

Union County Workforce Development Board
Adult Education and Literacy Committee
Committee Chair, Julio Sabater
Meeting Minutes: December 15, 2020, 11am

Attendees

Julio Sabater- Committee Chair, Workforce Advantage
Gloria Durham, UCWDB Chair
Meredith Barracato, Union County American Job Center
Scott Kuchinsky, Plainfield Public Library
Marlene Moreira Loff, Union County College
Barbara Bagger, Literacy NJ- Union County
Marie Thelusma-Chase, Boxwood Learning Center

UCWDB Staff

Lisa Bonanno
Carolina Marin
Elizabeth Paskewich

Meeting Summary

I. STRATEGIC PLANNING SUB-STRATEGIES

- A. SS-3- Consider the adoption of computer refresher courses of not only older workers but all customers below sufficient proficiency
Committee Discussion:

- o Plainfield Public Library, Scott Kuchinsky: Within the Certiport system, Spark is the assessment tool used to place a student for digital learning. We have utilized this under WLL funds, but overall there is a funding issue to continue this in future programs. We have support from the County and the State to continue the model we have, just the funding make it happen going forward is an issue. Addressing these basic computer literacy issues, such as using a mouse, accessing email, virtually is very difficult
- o American Job Center, Meredith Barracato- There is a need for digital literacy services. We have students that can easily use their cell phones for social media but utilizing job programs have become a barrier. If there is a way to

spread IC3 or increase basic computer skills training that would be great resource.

- o Union County College, Marlene Moreira Loff - Basic computer knowledge, just to get into an Orientation or Registration online or even to into class has been a struggle for some. Individuals who are not able to access these services are suffering. Base level students are in great need of services.

***Committee Planning:**

Key Planning Components-

1. Skills needed to function in digital world
 - Create/Administer a standard assessment to determine a students digital literacy proficiency.
 - Student Proficiency Level 1- Basic skills
 - Student Proficiency Level 2- Have basic computer understanding- IC3 is appropriate
 - Create Metric for digital literacy- possibly using Spark
 2. Infrastructure- Devices & Platforms needed/required of the digital world
 - Funding needed for devices and internet connectivity.
 - Understand current regulations for funding allowances
 - Research best practices- loaner programs, donations
- B. SS-44- The WDB will look to establish specific policies regarding the sharing of testing resources and the implementation of system-wide assessment.

Committee Discussion

- o Union County College, Marlene Moreira Loff - In spring neither test was available remotely, now tests are available virtually. This does bring challenges such as class testing size and technology required. In-classroom exams are currently limited due to social distancing.
- o American Job Center, Meredith Barracato - Commitment to sit through a 4 hour remote test is difficult. Staff is often trouble shooting technology issues. Additional proctors

are also needed for remote tests. Pre-tests can also be difficult for students initially as they are not familiar with the testing platform.

II. CLIENT SERVICE ISSUES & CONCERNS

Committee Discussion

- o Boxwood Learning Centers, Marie Thelusma-Chase: We are having trouble accessing test sites for our students to take their High School Equivalency exams. We have been providing support services, transportation, testing fees, and incentives to help our students along. Communication is needed with school districts regarding expulsions and WIOA programs. Additional funding needed with our OSY population specifically with tutoring.

It was recommended Agency specific issues be brought to AJC- Department of Human Services and attendance in Youth Committee was recommended.

- o Union County College, Marlene Moreira Loff: Bringing to the public more information about our programs and how they can apply. GED interest is bigger than ever, however students do not have the technology to be able to commit to the program.
- o American Job Center, Meredith Barracato – We are finding a lack of commitment as well, but that also stems from uncertainty of Career path. With the changing times there is uncertainty on what careers will be stable in the future. Many steering towards individualized careers tracts, such as CDL.

***Committee Planning**

What Career pathways are available for our populations and communities, what is the best tool for career exploration?

- Explore UC Works
- Explore NJ Career Connections
- Explore what are the In-Demand occupations now, have they changed, what is the future.

III. ADULT LITERACY & DISABILITIES ISSUES & CONCERNS

- Committee recruitment needed to help further discussion and needs in this area.

IV. COMMITTEE ADJOURNED

Next Meeting: January 12, 2021, 11am via Zoom