

**FINAL MINUTES**  
**CAREERSOURCE PALM BEACH COUNTY, INC.**  
**YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT OUTREACH COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Wednesday, May 7, 2025**

I. **CALL MEETING TO ORDER, WELCOME:** Alyssa Freeman welcomed attendees and called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Committee members attending: Alyssa Freeman, Ike Powell, and David Talley. Staff members attending: Julia Dattolo, Steven Gustafson, Abraham Greene, Cody Melton, Charles Duval, Najum Uddin, Melanie Rebottini, Melanie Magill, Eugene Spann, Sophia Jerningan, Artesia Graham, Gerard Melville and Mary Mullen-Butler. Guests attending: Shirlon St. Amour, Palm Beach County Reentry Program Coordinator.

II. **AGENDA APPROVAL**

a. Proposed Amendments: Alyssa Freeman asked if there were any amendments. There were none.

b. Approval of Agenda: Alyssa Freeman called for a motion to approve the agenda.

Motion: Ike Powell

Second: David Talley

The motion passed unanimously.

III. **PUBLIC COMMENTS:** Alyssa Freeman asked if there were any public comments. There were none.

IV. **ITEMS FOR APPROVAL**

a. Minutes from January 16, 2025: Alyssa Freeman called for a motion to approve the minutes. Before proceeding, Ike Powell requested the following edits under Palm Beach County's Birth to 22: Opportunity Youth Action Team Update:

- Second bullet: Remove the name Chris Cannon.
- Third bullet: Remove the entire sentence.

With these adjustments, Alyssa Freeman called for a motion to approve the amended minutes.

Motion: Ike Powell

Second: David Talley

The motion passed unanimously.

V. **INFORMATIONAL**

a. Young Adult Program Update (Steven Gustafson): Steven Gustafson provided a detailed presentation on the ongoing redesign of CareerSource Palm Beach County's youth program. He announced that Cody Melton has taken on the role of Director of Youth Operations, overseeing not just youth services but multiple other programs. Mr. Gustafson explained that after a thorough evaluation of the current youth program, the team concluded that it lacked structure and consistency in service delivery due to insufficient written guidance and resources for staff. To address this, the team initiated a full redesign aimed at building a sustainable, effective, and impactful program tailored to the specific needs of Palm Beach County youth.

The redesigned program, now rebranded as *Engage*, focuses on long-term career and educational success rather than immediate employment. Unlike the prior approach that centered on short-term job placement, *Engage* emphasizes preparing youth for careers by guiding them through structured pathways. These include college enrollment, entry into skilled trades, technology and IT fields, and healthcare careers. He highlighted that, per U.S. Department of Labor guidelines, placing a youth in a post-secondary educational institution is considered a successful outcome.

Given Palm Beach County's more limited budget compared to regions like Orlando or Tampa, the redesign strategy emphasizes leveraging existing community partnerships and resources rather than duplicating services. The program is being built using a human-centered design model with significant staff involvement. Weekly planning meetings are being held with front-line team members to ensure the design is collaborative and grounded in operational realities. The goal is to produce a comprehensive program guide containing structured policies, tools, and templates that will enable both new and existing staff to effectively support youth participants.

The Engage program will primarily target individuals aged 18 to 24 for year-round services while still offering summer programs for youth aged 16 to 24. Several specialized tracks will be developed:

- **Engage Education:** Assisting youth in navigating post-secondary education pathways, including help with FAFSA applications and mentorship support.
- **Engage the Trades:** Promoting careers in skilled trades and apprenticeships, especially in fields that are resilient to economic shifts and technological automation.
- **Engage Technology:** Introducing youth to emerging technology fields, including AI and IT, which are in high demand.
- **Engage Healthcare:** Addressing the ongoing shortage in healthcare professions within Florida by guiding youth toward long-term careers in this field.

Importantly, the program will no longer fund training directly under the youth component. Instead, participants will be funneled into the WIOA Adult program after they have shown commitment and readiness through internships or career exploration activities. This two-tiered system enables CareerSource to maximize federal funding and offer more impactful support by aligning short-term exploration with long-term career advancement. For example, rather than funding a brief dental assistant course, the agency would aim to support a participant in becoming a dental hygienist, providing greater earning potential and job security.

Mr. Gustafson also explained that exceptions will be made for 16–17-year-olds in certain situations. While the year-round focus will be on 18–24-year-olds, younger participants will be accommodated when appropriate, particularly for education-focused needs like GED attainment. Policies will be flexible, allowing the director to approve exceptions when warranted.

- Success Stories (Abraham Greene): Abraham Greene shared a compelling success story from a youth participant who overcame significant personal challenges, including the recent death of her grandmother and becoming a young mother. After being referred to the program by a friend, she received job readiness support, counseling, transportation assistance, and mentorship. As a result, she secured a job at the Boys and Girls Club, a role aligned with her passion for working with children and has maintained the position for over a year. She credited the program with helping her gain stability and support her son, noting that it was the first time she had stayed in a job for such a duration.
- Palm Beach County's Birth to 22: Opportunity Youth Action Team Update (Ike Powell): Ike Powell gave an update related to the Birth to 22 initiatives, highlighting that May is Mental Health Awareness Month. He shared highlights from the recent annual meeting held on February 18, which had nearly 200 attendees, primarily youth and their caregivers. This represented a shift from previous years where attendance was mostly service providers. During the event, the revamped Youth Master Plan was launched. Mr. Powell also provided information about a countywide needs assessment being conducted by the Victory Group. The goal is to identify what youth need to transition successfully to adulthood, with a focus on those in the dependency system, such as foster care. So far, 409 youths and 34 service providers have participated in the survey, with results expected by the end of May to inform future strategic planning.
- Internship Portal (Julia Dattolo): Julia Dattolo provided an update on a new internship initiative in collaboration with the Business Development Board and Palm Beach County. The initiative includes the creation of a centralized internship portal—**InternPalmBeach.com**—which will launch soon. This portal will host internship opportunities across all industries, serving both high school and college students. Larger companies will have links to their own internship pages, while smaller employers will post directly on the platform. Local high school students will receive special consideration, and the site will include features like resume assistance and interview preparation support for them. The platform is being supported through a county-sponsored contract, which was finalized and set to be delivered to Ms. Dattolo this same day.

VI. **OPEN DISCUSSION:** There was none.

VII. **ADJOURNMENT:** Alyssa Freeman wished everyone a good summer. The meeting was adjourned at 9:33 a.m. The next meeting will be held on September 18, 2025, at 9:00 a.m.