

UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
YOUTH COMMITTEE
SCOTT KUCHINSKY, CHAIRMAN
Wednesday, March 30th, 2022 10:00AM Via Zoom
MEETING MINUTES

Committee Members

1. Scott Kuchinsky - Committee Chair, Plainfield Public Library
2. Cathy Hart- HACE (Elizabeth Housing Authority)
3. Susana Mateo, Elizabeth Public Schools K-8
4. Nasrene Mondol, American Job Center
5. Jasmine Lee, Simon Youth Academy
6. Elizabeth Ramos Union County College
7. Ayesha Howard, Plainfield Public School
8. Juanita Vargas, United Way of Greater Union County
9. LaChelle Thompson, Elizabeth Housing Authority
10. Paul Arboleda, Boxwood Learning Center
11. Alyssa Milanes, NAF Program Coordinator, Elizabeth Public Schools
12. Kelly Smith, Elizabeth Development Company
13. Marie Chase, Boxwood Learning Center
14. Juanito Chiluisa, NJDOL Employment Services
15. Jackie Santiago, Department of Human Services

UCWDB Staff

Meredith Barracato

Meeting Summary

I. Welcome and Introductions

Chairman Kuchinsky welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked if everyone could add their name and organization in the Zoom screen.

II. Review and approval of the January 19th, 2022 Minutes Committee Meeting minutes:

A motion was made by Lachelle Thompson and seconded by Elizabeth Ramos. Motion carried.

III. Youth Forward Presentation-

Jackie Santiago reviewed the presentation for the Youth Forward team. Presentation attached to meeting minutes. Jackie Santiago did a brief overview of the Youth Forward orientation which listed the program goal, enrollment requirements, and services offered. Some of the services offered are the following:

- Tutoring
- GED/High School Diploma
- Paid/unpaid work experience

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- On the job education and training
- Leadership training
- Mentoring
- Supportive Services

Susana Mateo asked how long would the process take to enroll in the Youth Forward program and how long can they be enrolled. Jackie Santiago mentioned the student can enroll in a number of elements that can last a few weeks to a few months. She mentioned that after a youth is exited from the program the Youth Forward team will conduct follow up for an additional 12 months. She added the enrollment process can take about three weeks.

Juanita Vargas asked about the work experience and what the process looks like. Jackie mentioned the Youth Forward program contracts with Community Access Unlimited (CAU) and they have sites throughout the county. Some of the worksite includes 5 Below, Jersey Lanes, Tax office, and CAU locations. The youth can work 20 hours a week for \$13.00 an hour. Juanita asked if the employer was paying the youth salary? Jackie mentioned CAU was paying the youth's salary. She added the goal is for the employer to keep the youth even after the work experience is over. Juanita asked to explain more about the tutoring program. Jackie mentioned Youth Forward is working with CAU who is contracting with Boxwood to provide those services.

Susana Mateo asked if there is a cut off time when they are taking new students. Jackie Santiago mentioned since the contract ends in June students should enroll as soon as possible to receive services.

Juanito Chiluisa asked if there were any jobs site in Cranford or Kenilworth? Jackie Santiago mentioned there weren't but she could let CAU know so they can look into establishing job sites.

IV. Boxwood Learning Center Presentation

Marie Chase from review a presentation for the services from Boxwood Learning Center. Marie showed a slideshow that was developed by Paul Arboleda who is a youth client. Marie mentioned Boxwood has a contract with the Youth Service Commission and Youth Forward to offer services to out of school youth. The following are some of the services Boxwood offers to its students:

- Post-secondary support/technical school enrollment.
- Independent living skills workshops

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- Mentoring
- Tutoring
- GED Testing

Marie Chase asked Paul Arboleda a few questions to get a better understanding of what were some of the support or experiences he received from Boxwood such as employment opportunities, life skills, and financial literacy. Paul Arboleda is now a peer mentor for new students. Meredith Barracato asked Paul Arboleda what he wanted to do in the future. Paul said he didn't know what he wanted to do in the future but he is currently enrolled in an apprenticeship program.

V. Elizabeth Development Corporation (EDC):

Kelly Smith discussed EDCs programs that assist students in enrolling in various technical job training programs such as handyman, programs in construction trades, and CDL training program. In addition to the training they will provide job placement, record expungement, and will pay for licenses for their students.

Juanita Vargas asked if Kelly Smith would be available to do a presentation for the youth in United Way of Greater Union County program and if the youth need to have a diploma or GED to enroll in the program. Mr. Smith mentioned he does information sessions throughout the state and to enroll the youth need to have a diploma or GED. Meredith Barracato asked if EDC works with any unions or have any other initiatives aside from the Women in Construction program. Mr. Smith mentioned they are in talks with various union groups and have a few new programs in development. Mr. Smith added after someone finishes the program they will work with them until they find a job.

VI. WIOA 14 Program Elements:

Meredith Barracato discussed the WIOA 14 Program Elements and asked committee members to offer feedback on programs that offer the services. Meredith Barracato discussed the various program elements and categorized the elements into three groups that focus on the following;

- Educational Development
- Professional Development
- Personal Development

Committee members shared the various programs that offer the program elements. The list of suggestions is in the attached presentation.

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Meredith Barracato review the Partner Resource Google Drive File which has information on the various partner programs, labor market information, and community resources.

VII. Sub Strategies Update: The Chairman decided to table the sub strategy discussion for the upcoming meeting.

VIII. Meeting Schedule 2022:

- a. Wednesday May 25th, 10:00am
- b. **Optional Meeting Date Wednesday June 15th, 2022**
- c. Wednesday July 20th 10:00am
- d. Wednesday September 28th 10:00am
- e. Thursday December 8th 10:00am

IX. COMMITTEE ADJOURNMENT

Before the meeting ended Juanita Vargas mentioned United Way of Greater Union County is recruiting for their Youth Corp program. The Chairman reminded the committee members to please reach out to him with any questions.