

UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
DISABILITIES COMMITTEE
Cyndy Walsh Rintzler, CHAIRWOMAN
MEETING MINUTES: TUESDAY, January 11TH, 2022 10:00AM

Committee Members

1. Cyndy Walsh Rintzler, Inroads for Opportunities
2. Gino Elmarassy, Union County American Job Center
3. Robert Croom, Union County American Job Center
4. Nasrene Mondol, Union County American Job Center
5. Ed Faver, NJ Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services
6. Sandie Lynch, Community Access Unlimited
7. Samantha Pica, Family Resource Network
8. Jaime Caruso, Family Resource Network
9. Christine Backiel, Bridgeway Health Career Services

UCWDB Staff

Meredith Barracato

Meeting Summary

- I. **Welcome and Opening Statement:** Chairwoman Walsh Rintzler welcomed everyone to the second Disabilities Committee and thanked them for participating.
- II. **Approval of October 12th Meeting Minutes:** Robert Croom made a motion to approve the October 12th meeting minutes. Samantha Pica seconded the motion.
- III. **Disability & Employment Boot Camp:** Meredith Barracato discussed a statewide initiative that provides technical instruction, project-based learning, and customized coaching, the teams explored challenges employers and individuals with disabilities encountered when seeking meaningful employment. A video regarding the training initiative was shown which focused on the following steps.
 1. Properly identify your design challenge sets the stage for how the design thinking process will help you build needed solutions.
 2. Get inspired by the people you're serving, start by listening to people to get new ideas about how to design for them.
 3. Synthesizing involves identifying patterns and surprising insights to inspire new opportunities for design while ideating involves brainstorming new ways to serve your customers.

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4. Prototyping involves trying out ideas your team has agreed to move forward with following Ideation. It also involves the iterative process of getting feedback from customers so that you can revise prototypes developed and continue collecting feedback for improvement
5. After putting your prototype to the test and collecting the feedback needed to help develop the final form of your solution comes the implementation phase.

Chairwoman Walsh Rintzler mentioned it is just as important for the employer to feel engaged in the process to ensure retention of the participant. She added its important to get the foot in the door and the partnership expands. Meredith Barracato mentioned NJDOL have been looking for more collaboration between DVRS and the AJCs are important and should move forward with some concrete goals. Meredith Barracato mentioned the links to the videos and resources have in the meeting presentation.

IV. Strategic Plan: Meredith Barracato mentioned the SETC has not provided formal guidance but have provided informal feedback on how program have worked through COVID19 and what strategies will be staying. Meredith Barracato review the six strategic plan goals and then discussed each individual strategy. The following are recommendations Disabilities Committee members agree should be the focus for the strategic plan;

1. SS-1 Further, enhance existing partnerships with the business and education specifically addressing the educational and skill requirements for those defined in WIOA as hard to serve populations.
2. SS-2 Continue to engage employers, industry leaders, and public officials broaden the training and service alignment with additional regional key Industries/Sectors.
3. SS-7 Staff Cross Training to increase full understanding of processes and services
4. SS-10 Begin strategy to increase Soft Skill Training to this population
5. SS-10 Begin strategy to increase Soft Skill Training to this population
6. SS-23 The expansion of a Business Services Representatives team to facilitate the connections between employers and the One-Stop Career Center and the Workforce Innovation Business Center.

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Chairwoman Walsh Rintzler mentioned it would be important to add a goal directly relating to business partnership.

Samantha Pica stated Family Resource Network also has an employer engagement goal for this year and will continue to look for ways to achieve this goal. She mentioned she would like to create a Zoom meeting/open forum with local businesses to answer their questions about working with clients. She said this goal will be transferred to their PY 2022 objectives.

Robert Croom shared that employer engagement is an objective for this year for the AJC. Meredith Barracato mentioned that as part of educating the AJC staff on working with individuals with Disabilities, she would be requesting the various committee members to share information about their programs and the clients they work with. Committee members agreed it would be a good idea and are willing to participate.

Meredith Barracato discussed the soft skills program sub strategy and asked how the soft skills program can benefit individuals with disabilities. Chairwoman Walsh Rintzler asked if one of the UCC representatives who conduct soft skills attend the meeting so everyone can have a better understanding on the soft skills program at UCC.

Meredith Barracato asked the committee what are the follow up services/surveys that are conducted by the programs. Chairwoman Walsh Rintzler said each program should be conducting some type of follow up as part of their strategy and has been an initiative at the state level.

Ed Favor mentioned DVRS has a business outreach team and Irene Perez is their new point person. Ed Favor said she could be someone who can attend the meeting and work with the AJC team. He mentioned there are four individuals as part of the business team.

Chairwoman Walsh Rintzler asked if the someone from the Literacy Consortium was a part of the Disabilities Committee. Meredith Barracato shared that at the moment no one was a part of it but she will follow up with someone from UCC.

V. Committee Member Updates:

American Job Center- They are open for appointment only but no clients have asked for services. If clients want to see someone they will just need to make an appointment.

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DVRS- Ed Favor mentioned they are in a hybrid schedule twice a week because they don't want anyone in the office. Currently his focus is not operations but more personnel issues and the need for hiring. The clients are not seen in person only through Zoom. Moving the cases from each step has been complicated. He is currently hiring for various positions.

Inroads for Opportunities- they have been closed due to COVID but they will be opening for participants and have assessments and employment happening. Ed Favor shared the performance of In Roads has been great and they have been working well with his team.

Family Resource Network- Samantha Pica mentioned Hector Smith will have a full schedule due to staff maternity leave. They are also preparing for accreditation. Jaime Caruso also introduced herself to the committee.

Bridgeway Health Career Services- Christine Backiel introduced herself and shared her program is working remotely but have been working with people remotely.

Meredith Barracato shared update on the Workforce Development Board which are the creation of polices such as On the Job training and a few RFPs that are out.

- VI. Meeting Schedule 2022:** The following information was shared in a slide.
- **Tuesday March 15th 10:00am**
 - **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**

VII. Committee Adjournment: