



Tompkins County Workforce Development

Disabilities Workforce Committee

TC Workforce Development Board Conference Room
119 E. Seneca St., Suite 200, Ithaca, NY 14850

Meeting Minutes - Tuesday, August 12, 2025

Present: A. Tunison, B. Flaherty, J. Lynch, A. McManus, K. Rachetta, B. Seekins, J. Slade

Excused: J. Gondek

Staff: C. Sponn, D. Achilles, J. Starley

Call To Order:

Mr. Tunison, Disabilities Workforce Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m.

Approval of Minutes: June 10, 2025

It was moved by Ms. Slade, seconded by Ms. McManus, and unanimously adopted by voice vote of members present to approve the minutes of June 10, 2025.

Discussion:

New Ticket to Work Provider updates

Mr. Sponn reported that the Career Center has partnered with American Dream Employment Network (ADEN) to be the new Ticket to Work Provider. Mr. Starley has been working with ADEN for training and learning that ADEN wants to help in opening tickets for customers, seeing the customer succeed, and getting the ticket closed. There are a lot of tools for job seekers and employers, it is a complete service. ADEN wants to make sure that everything is done properly and all paperwork is complete so that there are no questions and that all the boxes are checked. ADEN is a known strong program and it has a lot of resources and is a good partner to work with.

Disabilities in the Workplace Survey Results

Mr. Sponn reviewed the results of the Disabilities in the Workplace survey (See attached survey data). Mr. Sponn reported that 15 organizations responded to the survey. Mr. Sponn inquired what the Committee members would like to see next with the survey. The committee members had a great discussion of ideas on how to move the survey forward.

Adaptive Technology Purchase Updates

Mr. Sponn reported that Workforce has received the extra funding requested from the State for the adaptive technology. Ms. Achilles will work on ordering from the list that the committee worked on. Mr. Tunison would like to advertise to the community that Tompkins Workforce Career Center has the adaptive technology for individuals to use.

Accessibility Concerns for New Center of Government - Future Space of Tompkins Workforce Development and Career Center

Mr. Sponn reported that the new Center of Government building will be on the corner of Buffalo and Tioga Street. The Career Center will be located in the Old Jail building and will occupy the whole building except for half of the 4th floor that will be Assigned Council.

Disability Resource Coordinator (DRC) Report

Mr. Starley reported that Ms. Wiley from the New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL) will be doing a training in September for staff on the NY SCION program. For the success of the program it is very important that all staff are on the same page about program goals.

Mr. Starley will be attending the National Employment Network Association (NENA) conference in September 2025.

Mr. Starley has mentors that he works with, Ms. Wiley, NYSDOL; Mr. Kelly, Finger Lakes Workforce Board; and Ms. Jones, Orange Works. They all have been very helpful to put all the pieces together of what a DRC needs to do.

Mr. Starley cannot wait to talk to more people and businesses and let them know that Workforce Development is there to help. Mr. Starley has a lot of great ideas on how to promote what a DRC should be doing for the community.

Director's Report:

Career Center Updates

Mr. Sponn reported that there has been a lot of issues with the ventilation at the Career Center. Staff were feeling ill and there are tests being done to make sure that the Career Center is a healthy and safe place for staff and community members to be in.

Members' Updates:

Ms. Rachetta shared that Tompkins Cortland Community College (TC3) is offering free Community College to 25 to 55 year olds who want to earn a college degree. The four areas are: Nursing, Teaching, Computers, and Engineers. Participants who take advantage of this opportunity have 10 semesters to complete the program of their choice.

Ms. Rachetta shared that TC3 and SUNY Binghamton are holding a webinar in October for students who are going to college for the first time and what the process is in order to make it an easier transition into college. Ms. Rachetta will share the brochure to the committee.

Ms. Slade shared that National Disability Employment Awareness (NDEAM) will be on October 8, 2025, in Binghamton, New York.

Ms. Slade shared Chemung Manufacturing Day is for all kids on Friday, October 17, 2025 at SUNY Corning Community College Airport Corporate in Horseheads.

Ms. Slade shared that the World of Job Skills Fair is in planning stages with the committee.

Adjournment:

Mr. Tunison adjourned the meeting at 9:44 a.m.