

UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
DISABILITIES COMMITTEE
Cyndy Walsh Rintzler, CHAIRWOMAN
MEETING MINUTES: TUESDAY, OCTOBER 12TH, 2021 10:00AM

Committee Members

1. Cyndy Walsh Rintzler, Inroads for Opportunities
2. Adam Kubler, Arc of NJ
3. Gino Elmarassy, Union County American Job Center
4. Robert Croom, Union County American Job Center
5. Nasrene Mondol, Union County American Job Center
6. Manny Ramirez, UC office for People w/Disability & Special Needs
7. Pamela Mata, Union County American Job Center
8. Josh Bornstein, Union County ESC
9. Beatriz Baldwin, Goodwill of NY/NJ
10. Ed Faver, NJ Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services
11. Sandie Lynch, Community Access Unlimited

UCWDB Staff

Meredith Barracato

Meeting Summary

- I. **Welcome and Opening Statement:** Chairwoman Walsh Rintzler welcomed everyone to the first Disabilities Committee and thanked them for participating. The Chairwoman discussed her experience working with individuals with Disabilities and is looking forward in chairing the committee and setting goals.
- II. **Committee Member Introductions:** Each committee member introduced themselves and briefly discussed their organization. Many committee members discussed some of the challenges they have encountered during the pandemic. These challenges included the lack of in person services, the digital divide, and the need for more resources. Committee members also discussed positives such as acquiring new digital systems/skills, becoming more creative in their services delivery process, and various new virtual programs. Everyone agreed the need to return to in person services. This has been a major request from the participants as much as the families.
- III. **New Committee, New Commitment:** Meredith Barracato discussed the goals and the objectives of the newly formed Disabilities Committee which included the importance on collecting and using data, mapping and assessing resources and identifying the gaps in services.

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IV. Strategic Plan: Chairwoman Walsh Rintzler expressed the importance of obtaining feedback from committee members for the strategic plan. She stressed the need for committee members to advocate for their participants. Meredith reviewed the strategic plan that was updated in 2019 and discussed the various sub strategies within each goal. The following are the six goals for the Union County Strategic Plan;

- **Goal 1** – Increase Emphasis on Career Pathways / Credential Attainment
- **Goal 2** – One Stop Integration
- **Goal 3** - Broadened Use of Technology in Operation & Customer-Facing Processes
- **Goal 4** – Expand Access
- **Goal 5** – Employer Activities
- **Goal 6** - Expanded Use of Evaluation Metrics beyond National Performance Standards/ Systematic Oversight

Meredith provided committee members with a with a Google Drive link to the strategic plan and sub strategies and asked committee members to review the sub strategies for the next meeting in November. Meredith explained the objective in reviewing the sub-strategies is to see how the current sub strategies impacts their clients and what changes should be made to improve the sub-strategies or goals. Meredith provided examples of other committees have been coming up with ideas that meet the needs of their clients. One example she gave was for the literacy committee and the need to focus on one sub strategy that is a major barrier and how to overcome that barrier.

V. Labor Market Information: Meredith Barracato reviewed a slide which provided the statistics on the individuals living in Union County with Disabilities. The committee agreed the data provided in the slide reflects the individuals they serve. Sandie Lynch mentioned the individuals that are served in CAU are reflected in the information provided especially between the ages of 18 through 64.

Chairwoman asked if there was anyone who could join the committee who focused on the population over the age of 64. Manny Ramirez mentioned the Department of Aging might be a good resource since they work with individuals over the age of 65. Meredith Barracato review the department of labor report which focuses on job postings, employers with the most job opening, demographics of job postings, and the skills

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needed for the various job posting. Meredith reviewed the latest data on the fastest growing and declining jobs.

Ed Faver mentioned tractor trailer driving is in big demand and knows of a dairy company that is offering \$70,000 to start with benefits and bonuses. He added he has not been able to get interested candidates in applying to the jobs because clients are not comfortable going to school for training. He asked committee members to send him referrals of individuals who are interested in these types of job because they are always coming to him with job opportunities. Chairwoman mentioned Access Link has the same openings for drivers and the lack of employees impacts the services to the clients in her organization. The lack of employees causes delays in pickup which then causes her clients to get into work late. She added the pickup times which are normally 3:30pm can sometimes be extended until 6:00pm which cause challenges to client's routine. Josh Bornstein mentioned as a school district they have worked to train individuals to become CDL drivers but have challenges with training. He mentioned the process to become a CDL Driver is cumbersome between the road hours and multiple tests. Josh added the challenge can become an opportunity if there is a way to partner with one of the CDL companies to provide training. He added currently there is also lots of opportunity for individuals with disabilities to get hired but the need is to have long term hiring.

Meredith Barracato asked if some of the suggestions based on the discussion could be considered a sub strategies for the strategic plan. She summarized the discussion and asked if there was a need in understanding the CDL process and finding individuals who are interested in the occupation. Josh Bornstein mentioned this might be a challenge for individuals with disabilities and might be a better issue for the career center committee instead of the disabilities committee. Ed Faver mentioned some of the clients who come to his organization are part of the Reentry programs who would most likely be candidates for the CDL occupation. Chairwoman mentioned there might be a pool of people who could benefit from this initiative but this might be a larger workforce development challenge. Meredith Barracato mentioned the Workforce Development Board can ask a CDL provider to come in and do a presentation on their services.

Josh Borstein asked if someone from UCC could attend a meeting to see how they can accommodate individuals with disabilities into a soft skills course. Josh mentioned he would like to offer these courses to his clients

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but he was not sure how it would work. Meredith Barracato mentioned Karen Cimorelli from the Disabilities Office Union County College would be a great liaison. Josh asked if there was a way to get employers on the

Committee because it's important to have the business perspective and suggestion. He added also asking a Workforce Development Board member to join the committee would be a great addition to the committee. Meredith asked Pamela Mata from the American Job Center share some thoughts on how she would like to incorporate the disabilities community into her presentation to employers. Pamela mentioned she would like to learn more about what the population needs and how her team is becoming more knowledgeable on how to present clients to employers. She discussed the various job fairs and how she would like to create awareness for employers and job seekers. Josh mentioned this would be a great way to engage or connect with employers and see if they can join the committee. Pamela mentioned she will do some research in seeing which of the companies she works with has programs who work with individuals with disabilities. She added that a good way to attract job seekers is to get big name companies like Amazon, Shop Rite FedEx and then invite smaller companies to join in.

- VI. Meeting Schedule 2021** Chairwoman mentioned the next meeting would be on Wednesday November 9th 10:00am and then in December so everyone can begin to discuss the direction of the committee. Josh mentioned there was a meeting on November 9th which would include a number of committee members. The Chairwoman and Meredith mentioned they would look into alternative dates

- VII. Committee Adjournment:**