

UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
AMERICAN JOB CENTER PARTNER COMMITTEE
KRYSTAL CANADY, CHAIRWOMAN
MEETING MINUTES: WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 1ST 2021 10:00AM

Committee Members

1. Krystal Canady - Committee Chairwoman, The Gateway Family YMCA
2. Perle Almeida, American Job Center
3. Cathy Hart, Elizabeth Housing Authority
4. Tina Lopez, Division of Social Service
5. Colleen Clayton, The Gateway Family YMCA
6. Robert Croom, American Job Center
7. Cathy Waters, Urban League
8. Christine Backiel, Bridgeway Services
9. Lisa Hiscano, Union County College
10. Gino Elmarassy, American Job Center
11. Jasmine Lee, Simon Youth Academy
12. Kim Best- Parris, Youth Forward
13. Marilucy Lopes, Union County Mental Health Administrator
14. Herb Caesar, NJSBDC
15. Juanita Vargas, Union Way of Greater Union County
16. Michael McLean, NJDOL WFNJ & SNAP
17. Pamela Mata, American Job Center
18. Ed Faver, Division of Rehabilitation Services

UCWDB Staff

Meredith Barracato

Meeting Summary

- I. Welcome and Introductions:**
Chairwoman Canady welcomed everyone to the last AJC Partner's meeting of the year.
- II. Review and approval of October 5th 2021 Meeting minutes:**
Motion was made by Colleen Clayton to approve the October 5th 2021 Committee Meeting Minutes. Cathy Waters provided the second motion. Motion was carried.
- III. Review of Sub-Strategy Recommendations:**
Meredith Barracato reviewed slides that focused on the sub-strategies discussed in the previous meetings. Meredith Barracato referenced a news article from The Hill ***American Job Centers Are Important To The Nation's Recovery***, which supports the committee's request to redefine the role of the Union County American Job Center. The article dated

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September 21, 2020, discussed the need to retrain and upskill the labor force. Meredith Barracato mentioned that this was in line with the

committee's goals to view the challenges facing the labor market into opportunities in redefining the workforce. The new proposed sub-strategies are the following:

- ▶ Redefine the role of American Job Center to meet the needs of the emerging hybrid workforce environment- virtual workforce, gig economy, increase automation
- ▶ Expand staff cross training to include All AJC Network partners on new technologies, procedures/processes, and resources.
- ▶ Expand cross training to AJC Network partners on changes to state and federal regulations

Tina Lopez asked how the strategic plan supports the new initiatives of redefining the roles, obtaining the data to make changes, and what some action steps are. Meredith Barracato mentioned that aside from using the NJDOL data on current trends, the partners will be using survey feedback from job seekers and employers. Meredith Barracato asked Pam Mata to discuss some AJC business unit initiatives. Pam Mata discussed the various strategies such as conducting job fairs and following up with the job seekers and employers to ensure the business unit understand what is needed and no information falls through the crack. Pam Mata added that her team is also trying to understand how to use UCWORKS more to utilize it more when working with clients. Meredith Barracato added that it's vital for the partners to use UCWORKS as well when working with their clients.

The following sub-strategies were reviewed which discussed the need for enhanced partner coordination.

- ▶ Identify partners, services/resources, and the cost for those services
- ▶ Establish an MOU/contract/purchase order with new partners
- ▶ Provide training to all partner staff on the new systems, referral process, and database
- ▶ Create a baseline educational strategy among all the partners
- ▶ Create an interagency referral mechanism and streamlined referral process
- ▶ Make client information (jackets) available to partners

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Meredith Barracato discussed the committee's interest in providing supportive services and increasing awareness to the community of all supportive services available to clients. The committee has agreed on the importance of providing clients with Supportive Services to overcome their barriers.

- ▶ Update supportive service policy (WDB 2017-09)
- ▶ Cross train AJC Network partners to increase awareness of supportive services
- ▶ Streamline supportive services referral process
- ▶ Conduct supportive service inventory
- ▶ Provide supportive service agencies space at AJC Job Fairs
- ▶ Leverage partner resources to provide "wraparound" services to help participants overcome barriers to employment, education, and training to complete programs

Perle Almeida mentioned that community service partners would be able to share their information with AJC staff to share it at AJC events such as job fairs if they are not available to attend the events.

Meredith Barracato discussed that the outreach strategies that the committee has agreed on are a high priority.

- ▶ Develop a strategy around community awareness opportunities and outreach to new organizations
- ▶ Market training opportunities and career pathways in high demand occupations
- ▶ Create centralized Job seeker/Resource database (Google Doc)
- ▶ Create an evening resource fair for clients who can't navigate the various systems
- ▶ Expand cross training to partners on new technology such as UC Works, Skills Up New Jersey, etc
- ▶ Implement quarterly targeted employer and job seeker satisfaction surveys

The Chairwoman asked Meredith Barracato when the committee would be able to finalize the sub-strategies. Meredith Barracato mentioned that once the formal guidance is issued from the SETC, meetings with all the committees will be held to finalize the recommended sub-strategies for submission to the state.

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Meredith Barracato asked Michael Mclean from NJDOL if he could share any information regarding the strategic plan. Michael McLean mentioned that he does not have any information at this point.

The Chairwoman asked if the AJC had hired a new Director. Perle Almeida mentioned that Division Director Debbie Ann Anderson would share the news of the new Director at the December 8th Workforce Development Board meeting.

The Chairwoman mentioned she is excited about the new strategies because it allows everyone to be focused on the changes and ensures residents who are not working can go to the AJC centers to receive services. The Chairwoman asked if the AJC is open for services. Robert Croom mentioned that the centers are not open for in-person services but will soon open for appointment-only services.

All previous and proposed sub-strategies are included in the presentation attached to the meeting minutes and will be shared with all committee members. The objective of the sub-strategies is for the partners to ensure clients do not get lost within the referral process.

IV: Meeting Schedule 2022:

The meeting schedule for 2022 will be shared with all committee members after the Workforce Development Board meetings on December 8th.

V. COMMITTEE ADJOURMENT