

UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD  
LITERACY COMMITTEE  
JULIO SABATER CHAIRMAN  
MEETING MINUTES: TUESDAY, October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021 10:00am

**Committee Members**

1. Julio Sabater- Committee Chair, Workforce Advantage
2. Yunia Labaut, Workforce Advantage
3. Scott Kuchinsky, Plainfield Public Library
4. Marlene Moreira Loff, Union County College
5. Dr. Lyle Moseley, Elizabeth Board of Education
6. Perle Almeida, Union County American Job Center
7. Jas Verem, International Rescue Committee
8. Nasrene Mondol, American Job Center
9. Debbie Walter, Union Public Library
10. Robert Croom, American Job Center

**UCWDB Staff**

Meredith Barracato  
Antonio Rivera  
Carolina Marin

**Meeting Summary**

**I. Welcome and Introductions:** Chairman Sabater welcomed everyone to the meeting. All committee members introduced themselves and provided some background on their work experience.

**II. Review and Approval of the August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2021 Meeting Minutes:**  
Perle Almeida made a motion to approve the August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2021, and Jas Verem seconded the meeting minutes. Motion carried.

**III. Labor Market Information:**

Meredith Barracato reviewed slides that focused on the Union County labor market from September 2021 (see attachment) and the fastest growing and declining jobs. Meredith Barracato also reviewed additional information on certifications in demand, cities with the most job openings, unemployment claims reports, and information on software and programming skills in greatest demand.

Marlene Loff asked if the state has a 2021 In-demand Occupation list because in the past Administrative Jobs were taken off the demand job list. Antonio Rivera mentioned that the slides show the skills needed by employers close to real-time. The state is not reacting to updating the training in-demand list for real-time hiring skills, but that does not mean that Union.

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County can't respond to that need for strategic planning purposes, and locally Union County is responding to the needs of the employers.

Chairman Sabater highlighted that the most significant demand for growing occupations is in the healthcare and mathematical field. He added that home health aides and personal care aides are included in the CNA field. Marlene Loff added that all the Allied Health Field should be included in the in-demand list, especially in Union County with all the medical occupations.

Dr. Lyle Moseley asked if the information is factoring in the upcoming infrastructure bill? Antonio Rivera mentioned that the slide is the latest information and is a projection of what's happening now. However, once the infrastructure bill is finalized, the project will change significantly in the technology field. There will be a significant shift to technology and automation, and it's essential to build a workforce to transition the local workforce.

#### **IV. Review of Strategic Plan Sub-Strategy:**

Meredith Barracato opened up the discussion to review the information committee members entered as part of sub-strategy #42 Strengthen connections between adult education, postsecondary education, and workforce will be strengthened, including expanded access to stackable credentials with co-enrollment between WIOA Title I and II Programs. Chairman Sabater questioned if it was necessary to go through the partner's enrollment process. Marlene Loff mentioned that each grant requires certain items to enroll clients in the program, so a uniform enrollment would not be feasible. Meredith Barracato explained the need to understand the enrollment process for all partners so UCWDB can create a co-enrollment policy and provide guidance for a smooth enrollment. Scott Kuchinsky mentioned it would be a good idea to have a similar cover sheet with uniformity to assist with the ease of the enrollment process.

Marlene Loff mentioned that a few years ago, Union County College held a professional development day in which her staff was trained on the services of the AJC. This information would allow for her staff to speak to the clients about the AJC. Marlene said that all of the evening students could not take off from their part-time jobs to meet with someone due to conflicts in schedules.

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Chairman Sabater added that it's necessary to know the new eligibility requirements for the AJC so the partners like his organization can do the work to prepare the client for the certification process. It's essential to create a kit of documents and forms so providers can assist in helping the students, considering the language barrier.

Antonio Rivera stated there needs to be a two-way highway with open borders with the partners. He added that this could only be done if the partners understood the various programs. There needs to be a system for clients who come to the AJC who are not eligible for services but can be referred to and for partners to refer eligible clients back to the AJC for services. He reminded everyone that Federal law does not allow the AJC to provide clients without a social security number. The goal is to assist those clients who are eligible at the AJC with occupational opportunities.

Marlene Loff discussed the current referral system for clients and demonstrated a few slides that show the college's referral process. Chairman Sabater agreed that the form should still be updated and used for all referrals. Marlene Loff mentioned that the Department of Labor used data matching with the clients in the Laces software, but now the college is required to do that function.

Antonio Rivera emphasized creating a team-based approach when servicing clients and focusing on collaboration and wrap-around services. The exchange of information from partners needs to be established at every part of the client's pathway. Move away from the term of referral of clients to transferring clients among partners. Marlene Loff mentioned it would be great for the Title II partners to provide information to the AJC on the IET programs because many students want to get the ESL portion but do not get the ESL training and occupational training.

Chairman Sabater asked if some of the recommendations could be implemented now versus waiting until the strategic plan is completed. Antonio Rivera mentioned that the committee could implement recommendations, but reviewing the current strategic plan sub-strategies needs to be reviewed and updated. Antonio Rivera added that the committee should also consider thinking about digital literacy needs and the language barrier needs.

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Antonio Rivera mentioned the need to integrate what the partners expected outcomes are. We need to communicate and collaborate to ensure that clients are offered additional supportive service supports instead of training. If the client is eligible and certified, AJC can provide WIOA funding under supportive services. Dual enrollment does not just mean training; it could be supportive services to fill in the gaps for the client.

Marlene Loff mentioned there used to be interagency training. She suggested having a quarterly meeting to discuss the clients and exchange information about the client. Antonio Rivera mentioned the partners could have an interagency client transfer, and the AJC can support its partners with various systems such as Loops which will give them access to a client's employment history. Marlene Loff will look into opening up UCC's professional development session to the committee members.

Nasrene Mondol added that there are currently systems with partners where reliable communications and clients don't fall through the cracks by establishing these procedures and point persons. She informed the committee member's partners could use the virtual one-stop system on UC Works, which allows partners to view information/status updates on the clients. Chairman Sabater asked Nasrene if the AJC could create a referral kit. Nasrene said it would be more efficient to use the virtual one-stop system. Nasrene offered to train the partners on how to use the UC Works.

As part of the discussions with the AJC, Antonio Rivera added that the goal is to offer wrap-around services and a team-based approach. Chairman Sabater agreed.

The following are the recommendations that the Committee suggested for consideration to the strategic plan sub-strategies;

- Expand staff cross-training to include Literacy Committee members to increase understanding of partner agency processes and services.
- Creation of a training on the features and benefits of UCWORKS, the AJC Virtual One Stop system.
- Disbursement of English and Spanish AJC orientation for client review.

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- Creation of an AJC WIOA eligibility kit for partners.
- Identification of common enrollment elements for streamlined referrals.
- Development of a universal referral mechanism with basic enrollment information to accompany the client.
- Identification of program liaison for interagency referrals.
- Formal creation of procedures for interagency referrals.
- Creation of a training on the interagency referral process.
- Enhancement of career exploration for Title II clients by partner agency.
- Consider the adoption of a quarterly interagency meeting to review client progress and needs to facilitate successful outcomes.
- Develop a process to offer wrap-around services for WIOA eligible clients. Identify lead agency for case management purposes.
- Integrate an outcome measure that can identify services needed to ensure a success.
- Consider the creation of class size contracts.
- Develop Title II exit procedures.
- Consider the expansion of AJC office hours to accommodate client work/school schedules.

## **V. Next Meeting**

- a. **Tuesday November 16<sup>th</sup> 10:00am**

## **VI. COMMITTEE ADJOURNMENT**