

**Union County Workforce Development Board
Literacy Committee Meeting
Administration Building - 4th Floor Large Conference Room
10:00 AM October 19, 2018**

Committee Members Present

Julio Sabater, President Workforce Advantage (Chair)
Antonio Rivera, Director UCWDB
Barbara Hathaway, Literacy NJ
Marlene Loff, Union County College
Scott Kuchinsky, Plainfield Public Library
Yunia Labaut, Workforce Advantage
Jeffrey Jackson, American Job Center

Staff

Elizabeth Paskewich, UCWDB
Robert Rachlin, UCWDB

Meeting Summary

1. Prior to the beginning of the meeting Antonio Rivera stated that UCWDB Chairman Dominguez had appointed Julio Sabater as chairman of the Adult Literacy Committee.
2. The meeting was called to order at 10:05 AM by Committee Chairman Sabater.
3. Mr. Sabater thanked everyone and was honored to participate as chair of the Literacy Committee. He added, "As chair, I see myself trying to lead some discussion with all the members, especially the committee in a free discussion of the issues." He further stated that he would like to set the tone for the committee. He mentioned that based on the State, Federal Government, and local WDB there are certain options. There are some changes taking place. Some are already aware of them and some will soon be aware. The focus of the committee will be seeking solutions to deal with the challenges that lie ahead. He then asked for those present to introduce themselves as well as to speak of any expectations they might have.
4. Marlene Loff declared that her expectations are to service our population in Union County. She also said that there are many adult learners that need services. They need High School Diplomas not just English Language proficiency.
5. Scott Kuchinsky cited that Plainfield Public Library as one of the high school literacy test sites in Union County. They have GED, ESL and digital

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literacy components that are connected to all training staff. Additionally, the library has 2 state funded programs for providing career services and has been connected to state and local literacy programs for the last 5 or 6 years.

6. Yunia Labaut's objective is to help our population achieve their goals as much as we can.
7. Barbara Hathaway's agency provides ESL and HSET instruction and her goal is to serve our students as best as we can.
8. Antonio Rivera stated that his goal is to help the subparts of the system connect to the whole. "That's where clients get lost. They need to have an effective employment plan and career path." He also mentioned that we need to connect all the pieces to improve participant's lives.
9. Chairman Sabater spoke of how he has been providing services since 1988. He has been on the State Employment and Training Commission for many years and hopes to bring ideas from this committee to the state level. He then mentioned that this is an introductory meeting and many agenda items will carry over into the future. He then asked Mr. Rivera for an synopsis of the committee.
10. Antonio Rivera spoke of how he and Julio put together the agenda. He stated that the agenda was an overview for the next year. It is an introduction for what is forecast for the next year as well as anything else that may need to be tackled. He then went on to provide brief descriptions of the first 8 pages of the agenda focusing on the important points of each page. He accentuated the need for the partners to put all the pieces together. He also spoke of how Title I and Title II clients must be connected via the partners. Furthermore, he addressed the shortcomings that the One Stops and AJC may be viewed as having. "We need to know how strong or weak we are. We need an open dialogue so that we can move forward."
11. Mr. Sabater spoke of the One Stop's need to serve different integrated populations in a seamless fashion. It might be an agenda item in the future.
12. Mr. Kuchinsky addressed the fact that he is required to use 2 different reporting systems, ASOS and LACES. There appears to be a duplication of services. He went on to state that we need a universal way to see what

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each portion is doing. He mentioned the need for a good way to move information around and the need to follow state protocols makes it difficult. Additionally, communication is weak. There are problems between providers as far as record sharing. He stressed how duplication of services between providers is the number one problem. We need to have a better way of moving information around. He also mentioned that by having to use various protocols, the state found him in violation. He also mentioned privacy issues may be a deterrent in sharing information as well as the need for waivers.

13. Mr. Rivera responded to him. He noted that WDB is cognizant of these facts. ASOS is not the best system. There are issues with what the State Government requires as opposed to the Federal Government. The WDB has charged the AJC with finding cloud based software for which it will provide the funding. He also acknowledged that if this were accomplished, there could be a universal intake form. This way everyone will have access to secure data.
14. Mr. Kuchinsky commented that If we can track things, it will be worth it.
15. Mr. Rivera spoke about NJFORMS. He stated that they receive the download from ASOS and tweak it. The potential to integrate data is there. There can be a case management career path focus that everyone can have access to. He stressed the need to protect confidentiality.
16. Chairman Sabater stressed the commitment for continuous improvement. He recognized the need to be able to accurately measure accomplishments. Sharing information is paramount. It is a challenge.
17. Mr. Rivera remarked that the software company we are in discussion with currently provides the required services in other states. The system will be cloud based and secure.
18. Mr. Rivera spoke of the need for systemic integration of Title I and Title II. He went on to discuss the "dashboard" which appears in the agenda, paying particular notice to the fact that 80.6 per cent placement is required for all clients. Again, he noted how integration of all systems is vital. If partners don't work together, there will not be an 80 per cent success rate. Tab 1 on the dashboard refers to reportable individuals i.e. someone who merely asks for information. Tab 2 refers to those who take the next step as participants. Tab 3 applies to what happens after 12 to 18

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months as well as exits. You may still assist them. It is related to core indicators. Partners have an obligation to those who exit and seek other services. Mr. Rivera continued to focus on required goals and objectives. He realizes that not everyone can achieve the required standards. The ultimate goal is for the AJC have the aggregate achieve those standards. There is the issue of someone exiting without being employed. We must continue to offer services. Partners need to make sure if a client is leaving your shop without being employed they should be moving to another activity. The partners are not in competition with each other. Everything is outcome driven.

19. Chairman Sabater stated if a person disappears, eventually the system will consider them an exit. The One Stop must keep engaging them so they will not.
20. Marlene Loff discussed the need to advance students from low beginner to high intermediate so they may qualify for courses or even go on to college. UCC has created a referral system of which the One Stop is part of.
21. Jeffrey Jackson spoke of the importance of starting off with a well communicated service plan whose language is understood by all parties. The hope is for one to advance academically to move forward to an ITA.
22. Scott Kuchinsky spoke of the problem of losing participants along the way, not at an end point. He also indicated that supportive services are lacking. He mentioned the need to have more funding for those services. He also indicated that those services should be on site.
23. Mr. Rivera replied there is \$200,000.00 that is intended for support services most of which remains unspent. He feels that this is a result of poor communication.
24. Scott acknowledged that his agency received \$30,000.00 from the state that remains unspent. He feels that they are losing participants due to lack of onsite child care.
25. Ms. Loff feels that a major problem pertaining to child care is the need for certification. She has concluded that those in need of child care prefer to use someone they are familiar with. Consequently, they are not using services.

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26. At that point there was a great deal of back and forth with Ms. Loff, Mr. Kuchinsky, Chairman Sabater and Antonio Rivera. With there being no requirement to have a Social Security Number to use Title II services both Ms. Loff and Mr. Kuchinsky are of the opinion that participants are not using Title I services. In particular, Mr. Kuchinsky feels that in the current climate in this country people are afraid to use SSN's and will ultimately lose out on services. Both Chairman Sabater and Mr. Rivera feel that we can't get caught up in cases that are hard to serve. It will take up a great deal of discussion and that we need to focus on overall vision. As a matter of fact, Mr. Rivera stated that most cases don't fall into this category.
27. Mr. Rivera spoke of how the AJC failed in 5 performance indicators. While Ms. Loff spoke of the successes of Union County College's literacy programs, Mr. Rivera spoke of a big delta that exists between UCC and AJC. This chasm needs to be bridged. The individual successes of sub parts are not being translated into system successes. He repeated the importance of connecting the pieces. He also mentioned we have more resources at our disposal than we realize. Again, he stated that the success of one partner does not translate into success as a whole.
28. Mr. Kuchinsky spoke of how they do refer clients to the One Stop. However, he feels that most are turned off by the One Stop and don't wish to return.
29. Mr. Rivera agreed that the One Stop has a perception problem in the community.
30. Mr. Kucinsky stated he felt case load at the One Stop is a problem. As a result, he has a difficult time in "selling" the services that the One Stop provides. He has made repeated attempts to have clients who have already been to the One Stop to return there. He has never been successful.
31. Again Mr. Rivera referred to the "branding crisis". He repeated the need for an online system as well as affiliate sites. He feels that exploiting the positive image that non-government agencies possess and using them as affiliate sites can be a positive step. More training opportunities would be available if we may have someone from the One Stop available at satellite locations on a regular basis.

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32. Chairman Sabater stated the need to map out the process connecting the whole system. We can look at the transitions and overcome the barriers that exist. We need long term solutions.
33. Mr. Rivera turned discussed the State's DOL performance goals for Title I and Title III. He specifically mentioned how the focus is now on job retention and what is required. He focused on supportive services that are available to participants. You can have someone exit the system and still take advantage of supportive services to help them be successful. If not properly referred to another system, the potential for a drop off exists which will project poorly on the partners. "How do you balance out the need for employment with the need to improve literacy skills?"
34. At this point the meeting was turned over to Chairman Sabater to discuss literacy skills. The Chairman spoke of the barriers that need to be addressed by the committee in order to ensure that goals are met.
35. Mrs. Loff and Mr. Kuchinsky repeated some of their previously stated concerns. In particular, they were concerned as to how clients learn of the availability of supportive services. Mr. Jackson spoke of how he can help with making clients aware of them.
36. Mr. Kucinsky feels clients are not aware that the Plainfield Public Library and the One Stop are separate from each other.
37. Mr. Rivera recommended Mr. Kuchinsky should be added to the AJC Committee in light of the fact that many of his concerns can be addressed by that committee.
38. The Chairman again stated that future committee meetings need to have a more systematic way of discussing things.
39. Mr. Rivera mentioned we have the resources and give consultants the specific tasks that the WDB does not have the time to attain on a daily basis. "We can direct and guide the consultants. We need to look at and discuss the data and come up with a new literacy plan in the next 6 months."
40. A brief discussion as to what the consultants can bring to the table followed. Ms. Loff spoke as to how IET programs are very rewarding. No longer will ESL or GED be done first, they will be done simultaneously. The

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state is extremely pleased with Union County. UCC's consortium had C N A as well as Microsoft Word and Excel.

41. Chairman Sabater commented as to how a lot of questions are not being resolved on the state level. The state is looking into how data may be shared.
42. Mr. Rivera asked for committee members put their concerns into writing and he would forward them to Group I & I for consideration. He then proposed scheduling a meeting with Group I & I, Chairman Sabater and himself to discuss those items that require immediate attention.
43. After a few brief remarks Chairman Sabater adjourned the meeting.
44. Verbatim dialogue is available through recording.