

UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
AMERICAN JOB CENTER PARTNER COMMITTEE
KRYSTAL CANADY, CHAIRWOMAN
MEETING MINUTES: WEDNESDAY, February 23rd, 2022 10:00AM via Zoom

Committee Members

1. Krystal Canady - Committee Chairwoman, The Gateway Family YMCA
2. Colleen Clayton, The Gateway Family YMCA
3. Robert Croom, American Job Center
4. Cathy Waters, Urban League
5. Isaias Rivera, Union County College
6. Gino Elmarassy, American Job Center
7. Herb Caesar, NJSBDC
8. Juanita Vargas, Union Way of Greater Union County
9. Michael McLean, NJDOL WFNJ & SNAP
10. Pamela Mata, American Job Center
11. Ed Faver, Division of Rehabilitation Services
12. Marlene Loff, Union County College
13. Jasmine Lee, Simon Youth Academy
14. Cyndy Walsh Rintzler, Inroads to Opportunities
15. Hawa Bonds, Youth Forward
16. Nasrene Mondol, Union County American Job Center
17. Nicole DeAugustine, UCDHS/Division of Individual & Family Support Services
18. Julia Gibson, Job Corps
19. Susan Eagle, Division of Social Services
20. Juanito Chiluisa, NJDOL Employment Services
21. Julio Sabater, Workforce Advantage
22. Latoya Bennet, Youth Forward
23. Nancy Berkenfeld, Elizabeth Public Library
24. Marissa Caporera, Elizabeth Housing Authority
25. Scott Kuchinsky, Plainfield Public Library
26. LaChelle Thompson, Housing Authority of Elizabeth

UCWDB Staff

Meredith Barracato
Antonio Rivera
Carolina Marin

Meeting Summary

I. Welcome and Introductions:

Chairwoman Canady welcomed everyone to the first AJC Partner's Committee meeting for 2022.

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II. Review and Approval of December 1st, 2021 Minutes:

Motion was made by Colleen Clayton to approve the December 1st, 2021 Committee Meeting Minutes. Marlene Loff provided the second motion. Motion was carried.

III. Department of Labor data:

Meredith Barracato shared a few slides from the NJ Department of Labor and the Conference Board which will be located in a Google Drive folder titled Partners Resources. This information will be available to all committee members as part of the presentation. Meredith Barracato reviewed the NJDOL data which shows the greatest skills in demand, risk of automation, and occupations in greatest demand. The second set of slides Meredith Barracato reviewed was from the Conference Board which discussed the hiring trends across the country. The Chairwoman mentioned it's important to look at the data and think about how to change the way the organizations operate.

IV: American Job Center Presentation:

Robert Croom shared a presentation of the American Job Center service delivery, performance, and initiatives. Chairwoman Canady asked how was the data presented compare to the level of service they have projected because the 10 individuals who have a job is low. The Chairwoman asked how many people in Union County were unemployed and she is trying to understand why there are so many people unemployed (Meredith mentioned the unemployment rate in Union County is around 5%) and the AJC only placed 10 people in jobs for quarter one and two. Nasrene Mondol mentioned the individuals that Robert is discussing are active and still in the training process due to the various process to enter training. Chairwoman asked if there was an opportunity for the staff could see where there are barriers because you could start out with a high number but only place single digits. Robert mentioned they have been trying to screen clients and focus on people who are interested in training and finding a job. Julio Sabater mentioned he suggest if the AJC can show how many have started training instead of showing career counseling meetings, how many remain in training/active, how many completed trainings so they can understand better employment after training. He would also like to see how many individuals who don't access training get jobs without accessing training. Chairwoman agreed that would be a good suggestion. Isaias Rivera mentioned the 10 individuals who are listed are not necessarily part of the orientation and UC Works numbers presented. He added that the AJC

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needs to wait till 90 days after the clients exit. He also mentioned since a lot of the clients don't report back to the AJC or UCC on their employment status it's important if the AJC staff could use the Loops system to verify if the client is working using their social security number. Even with Loops the information is backlogged this would at least provide him information that the clients don't share. Robert mentioned as part of the AJC's business imitative they have created a job fair committee to work on creating larger scale job fairs. Nasrene Mondol mentioned as part of the new management team they have been speaking with other AJC's like Bergen County on their best practices.

Chairwoman mentioned she appreciated the suggestions from Workforce Advantage and Union County College and hopes those suggestions are taken into consideration for the next presentation. She added she is happy to hear there are successful models such as the Plainfield Public Library and is happy to hear the AJC is working with other counties on adopting their best practices. She hopes the AJC can implement some incentives to have clients stay with the AJC. The Chairwoman asked Meredith Barracato what happened with the software that was purchased that was supposed to help with tracking the clients. Meredith mentioned a number of initiatives that the WDB and the AJC have been working on to improve the service delivery system and the tracking out outcomes. Meredith Barracato mentioned as of recently all the career counselors have Loops access which provides them employment data even if it is with a lag. Meredith mentioned the Workforce 180 case management training, worked based learning training, and supportive service initiatives.

Antonio Rivera mentioned one of the biggest challenges doesn't reflect the client engagement so they can restructure and redefine the data. Antonio reviewed a slide which depicts the performance tracking measure which is tracked six months and one year after exiting the training program.

V. Disabilities Committee Update

Meredith Barracato informed committee members Cyndy Walsh Rintzler was not available to speak because she was pulled away from her desk. Meredith Barracato mentioned since the Disabilities committee was new they are now entering phase three which is to meet in March and begin to tailor the sub-strategies to meet the needs of the population and then develop some action steps towards meeting those goals.

VI. Youth Committee Update

Scott Kuchinsky mentioned some of the sub strategies that have been struggling with the pandemic and mentioned some of the important sub goals is to ensure integration of the partners especially with the AJC. Scott mentioned the goal is to make sure the people within the system know what is available. Scott mentioned there is a focus on ESL needs for OSY youth and the need for those services for that population. Scott stressed the importance of moving away from just having a list and focus more on direct hand off to ensure someone doesn't fall through the cracks with a support system in place. The Chairwoman mentioned she appreciates the work the Youth committee meeting is doing and making sure the youth understand there are services out there for them.

VII. Literacy Committee Update

Julio Sabater mentioned that the Literacy Committee is focusing on a few initiatives to ensure Title II clients understand career options once they overcome their literacy and language barriers. Julio Sabater reference all the initiatives that include the following sub strategies;

- Enhancement of career exploration for Title II clients by partner agency. Sharing of tools-Career/interest Inventory/ IEP/ISS
- Procurement of digital tools, such as laptops and Wi-Fi, for clients to use while in training and job search.
- Distribution of AJC orientation for Title II partners to share with their clients.
- Creation of an AJC WIOA eligibility kit for partners.

VIII. Partner Updates

Meredith Barracato mentioned as a follow up to the committee meetings it's important to continue the discussions, to create sub strategies, and action steps and to formal a plan once the guidance is shared with the SETC.

1. Division of Social Service- Susan Eagle mentioned they are still following COVID protocols so in person services are only for certain emergency services. There is still no guidance in terms of sanction and work activities programs.

2. NJ Department of Labor Employment Services (ES)- NA

3. Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS)- Ed Faver mentioned his program is hiring for staff and they are working on a

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compliance plan and the referrals are up 120 referrals. Not seeing anyone in person all virtual services. Looking for clerical and professional services

4. Simon Youth Academy- Jasmine lee mentioned she has 20 students enrolled but 10 in process of enrolling. Most of their referrals are from previous students.

5. Job Corp- NA

6. Youth Corp (United Way of Greater Union County)- Juanita Vargas mentioned they are working with 2nd cohort of youth and they are actively recruiting for youth. They are also working with the Youth Forward team in assisting clients transition after their program ends. They need to find more services for ESL youth.

7. Union County College- Isaias Rivera mentioned he is recruiting for supply chain management, PCT, etc. They are finalizing an OJT contract with an employer. They are working more towards employer services and have been working with the AJC.

8. America's Small Business Development Center-NA

9. Workforce Advantage- Julio Sabater mentioned they have been able to expand the partnerships with BMI to help individuals with substance abuse issues. They will be doing a lot of IC3 and CNA training. They have started a youth program with 20 youth in their IC3 program with stipends, paid internships and job placements. They will issue laptops to students participating in the IC3 program for them to keep if they complete the program. They have seen great success with the DSS program that allow 80 clients to receive IC3 training program with laptops issued. He is happy to report the AJC has now been issuing class size contracts which streamlined the program.

10. The Family Resource Network- NA

11. The Gateway Family YMCA- Colleen Clayton " *The Gateway Family YMCA has 6 branches and various program locations in Elizabeth, Rahway and Union, which serve Eastern Union County and Northern Middlesex County.*

We continue to provide housing, expand our child care and after school care services, Virtual WISE senior services and traditional YMCA programs each month. We provide financial assistance to the community and accept government subsidy for child care. Our housing programs have incorporated job training and life skills trainings as part of our wrap-around social services and case management.

We offer chronic disease management programs for the community in multiple locations, in English and Spanish focused on Blood Pressure and Diabetes self-management. We also provide CPR, First Aid, AED and

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Lifeguard Training Certification courses, and a complimentary membership for all 7th Grade Students through the 7th Grade Initiative and Leaders Club.

We continue to hire staff for various positions and have an online job application on our website tgfymca.org. Summer Camp registration begins 3/24 and we will be celebrating Healthy Kids Day for the community on 4/30. I'm happy to be connected to all of you and the great work we are all doing to support our community together."

12. Plainfield Public Library (PPL)- Scott Kuchinsky mentioned the PPL GED program has been working with Youth Corp and hope to get people back in the building in early summer. The IC3 program is thriving and have about 225 certificates totaled. Scott mentioned they have had a hard time targeting the Spanish population due to issues with their documentation but their grant allows for some flexibility. He is also hiring Spanish speaking instructors.

Meredith asked committee members to share with her any job postings so she can upload to the drive and email all partners.

13. Union Public Library- NA

14. Bridgeway Career Services- NA

15. Literacy of NJ-NA

16. Easter Seals- NA

17. Workforce 55+ Program- NA

18. Urban League-Reconnections- Cathy Waters mentioned they have been doing well with the Reconnections program. They are still working at their Urban League office which has been going well. They have returned to the Plainfield One Stop Center and have hired someone for that office. They are able to offer clients wrap around services, mentors, and employment services. They will be transitioning back to the Elizabeth One Stop office soon. Similar to the Workforce Advantage they have the recovery grant for individuals with substance abuse program.

19. NJ Reentry Corp- NA

20. Community Services Block Grant- Nicole DeAugustine mentioned they are providing services to individuals under the Community Service Block grant up to 200% of the poverty level. The county is also doing the food distribution events for the rest of the year

21. Housing Authority of City of Elizabeth- LaChelle Thompson mentioned they are doing weekly testing and present a form of ID. They are offering Covid Vaccines and doing a community health fair on April 13th.

22. International Rescue Committee- NA

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23.NJ Department of Labor Coordination & Support- Michael McLean introduced himself and provided an update on returning CWA clients back to the office. He also mentioned the laptop loaner program that the state has available.

24.Elizabeth Development Company-NA

25.Elizabeth Public Library- Nancy Berkenfeld mentioned they have a spanish speaking access navigator staff member who can help people with any questions about resumes, banking, health insurance, etc. For Elizabeth residents only, they have a laptop loaner program. They also have Brain fuse program to build up math and reading skills and practice for the GED program. Nancy asked Meredith if there was someone who could help a client who is in need of legal services. Meredith asked Nancy to connect with Robert and Nasrene regarding supportive services.

IX. Meeting Schedule 2022

Wednesday April 27 th	10:00am
Wednesday June 22 nd	10:00am
Wednesday August 3 rd	10:00am
Wednesday October 19 th	10:00am
Optional Meeting	
Wednesday December 14 th	10:00am

X. COMMITTEE ADJOURNMENT