

Union County Workforce Investment Board
Disabilities Issues Committee
Union County Administration Building, 2nd Floor Conference Room
9:00am June 17, 2014

Committee Members Present

Ms. Donna Dedinsky, Wakefern Foods Corp. (Co-Chair)
Mr. Richard Capac, Leaf Group (Co-Chair)
Elizabeth Bennett, Evergreen Partners, Inc.
Crystal Cunningham, The Arc of Union County
Pat Dobson, Plainfield One Stop- Employment Services
Fred Mangold, Elizabeth One Stop Career Center
Myrna Pinckney, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Staff

Antonio Rivera, Director, Workforce Investment Board
Elizabeth Paskewich, Workforce Investment Board

Meeting Summary

Mr. Richard Capac and Ms. Donna Dedinsky welcomed everyone and self introductions followed.

Mr. Richard Capac read the Disability Issues Committee Charge.

Donna Dedinsky made a motion to approve the January 24, 2014 meeting minutes as presented. It was seconded by Myrna Pinckney and carried unanimously.

Mr. Antonio Rivera began the discussion on the Regional Conference on Disabilities Issues. The idea behind the regional conference is to create balance between regional service providers and resources of employers

Ms. Myrna Pinckney mentioned October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month. The theme this year is: Expect. Employ. Empower. In previous years Union County partnered with Cornell University. There were difficulties obtaining employers, so deciding on who to invite will be important. It was very well attended by Social Service groups. The focus of to whom the conference is geared towards needs to be clear, One-Stop administrators, employers, etc. Currently we are seeing more opportunities with smaller businesses and entrepreneurship, as the big businesses don't seem to be hiring as much.

Donna Dedinsky recommended encouraging each WIB member to provide a representative of their business at this event.

Antonio Rivera revisited the last committee meeting when discussing potential incentives to give to employers to provide employment opportunities. He recommended On the Job training as it provides a

monetary incentive to the business by paying part of the client's wages and provides the client with invaluable work experience. On the Job training combined with a support network through the WIB and One Stops would provide an excellent opportunity not previously provided. He mentioned that even with incentives opportunities are still scarce due to the economy.

Ms. Dedinsky agreed with this and mentioned there has been lack of turn over within her organization due to employees staying longer and not retiring. Employees have either lost money in the stock market not providing them with the economic cushion to retire or are afraid of unforeseen problems such where they will need to use their money that natural attrition is not happening. Mr. Rivera also stated that employers will also be cutting back due to the upcoming increased cost of healthcare.

Ms. Dedinsky said that it's important to get the message out to employers that while there are these issues in the economy it is still important to hire those with disabilities. She also mentioned that it is important to get a really great and dynamic speaker at the Conference to get our message across. The committee discussed potential speakers, such as Eric LaGrand.

Committee discussion on the Proposed Regional Conference breakdown:

Date: October or early November, half day conference

Location: Possibly Kean STEM building

Agenda: Panel and Speakers. Panel possibly comprised of employers, social service representatives, etc.

Invitees: Employers (corporate, non-profit, small business, big business), Social Service Networks

Action Steps: Elizabeth Paskewich will e-mail update to committee members at the end of July regarding progress of event.

The committee next meeting date and location, TBD.

Meeting adjourned at 10:05 A.M.