

**Union County Workforce Development Board
Minutes of the Youth Investment Council Sub-Committee
Union County Administration Building
Parks and Recreation Conference Room, 2nd Floor
November 11, 2016 at 11:00am**

Committee Members:

Pete Capodice, Co-Chair, Union County Vocational Technical Schools
James Horne, United Way of Greater Union County
Peter Capodice, Co-Chair, Union County Vocational Technical Schools
Ella Teal, Urban League of Union County
Jeffery Jackson, Youth Coordinator, Union County Dept. of Workforce Development Operations
Josh Bornstein, Union County Ed. Serves Commission
James Horne, United Way of Greater Union County
Gloria Durham, Genesis Solutions
Antonio Rivera, Director, Workforce Development Board
Elizabeth Paskewich, Workforce Development Board

Summary of Committee Discussion:

- Chairman Pete Capodice opened the meeting at 11:00am for discussion, specifically, a review of the youth components integrated into the Local Area Strategic Plan: 2016-2020. While said elements were being discussed, the Chairman stated that the strategic planning process was a starting point of discuss and not the final word of the committee or the county.

- Recent statistics indicate that there are approximately 69,800 individuals between the ages of 15-24 countywide, of which 15.8% of those 18-24 years have the educational attainment of less than a high school degree. Focusing on Union County's two largest cities, Elizabeth and Plainfield, the educational attainment of less than a high school degree for ages 18-24 is an alarming 36.3% in

Plainfield and 19% in Elizabeth. (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates).

- Eligible youth are seen by dedicated Youth counselors and are referred to services through the Youth Consortium. The majority of youth targeted for services are residents of communities with high levels of poverty and lower educational success rates. These include Elizabeth, Hillside, Linden, Plainfield, Roselle, and Rahway. The past Consortium was led by United Way. Currently there are sub-contracted services that take care of all youth programs in the County.

- One youth program that is available in the OSCC is Job Corp. The City of Elizabeth provided a Business Collaboration Program for youth ages 16-21. While developing strong partnerships with local employers Elizabeth provided its students with paid work experience.

- The City of Plainfield partnered with local businesses to provide various employability skills and basic skills workshops. Paid work experience with job shadowing was provided with work sites across Plainfield Public Schools. Career exposure to Custodial work and Clerical Administration was provided.
 - United Way of Greater Union County (lead agency)
 - Urban League of Union County
 - PROCEED, Inc.
 - Jefferson Park Ministries
 - Community Access Unlimited
 - Rahway Community Action Organization
 - Union County Court Appointed Special Advocates
 - Brand New Day
 - Plainfield Action Services

- NJ Chamber of Commerce

Expansion of Access to Disadvantaged Youth

➤ The Union County Workforce Board understands well the *new responsibility to expand* the level of services to out-of-school youth to a minimum 75%. It intends to expand the System's reach to serving disadvantaged OS youth by taking advantage of six significant changes in WIOA legislation, as compared to WIA.

- WIOA raises the out-of-school youth *eligibility age from 16 to 21 to 16 to 24*. These same youth could be serviced through the adult workforce system, specific developmental needs often go unmet. Raising the eligibility age will help us better target their programming for this population.

- Out-of-school youth in high-risk categories *do not have to prove low-income status* to receive services. This includes individuals who have dropped out of high school, have not attended school for at least one calendar quarter of the most recent school year, or are subject to the juvenile or adult justice systems.

- The group to be served includes *homeless individuals, run-aways, current or former foster care youth, and individuals who or are pregnant or parenting*. Youth who are not attending school, hold a secondary credential, and are either basic-skills deficient or an English language learner must be "low-income."

- In-school youth eligibility is expanded to include low-income individuals *ages 14 to 21 who are English language learners, as well as individuals with disabilities*.

- Youth "*living in a high-poverty area*" are added to the low-income criterion for youth activities funding and services.
- These actions in conjunction with additional changes in minimum funding set aside for youth wages suggest the need to consider expanding wages and/or stipends to youth.
 - The Youth Career Pathway Program shall become the central location for *WIOA and TANF/Out of School youth service opportunities*, wherein youth can receive referrals to other funded activities within the county, job readiness, soft skills, financial literacy, and a myriad of career foundational skills necessary for the world of work and post-secondary education.
 - The Union County Workforce Development Board of Director and the Board of Chosen Freeholders developed as pilot program for *in-school-youth* in partnership with Elizabeth High School and the One Stop Career Center of Union County—wherein the eligible *in-school-youth* were provided Information Technology, Job Readiness, Soft Skills classroom training, as well as a paid work experience to apply the skills being taught.
 - Coordinating a countywide version of this pilot program shall be one of the strategic program opportunities of the Youth Career Pathway Program.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45am.