

UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
DISABILITIES COMMITTEE
Cyndy Walsh Rintzler, CHAIRWOMAN
MEETING MINUTES: TUESDAY, March 15th, 2022 10:00AM

Committee Members

1. Cyndy Walsh Rintzler, Inroads for Opportunities
2. Gino Elmarassy, Union County American Job Center
3. Christine Backiel, Bridgeway Health Career Services
4. Diana Calle, Office for Persons with Disabilities & Special Needs
5. Manny Ramirez, Union County Bureau of ADA Compliance
6. Nasrene Mondol, Union County American Job Center
7. Perle Almeida, Union County American Job Center
8. Ed Faver, NJ Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services
9. Adam Kubler, Project Hire
10. Pamala Mata, Union County American Job Center
11. Samantha Pica, Family Resource Network
12. Dr Lisa Hiscano, Union County College
13. Karen Cimorelli, Union County College

UCWDB Staff

Meredith Barracato

Meeting Summary

- I. **Welcome, Opening Statement, & Introductions:** Chairwoman Walsh Rintzler welcomed everyone to the Disabilities Committee and thanked them for participating.
- II. **Approval of January 11th 2022 Meeting Minutes:** Ed Faver made a motion to approve the January 11th 2022 meeting minutes. Gino Elmarassy seconded the motion.
- III. **Union County College (UCC) Presentation:** Dr Lisa Hiscano reviewed slides regarding the soft skills program. Presentation attached to meeting folder. The following are highlights to the Soft Skills program:
 1. Interpersonal Communication Skills for Your Success
 - Develop interpersonal relations through effective communication skills
 2. Communication Mastery & Workplace Readiness
 - Understand the importance of being accountable in the workplace
 3. Teamwork & Emotional Intelligence
 - Contribute to a team environment and apply different strategies to enhance one's own emotional intelligence

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4. Computer Basics
 - Understand basics of Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel
5. Customer Experience
 - Learn to provide a satisfactory customer experience
6. Creative Time Management & Key Problem-Solving Strategies
 - Prioritize time efficiently and demonstrate an understanding of the importance of critical thinking
7. Online Resources to Prepare for a Job
 - Incorporate modern online job searching techniques on LinkedIn and proven online job search websites
8. Resume, Job Search & Interview Insights
 - Develop a draft resume for various industries and recognize key interview insights and how to answer the most interview questions

Ed Faver asked Dr Hiscano if she could meet with his staff sometime in the future to discuss the services. Dr Hiscano mentioned she would be glad to meet with his team. Meredith Barracato mentioned anyone who is interested in taking part of the soft skills course needs to be certified by the AJC and that could be coordinated between the AJC, DVRS, and UCC.

IV. Office for Persons with Disabilities & Special Needs: Diana Calle discussed the program and shared with everyone information on an upcoming event on April 9th with the Red Bulls. Diana Calle said since April is Autism awareness her department will be planning a special event on April 2nd. Diana briefly discussed the collaboration with the AJC on a job fair in October for individuals with disabilities.

V. Department of Labor Updates: Meredith Barracato reviewed slides regarding Union County labor market trends based on job postings. Meredith Barracato highlighted the trend in companies listing soft skills. Meredith Barracato presented information from nTIDE regarding the employment rates.

VI. Sub-Strategies Review: Meredith Barracato discussed the strategic plan and the various sub-strategies that were discussed in the last meeting. The Chairwoman asked for feedback to committee members to provide suggestions regarding the sub strategies.

1. **Further, enhance existing partnerships with the business and education specifically addressing the educational and skill requirements for those defined in WIOA as hard**

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to serve populations.

The Chairwoman mentioned she would like to focus on soft skills because it is part of the hiring and retaining employment goals. Based on the feedback from committee members the following sub-strategy was tailored to the needs of the population. Adam Kubler mentioned the job retention skills would be very helpful for businesses to supply even outside of the standard services organizations like his provide. Adam Kubler gave an example of someone who would like to advance within a supermarket but will need soft skills to move from one position to another.

Meredith Barracato asked if any committee members have done employer surveys to understand the needs of the employer. Adam Kubler mentioned his organization has tried but have been having varying results.

Adam Kubler mentioned the soft skills class they offer their clients isn't as detailed as UCC does but one thing they have needed to focus on is the proper use of social media like LinkedIn vs Facebook and safety concerns. Ed Faver mentioned he read an article about employers using social media as a filter not to hire candidates. Adam Kubler added there is a need to educate individuals to set social media to private to avoid those problems. Pam Mata asked if this would be a problem if the social media account is private. She added it's important that everyone keeps social media private. Adam added that is part of the challenge when trying to teach people these things when its part of social impulses to post everything online everyone can see. Nasrene Mondol mentioned employers will look at social media to see the candidate's true views on things but people don't know when things are going to be viewed inappropriately. Ed Faver says NJDOL views social media as an extension of the workplace and what you would not say at an employer site then you should not post it on social media.

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Meredith Barracato asked if there is a need to have repeated discussions with the individuals at the beginning of the hiring process or throughout the employment. The Chairwoman, Adam Kubler, and Ed Faver mentioned there is a need to repeat the conversation often and ongoing.

Updated Sub- Strategy: Enhance existing partnerships with educational entities to address the frequent soft skills development for individuals with disabilities and frequent need throughout the individual's employment to ensure retention.

2. Continue to engage employers, industry leaders, and public officials broaden the training and service alignment with additional regional Key Industries/Sectors.

Pam Mata mentioned the AJC and the Office of Special Needs are planning a Disability job fair in October. She asked for referrals from committee members that are interested in finding a job. She added the AJC is looking to have workshops that cover topics like interview skills, resume writing, etc. prior to job fairs for candidates to ace the interview process. The AJC will have job fairs in the upcoming months with IKEA, Walgreens, the Port Authority. Meredith Barracato asked where can committee members learn more about the job fairs since anyone can apply to these jobs. Pam Mata mentioned people can go to the UCNJ.org website for more information. Adam Kubler mentioned that its important to educate employers that often the tradition interview or job setting isn't always the best way to see client strengths. It's important to exposes employers to other ways to interview clients. He suggested employers can see if someone is right for the job by doing a try out, a video, or letting someone prepare for the interview questions before the interview. Pam Mata thanked Adam Kubler for the feedback and suggested having additional discussions on how to support individuals with Disabilities. Meredith Barracato mentioned The Family Resource Network is looking to do an Employer forum to understand the needs of the individual and how their skills align with the job.

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Updated Sub- Strategy: Engage employers and industry leaders to broaden the training and service alignment with additional regional Key Industries/Sectors.

3. Staff Cross Training to increase full under- standing of processes and services.

Meredith Barracato informed the committee members based on the feedback the previous sub strategy was updated to reflect the following.

Updated Sub- Strategy: Employer Training to increase full understanding of individual needs of population .

Nasrene Mondol mentioned the committee should consider reaching out to companies who focus on diversity and Inclusion and discuss the AJC initiatives with them and inform them how there are employer needs that could be met with these initiatives.

4. New Sub-Strategy: Reconsider traditional job interviews, educate employers on different ways to hire job candidates with reasonable interview accommodations.

5.

Meredith Barracato mentioned to the Chairwoman that due to the error in scheduling the meeting from two hours to one, they will need to save the additional sub strategies for the following meeting. Meredith Barracato added the committee member updates will also need to be brief since committee members have been logging off at the one-hour mark.

VII. Committee Member Updates:

American Job Center- Nasrene Mondol discussed the Workforce Learning Link and asked committee members to refer to her clients who are interested in upgrading their skills.

VIII. Meeting Schedule 2022: The following information was shared in a slide.

- **Tuesday May 3rd 10:00am**
- **Optional Meeting Date Thursday June 9th 10:00am**
- **Thursday July 7th 10:00am**
- **Thursday September 8th 10:00am**
- **Thursday November 3rd 10:00am**

IX. Committee Adjournment: