

**Department of Human Services  
Union County American Job Center  
Monthly Partners Meeting  
March 19, 2021**

The meeting was opened with a roll call and welcome by Elton Armady, Director, Union County American Job Center.

A PowerPoint slide presentation of the following information was shared with attendees:

**AJC BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT UPDATE**

The Business Development Team will consist of the following individuals:

Pamela Mata – Business Development Manager  
Mohamed (Gino) Elmarassy – Business Development Associate

The AJC continues to research businesses that are in line with the in-demand industries as mandated by the NJDOL. These industries include shipping and logistics, supply chain management, commercial driver's license (CDL) and more.

The Business Development Team is working to establish new relationships with businesses to assist with their hiring need and provide jobs for our clients and the general public. The BDT is currently working with Amazon, Renewal by Anderson, Trinitas Hospital, Wakefern, Remarkable Foods, Farmland Fresh Dairies and more.

**VIRTUAL JOB FAIR SURVEY RESULTS**

A Virtual Job Fair Survey was conducted to determine what industries/occupations individuals want to see represented in future job fairs.

The survey questions and results are as follows:

1. What industries would you like to be represented at future job fairs?

Healthcare	50%
Supply Chain Management	22%
Finance/Accounting	6%
Transportation/CDL	28%
General/Retail/Customer Services	56%
  
2. How much should positions at future job fairs pay in order for you to attend?

\$12-17 per hour	\$24,960 – 35,360 per year	19%
\$18-23 per hour	\$37,440 – 47,840 per year	43%
\$24-29 per hour	\$49,920 – 60,320 per year	29%
\$30-35 per hour	\$62,400 – 72,800 per year	5%
\$36-41 per hour	\$74,880 – 85,280 per year	0
\$42 per hour	\$87,360+	

Effective January 1, 2021, the State of New Jersey increased the minimum wage to \$12 per hour. Ideally, as we look to offer opportunities to customers, we should pay a minimum of \$18 per hour.

**PREFERRED JOBS**

One major initiative that we are launching is Preferred Job. Preferred jobs are jobs in which we have a direct relationship with the employer. Preferred jobs will now be emailed to AJC staff, posted at Union County social media and emailed to the 116k individuals on unemployment.

Interested candidates will need to register on UC Works in order to apply. Those that meet the qualifications will need to be certified by the AJC and then interview with the employer.

**ONET**

Occupational Information Network (ONET) is a tool utilized on UC Works. It contains hundreds of standardized and occupation specific descriptions for approximately 1,000 different occupations covering the U.S. economy. Provided candidates profiles are coded correctly within the system, we can use this to target job referrals and identify the right candidates for positions.

## **PARTNER STATUS UPDATE**

**International Rescue Committee (IRC)** – The current ESL class will end on 3/29/21. Classes are beginner to intermediate and run for eight weeks. All classes are virtual. The tentative start date for the next class is 4/11/21.

IRC has connected with community members to focus on the reasons for hesitation in getting the COVID vaccine. They are currently scheduling appointments for clients who are eligible, willing, and able to get the vaccines. IRC is hoping to organize a vaccine clinic to focus on community needs.

IRC is now offering help with tax filing virtually and in-person Saturdays only, 9:00 am – 6:00 pm.

IRC has received a number of calls from employers seeking employees and has placed approximately fourteen clients in various positions/industries.

In terms of career programs, IRC has completely in-school youth enrollments and are now focusing on out-of-school youth, adults, and dislocated workers.

**Division of Social Services** – DSS is working with the AJC on Bridging the Digital Divide initiative. DSS is reaching out to every work eligible GA and TANF client then handing them over, in a live handoff, to the AJC Career Counselor, who will contact the client to offer training.

The purpose of the initiative is to entice the client by offering them a laptop (Chromebook) that has built in Wi-Fi. If they sign up for the training program, DSS will provide them with this piece of equipment that will help them with the training.

DSS started with the GA population. Last week fifty clients were contacted, fifteen were interested. These names were submitted to AJC Career Counselor Kathleen Toussaint. There are four clients that have shown they genuinely need the laptop.

This program is also open to WIOA clients.

**Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVR)** – There are no new plans or services at this time. In March, 2020, there were seventy-five new requests for services, as of March 18, 2021, there are sixty-seven requests/referrals. Numbers are beginning to approach the old normal. Hopefully there will be over 100 requests/referral for March, 2021. Schools are referring in big numbers.

As people get vaccinated, employee schedules will be adjusted. At this time, employees are in the office 50% of the time.

The number of rehabilitations - people who have been successfully employed for ninety days or more and have moved out of a two to four times a week job coaching situation to a once or twice every other week - is about 70% of what they were pre-Covid.

**Youth Forward** - Youth Forward collaborated with Youth Corp on an outreach orientation.

To date, there are forty-three active youth enrolled, fourteen in-school and 29 out of-school.

Youth Forward is encouraging enrollees to utilize UC Works.

Youth Forward will continue to collaborate with partners.

**Simon Youth Academy** – The Academy is continuing to assist students with job placement and employment.

The Academy is in partnership with HMS and has been able to secure positions for five students.

**Job Corp** – Job Corp is officially open and students are back at the center. They are following all CDC guidelines and students are now in their own dorm rooms.

Job Corp has added a number of new employers to their Workforce Board.

Solar Landscape, a solar company that operates all of New Jersey, has hired students at the pay rate of \$67.50 per hour. Job Corp has emphasized to employers the importance of adding financial literacy, Solar Landscape has worked very seriously with students on this.

Job Corp is continuing to enroll new students. If anyone has any questions about Job Corp contact Ms. Julia Gibson.

Job Corp is participating in a book drive in Middlesex County and beyond to promote literacy in our communities. A number of staff members have purchased books for the Edison Housing Authority and Zone 6 Teen Center and is working to get books for teenagers. Also, Job Corp staff members are reading to children at the Children's Hospital who have recently had surgery.

**Youth Corp** – Out of 38 contracted, 28 students have been serviced. Twelve are currently attending orientation and will begin on Monday, 3/22/2021.

Youth Corp runs very generalized programs including soft skills, financial literacy, substance abuse, pregnancy preventions and career guidance.

Youth Corp's biggest challenge is getting the high school diploma test for participants.

If anyone knows of in-person testing site that offers TASK, please contact Brenda Cohen.

**Union County College - UCC** is currently recruiting students for the NJ Endures Program. There will be two informational sessions: Tuesday, 3/23/21 @ 2:00 pm and Thursday, 3/25/21 @ 10:00 am.

UCC is also recruiting student for the following programs: Supply Chain Management, Digital Literacy, and Patient Care Technician.

**America's Small Business Development Center** – The center is still operating virtually. There will be a financial literacy webinar for young leaders on 4/2/21 at 2:00 pm. This webinar is for a younger audience and students working at the Rutgers Library in Piscataway/New Brunswick.

**Workforce Advantage** – Workforce Advantage has been successful with job placements and has integrated a very strong workforce readiness component into all programs. This component emphasizes and provide the necessary skills for interviewing online. It allows the students to gain knowledge and to develop the necessary skills with practice.

Workforce Advantage has developed new material for the classroom. All classes are online and participation and performance has been very high.

**Reconnections** – Reconnections is generally co-located at the Union County One Stops in Elizabeth and Plainfield, but due to COVID they have transitioned to the Urban League at 1139 E. Jersey Street in Elizabeth. Reconnections has been open since June and is seeing clients virtually and in-person—while following CDC guidelines.

Reconnections offers wrap-around services/activities such as; employment workshops, linkage to employers, referrals to AJC career counselors for assistance with training programs, referrals to DVR, mentoring sessions, life skills, support for in-house faith-based community, and legal workshops. These services/activities are being held in-house and virtual. In addition, Reconnections offers counseling for mental health and substance abuse and provides referrals to the Division of Social Services for support for health care, food stamps, cash assistance and housing.

Reconnections has been very successful with assisting clients with employment and seen an increase in clients wanting training.

**Community Services Block Grant** – Employment Services through CSBG are being provided at PROCEEDS, Inc. in Elizabeth.

Normally for CSBG the income requirement for is that an individual must be within the 125% of the federal poverty guidelines but due to COVID, the requirement has increased to 200%.

**Housing Authority of Elizabeth** – The Job Plus Program is still operating, the official kickoff was 2/1/2021.

The Elizabeth Housing Authority has been getting an influx of new clients, which consists of a large number of older adults. The Housing Authority has been referring these clients to the AJC and also offering a soft skills program so they are prepared.

Through Investors Bank, the Elizabeth Housing Authority is offering a financial literacy program.

The Elizabeth Public Library has been assisting clients with resume writing, cover letters, how to use and operate LinkedIn, interview skills and networking. Today, they are offering a virtual basic computer class.

As the Housing Authority moves out this quarter into the next, they are seeking to serve the younger population. They are in the process of assembling a panel of entrepreneurs to assist clients who are interested in owning their own business.

The Housing Authority is assisting a number of clients with license restoration and is also working with reentry clients.

The Housing Authority of Elizabeth is also working with the America's Small Business Development Center in assisting clients.

**Meredith Barracato** – Ms. Barracato announced she will be leaving the AJC effective 3/26/21 and will be transitioning to the Workforce Development Board.

Respectfully submitted,

April L. Hayes, Administrative Aide/Workforce Learning Link Instructor  
Union County One Stop American Job Center

## **IN ATTENDANCE**

Elton Armady  
Perle Almeida  
Meredith Barracato  
Katerin Farias  
Brenda Cohen  
Julia Gibson  
Susana Mateo  
LaChelleThompson  
Elizabeth Paskewich  
Jasmine Whitous  
Veronicah Mwaniki  
Tina-Marie Lopez  
Melissa Lespinasse  
Julio Sabater  
Cathy Waters  
Edward Faver  
Herb Caesar  
Kamili Williams  
Lisa Hiscano

UCDHS/AJC  
UCDHS/AJC  
UCDHS/AJC  
UCDHS/Youth Forward  
NJ Youth Corps  
Job Corps Senior Manager  
NJ Youth Corps  
Housing Authority of Elizabeth  
UCDHS/DIFSS (CSBG)  
UCDHS/DIFSS (CSBG)  
International Rescue Committee  
Union County Division of Social Services  
Union County Department of Human Services  
Workforce Advantage  
Urban League/Union County Reconnections Program  
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVR)  
America's Small Business Development Center  
UCDHS/Division of Social Services  
Union County College