

**Union County Workforce Investment Board
Disability Issues Committee
Union County Administration Building, 2nd Floor
10 Elizabethtown Plaza, Elizabeth, NJ.**

**Department of Parks & Community Renewal Conference Room
9:00 am, Friday January 24, 2014**

MEETING AGENDA

- I. Call to Order Ms. Donna Dedinsky, Co-Chair
Mr. Richard Capac, Co-Chair
- II. Introductions
- III. Focus on Employers
 - How to better prepare individuals with disabilities for employment
- IV. Plan for more effective integration / coordination of One-Stop Services
- V. Development of Component of Workforce Development Strategic Plan for Individuals with Disabilities
- VI. Preparation for Grant Proposals
- VII. Adjournment

Union County Workforce Investment Board
Disabilities Issues Committee
Union County Administration Building, 2nd Floor Conference Room
9:00 am Friday, January 24, 2014

Committee Members Present

Ms. Donna Dedinsky, Wakefern Foods Corp. (Co-Chair)
Mr. Richard Capac, Leaf Group (Co-Chair)
Elizabeth Bennett, Evergreen Partners, Inc.
Fredia McKinnie, Community Access Unlimited
Myrna Pinckney, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services
Anita Thomas, Carolyn Dorfman Dance Company

Committee Members Absent

Frank Caragher, the Arc of Union County
Elaine Katz, Kessler Foundation
Charles Newman, UC Office of the Disabled
Fred Mangold, One-Stop
Stephanie Soules, One-Stop
Cory Storch, Bridgeway Rehabilitation Services Inc., Bridgeway House
Pat Dobson, Plainfield Workforce New Jersey Office

Staff

Philip Kandl, Staff, Workforce Investment Board

Meeting Summary

Mr. Richard Capac and Ms. Donna Dedinsky welcomed everyone and self introductions followed. Mr. Capac asked Mr. Kandl to provide some background on the Committee and its initiatives.

Mr. Kandl reported that the Committee was previously chaired by Ms. Myrna Pinckney. The Workforce Investment Board through its One-Stop Career Centers provides universal access to services. The Disabilities Committee charge is to plan for how to provide increased employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities, ensure that the One-Stop provides equal access to services and act as an advocate on behalf of the disabled population. The Committee organized a disabilities conference that was targeted to employers, although the attendees were predominantly from the social service sector. The focus of the conference was to address employer misconceptions regarding the American with Disabilities Act and reducing barriers to employment for people with disabilities.

Ms. Dedinsky indicated that Wakefern Foods Corp. hires people with disabilities and provides employment opportunities both permanently and on special projects. Wakefern partners with Vocational Technical Schools around the state to provide a Supermarket Careers Program for young students with special needs that helps prepare individuals for employment in the supermarket industry.

Discussion ensued regarding the Committee's role and expectations.

Mr. Capac indicated that as an employer a disability should not be a deterrent to hiring: the individual's skill sets were the most important criteria when evaluating a person for employment. Mr. Capac suggested that technology should be explored as providing access to employment opportunities. Ms. McKinney indicated that the definition of a disability includes cognitive, behavioral, physical, mental health, and developmental issues.

The Committee agreed that it was important to get notable companies to be a leader in this effort. Mr. Capac indicated that he would communicate this message through Chambers of Commerce. The Committee agreed that outreach to employers should include all businesses; smaller businesses can provide a more nurturing environment.

The Committee discussed how to move forward and identify both short term and long term goals. Ms. Dedinsky indicated that a first step would be to develop a resource guide for employers that can be distributed to employers that explain the available services and include testimonials from companies and individuals of success stories.

The Committee agreed that the next meeting should be a planning meeting. The service agencies agreed to bring their resource guides for committee members to review and the information would be utilized as a basis for developing an updated resource guide to be used as a marketing tool to employers.

To move the agenda forward, Mr. Capac suggested that the Committee develop a timeline with action items. Mr. Capac indicated that it was important to understand the issues and resources.

The next meeting will be a working meeting that focuses on:

- Resource Identification at the County and State levels
- Updated list of service providers
- Plan for the development of a resource guide

To define the employment needs of persons with disabilities within the County, the Committee asked for the number of people with disabilities that were unemployed.

The next meeting is scheduled for 9:00 A.M. Friday March 28, 2014. Location to be determined.

Meeting adjourned at 10:15 A.M.