
 - TriGreen Equipment – Occupation: Agriculture Equipment Technician. TriGreen owns 14 dealerships across the nation. They sell John Deere tractors and came to the AOA for technicians. Program is built off of a time-based diesel program.

- Newly Registered Occupations under current sponsors:
 - LBW Community College added Mechatronics Technician
 - Turbine Worx added Cyber Security Support Tech
- No program cancellations or suspensions
- Other new occupations on the horizon:
 - Accounting and finance. Shows that we are not only serving the traditional occupations but also more innovative ones.
 - BASF – Chemical refinery operators which is a new statewide occupation, first one in the state.
- 2021 Annual Report:
 - Employers Served: 62 Individual Employers + 356 Group Employers = 418 total Employers Served
 - Apprentices: 1234 New apprentices, 3033 apprentices currently in training, 445 graduated apprentices.
 - Josh said that we have not moved that much on diversifying the demographics. He indicated an increase of roughly 1% for females apprentices in the state and a little more increase in race categories. This is one reason we are focusing on diversifying the apprenticeships we offer so we can attract greater diversity.
 - Breakdown of the age groups of active apprentices:
 - 16-24 age group is the largest = 1638 active apprentices. Josh noted that this shows we are capturing young people.
 - 25-34 age group = 907 active apprentices
 - 35+ age group = 488 active apprentices

Mentors – AOA has partnered with Wallace Community College Hanceville to offer training to apprenticeship mentors. We are trying to partner with these employers to train quality people and not simply set it up and walk away. If we can get apprentices connected with high-quality mentors, the apprentices will have a more quality experience and so a more quality apprenticeship program. The training teaches communication styles. So far we have served 39 mentors at 21 employers, with an estimated impact of 250 apprentices.

Tax Credit – Josh said that Katanga has done a great job to promote, simplify and make it easier for employers to take advantage of the AOA tax credit.

Number of apprentices claimed <-- what we qualified it

- 2019 = 167 apprentices; 2020 = 220 apprentices; 2021 YTD = 202 apprentices (still have 11 more months)

Average number of apprentices claimed per employer

- 2019 = 3.71; 2020 = 5.64; 2021 = 5.45

Small employers are better able to claim the tax credit than larger ones because they have a different tax structure.

Specific report on Tax credit.

- During calendar year 2021 (1/1/2021 - 12/31/2021), 28 taxpayers claimed \$110,787
- From the start of the program to 12/31/2021, 60 tax payers have claimed a grand total of \$234,157.

- \$7.5 million dollars of tax credits annually – barely taking advantage of the funding available. One issue is if you are a company that does not pay income tax, you can't take advantage of it. Includes large companies, utilities, and public companies.
- Ed said that since we are already a low tax state to start, the tax incentive may not be as good of an incentive for some companies. Not trying to downplay the importance though.
- Upcoming Priorities for us – Pursue State Funds - We need to figure out how to compete in this arena. We do have a number of people in apprenticeships and it is helping our companies. Yet some companies are not joining cause there is no funding incentive and this is something Ed is going to work on, looking at other states. Florida has put together a \$11 million budget to incentivize the expansion of apprenticeships. Also looking at Tennessee and the teacher apprenticeship program. It is now nationally approved and the AOA wants to get involved due to the teacher shortage in Alabama.

Other AOA Projects

NGA WBL Grants - The best practices sessions are coming along. There will be 7, one in each region. We will be highlighting 4 WBL best practices per region

Registered Apprenticeship Verification Evaluation (RAVE) - Pilot of 10 will start in March 2022.

- Ed mentioned that many countries are moving on apprenticeship work rapidly. He referenced Switzerland, which is a benchmark country for work-based learning, where about every category of work there has a registered apprenticeship. This movement validates what we are doing here. We see apprenticeship as a really good way to get our skilled workforce to where they need to be.

- Best Practices Presentation – North Alabama Electrical Training Alliance by Daniel McCrory
The national program was started in 1941 – We needed some way to train these folks and make sure they are safe.

305 inside wireman apprentices currently enrolled. These apprentices are employed by one of our signatory contractors. About 30 signatory contractors. Some are small and have 1 apprentice, others are large like one who is working on a Facebook with 120 apprentices.

Bought a 22600 sq ft main facility in 2007 which consists of 6 classrooms, computer lab, and basement that has 9000 sq ft of hands-on and evaluation space. Daniel showed a photo of their new 3 phase lineman trainer. There are three poles and each has a transform bank on them. They can simulate any problem the apprentice would experience in the field and the apprentices can do this at a low voltage. That has been a game changer for this lineman program. The sponsor has also recently added an 8000 sq ft auxiliary building classroom which they are still outfitting. There will be crane training and a welding program.

The apprentices meet once a week at 6 PM. 225 hours of related instruction per year and 8000 OJL Hours total. The apprentice can apply for college credit, up to 50 hours to transferred to credits, depending on the institution.

Every apprentice, before they get to the interview, get the aptitude test. Any applicant that passes gets to interview. We have 350 to 450 applications per year and interview 250-300 applicants.

Who benefits:

Apprentices learn through OJL training and RTI and work with a journeyworker. The apprentice learns a living wage as they progress in their career. They graduate with numerous certifications, including the state license, OSHA 10, OSHA 30, and first aid.

Employers benefit by having their employees receive 4 years of standardized training. Our curriculum is recognized nationwide and transferrable.

Customer of Employers benefit because the training the apprentices receive allows the contractors to market their skillset to customers and to complete complex projects on time and under budget.

IBEW benefits because the training allows the IBEW to have a pool of skilled craftsmen to offer the contractors.

Moving Forward:

AOA has been great at making us aware of grants and tax credits that benefit the training center and employers. They recently applied for a training center grant.

Recently graduated 33 journeyworkers – 5 lineman and 25 wireman. We project 80 new apprentices next year.

Contact information: Danny McCrory, Training Director, 256-383-9507 ext. 11, Danny.mccrory@naljatc.org

Jerry Grissom said that Daniel is doing an extraordinary and we should be looking at the program as a gold standard and transferrable throughout industry. Josh made the comment that the program had already required that the apprentice earn a license before they graduate. As an office, we are now pushing that for licensed occupations (but it is not required). If not, it puts the apprentice in a qualified/not qualified state in-between. We want to make sure that the people come out of the apprenticeship are completely skilled and ready to work.

Conclusion:

- Announced the upcoming WBL summit in Birmingham on April 12th and 13th, 2022
- Adjourned by everyone leaving the teams meeting.

Minutes captured by Kristen Holder.