

American Job Center Operator's Committee Meeting

Monday, May 19, 2025

Attendees Present by Agency: Ilesha Armour/NJDOL; Patricia Banks/Plainfield Public Library; Nakaya Bligen/UCVTS; Lisa Bonanno/UCWDB; Juanito Chiluisa/NJDOL; Lisa Hiscano/UCNJ; Melody Holiday/Urban League of UC; Valerie Kerrigan/NJDOL DVRS; Nitya LeoGrande/Edison Job Corps; Ingrid Macias/NJ DOL; Isaias Rivera/UCN; Claire Sashi /CAU; Tony Staynings/Edison Job Corp; Ratyeeman Ward/HACE; Cathy Waters/Urban League of UC; Maritza Batista/UCNJ; Kendall Givens/HACE

DHS County Representatives Present:

DHS Office of the Director Present: Melissa Lespinasse, Asst. Director/UCDHS;
Jeffrey Jackson, Special Projects/UCDHS

American Job Center Present: Robert Croom, Director; Nasrene Mondol, Carolina Marin

Division of Social Services Present: Rhonda McClain; Amedio Di Cosmo; Stephanie Hodges-Johnson, Kendall Sears

Division of Children and Youth Services Present: Latoya Bennett

Division of Individual & Family Support Services Present: Elizabeth Paskewich, Navin Singh

I. Welcome & Roll Call

The meeting was called to order by Melissa Lespinasse; Director Debbie Ann Anderson, and Asst. Director. Karen Dinsmore, Asst. Director were excused from today's meeting.

Roll call was taken by Asst. Melissa Lespinasse.

II. Approval of the April 28, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Tony Staynings made the motion to approve the minutes, and Rhonda McClain seconded that motion. A motion passed with no abstentions and/or corrections to these minutes. The minutes were approved.

III. Federal Funding Update

- Ongoing uncertainty due to proposed House budget reductions.
- Potential changes to work requirements for able-bodied adults (impacting SNAP and Medicaid).
- Discussions about merging funding streams and shifting funding to different federal departments.
- Possible shifts in Medicaid, proposed federal cost transfer to the states, among several programs.
- Providers encouraged to monitor developments and stay informed

IV. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) & System Report Card Overview

Melissa and Jeffrey introduced a draft KPI worksheet to align with WIOA requirements:

- **Employment Rate (Second Quarter After Exit):**
 - Adults: ≥ 68%

- Dislocated Workers: ≥ 64%
- **Timeliness – Average Time to Employment:**
 - Goal: Under 60 days
- **Outreach – Employer Engagement:**
 - Goal: 10+ engaged employers

These metrics are in **DRAFT** form and open for discussion. The team agreed on the importance of:

- Capturing complete outreach data.
- Avoiding duplication in reporting.
- Forming subgroups to refine indicators and ensure meaningful tracking.

V. Streamlining Referral Process and Service Delivery

- Concerns raised regarding time-consuming training sessions and duplicative meetings.
- Goal to develop a comprehensive and unified referral system across all partners (e.g., Workforce Advantage, WFNJ, Integrity, UCNJ).
- The state is currently out to bid for a new data system platform; no vendor has been selected yet. AOSOS is still required for entry.
- Geographic Solutions is currently in use for the referral process and document uploads across the AJC network.
- Emphasis is on building an integrated system with dashboards and shared client data.
- Interim processes must be developed to maintain service quality and efficiency.

VI. Service Quality and Customer Planning

- Importance of intentional referrals based on customer goals and program fit.
- CWEP sites and WFNJ program are expanding; includes oversight from county leadership.
- Career Counselors and Navigators must ensure thoughtful customer placement and follow-up.
- AJC will assume full responsibility for managing referral processes and case management.
- New dashboard and case management tools are being explored to enhance tracking and documentation

VII. Employer Engagement and Sector Strategies

- Increased coordination is occurring with sector-based employers and the AJC & UCNJ Business Services Team (Carolina & Isaiah).
- Emphasis is on avoiding silos—teams must understand and cross-refer between services like OJT, ITA, and WFNJ.

VIII. Training Integration and Eligibility Considerations

- Discussion on the importance of building training components into short-term programs.
- Proposal to create a short (under 10-minute) video overview of OJT for staff and customer awareness.
- Clarification needed on the five-year eligibility window for previously unemployed individuals.
- Certifications may not be universally required, but must match job-specific needs.

IX. State vs. County Program Differences

- State and county employment programs differ in contract types and eligibility.
- Employers need clarity on program timelines and candidate readiness.
- Financial incentives help when onboarding or training time is extended.
- Accurate eligibility verification is critical for both customer success and employer participation.

X. Next Steps and Action Items

- **Case Conferencing:** Implement regular case conferencing meetings among partners to ensure coordinated customer services and reduce duplication.
- **Referral System Development:** Work towards a unified referral platform; interim manual tracking to be enhanced for better data sharing.
- **KPI & System Report Card Refinement:** Form subgroups to finalize and regularly review KPIs to improve data accuracy and program outcomes.
- **Staff Training:** Develop a short OJT training video and plan broader training sessions for staff on referral protocols and employer engagement strategies.
- **Dashboard Tools:** Continue exploring dashboard solutions for improved customer tracking, referrals, and reporting.
- **Employer Collaboration:** Increase sector strategy meetings with employer partners to align training and job placement efforts.
- **Communication:** Maintain open communication across teams and partners to anticipate and adapt to funding and policy changes.

XI. Adjournment

The meeting concluded with thanks to all attendees for their participation and contributions. Future meeting notices and updates on action items will be provided.

Next meeting: Monday, June 16, 2025 @ 8:30 a.m.
Location: Warinanco Sports Center | Warinanco Park | Roselle, NJ