

UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD  
AMERICAN JOB CENTER PARTNER COMMITTEE  
KRYSTAL CANADY, CHAIRWOMAN  
MEETING MINUTES: WEDNESDAY, June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2022 10:00AM via Zoom

**Committee Members**

1. Colleen Clayton, The Gateway Family YMCA
2. Cathy Waters, Urban League
3. Christine Backiel, Bridgeway
4. Diana Calle, Union County Office of Special Needs
5. Dr. Lisa Hiscano, Union County College
6. Herb Caesar, NJSBDC
7. Isaias Rivera, Union County College
8. Jasmine Lee, Simon Youth Academy
9. Juanito Chiluisa, NJDOL Employment Services
10. Juanita Vargas, Union Way of Greater Union County
11. Latoya Bennet, Youth Forward
12. LaChelle Thompson, Housing Authority of Elizabeth
13. Lillian Roman, Union County American Job Center
14. Nasrene Mondol, Union County American Job Center
15. Perle Almeida, Union County American Job Center
16. Robert Croom, Union County American Job Center
17. Tina Lopez, Division of Social Services
18. Veronicah Mwaniki, International Rescue Committee
19. Yunia Labaut, Workforce Advantage
20. Marissa Caponera, Job Corp
21. Anthea Williams, NJDOL
22. Srabanti Sarkar, Proceed Inc
23. Ingrid Macias, NJDOL
24. Iesha Armour, NJDOL
25. Eva Altidor, Community Service Block Grant

**UCWDB Staff**

Meredith Barracato  
Antonio Rivera  
Carolina Marin  
Lisa Bonanno

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**Meeting Summary**

**Welcome and Introductions:**

Meredith Barracato thanked everyone for joining the meeting and explained to committee members the chairwoman was having technical difficulties and would join the meeting once those issues were resolved.

**Review and Approval of April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022 Minutes:**

Motion was made by Colleen Clayton to approve the **April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022** Committee Meeting Minutes. Cathy Waters provided the second motion. Motion was carried.

Meredith Barracato reviewed slides regarding the following topics;

- **Situation Analysis: Immigration and the Future of the Workforce:** Meredith Barracato reviewed a report from Engen which discussed the importance of educating the countries immigrants and refugees which will add value to the nation's economy and prosperity. Meredith Barracato discussed how companies are increasingly stepping in to invest in educational programs for current and new employees. The programs which focus on English proficiency and increase in educational skills leads to increase wages, promotions, increase performance and employee retention. Full report attached to presentation.
- **Policy Updates: Incumbent Worker Training Policy:** Meredith Barracato reviewed slides which discussed the new WDB policy on incumbent worker training program. Meredith Barracato mentioned the incumbent worker training program provides financial assistance to train current employees to prevent layoff and/or improve the economic competitiveness of local businesses. Dr. Lisa Hiscano provided some information on Union County College employer program which has grant funds that provide employers training programs.
- **Supportive Service Operational Policy:** Meredith Barracato reviewed slides regarding the updates to the supportive service policy that offers participants enhanced supports that address their needs that are creating barriers. The operational process is based on assessment, documentation, referral, funding, and follow up. Juanita Vargas asked who would be supplying services for clients. Meredith Barracato mentioned the AJC will be facilitating the process and issuing RFPs.

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**American Job Center Presentation:**

Robert Croom shared a presentation of the American Job Center service delivery, performance, and initiatives. Robert Croom discussed the various job fairs and the outcomes for the events. Robert Croom spoke about the Youth Forward program and the employment program that will begin on July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Robert Croom asked partners to share with the AJC any special events that that AJC could participate in. He added the goal of the outreach initiative is to have the community aware of the services that the AJC provides. AJC presentation uploaded to google drive for review.

**Youth Committee Update**

Scott Kuchinsky was not able to attend the meeting but Meredith Barracato gave an update on the progress of the youth committee. Meredith Barracato mentioned the committee is working on the following sub strategies;

- Identify school staff & administrators to educate on WIOA programs and eligibility requirements.
- Establish a co-enrollment process for youth clients.
- Identify additional ESL providers within the county to address the language barriers for out-of-school youth.
- Develop a comprehensive list of alternative schools/programs available to students at risk of not graduating.
- Identify apprenticeships and on-the-job training opportunities for the youth.

**Disabilities Committee Update**

Meredith Barracato informed committee members Cyndy Walsh Rintzler was not available to attend the meeting and offered feedback regarding the new committee. Meredith Barracato reviewed the following objectives for the Disabilities Committee:

- Create information packet on trial work experience for job sites which include fact sheet on liability concerns, suggested job tasks, & provide assurances.
- Increase outreach to community/private organizations to develop new job sites.
- Introduce Employer interest/info seeking Survey- What is your experience, concerns, interest in, what would help you. Information gathering to create an FAQ.

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### **Literacy Committee Update**

Julio Sabater was not able to attend the committee meeting but Meredith Barracato discussed a few initiatives. Meredith Barracato reference all the initiatives that include the following sub strategies;

- Development of training on the features and benefits of UCWORKS, the AJC Virtual One-Stop system
- Creation of an AJC WIOA eligibility kit for Title II partners.
- Enhancement of career exploration for Title II clients by partner agency. Sharing of tools-Career/interest Inventory/ IEP/ISS
- Develop A Process to Offer Wrap-around Services/Supportive Services to WIOA Eligible Clients.
- Procurement of digital tools such as laptops and Wi-Fi for clients to use while in training and job search.

Dr. Lisa Hiscano discussed a grant that the Literacy Consortium had applied to provide the participants with digital tools such as laptops and WIFI to use for training programs.

### **Partner Updates**

Meredith Barracato asked the partners to provide a brief update on their program and share any special initiatives.

- 1. Division of Social Service**-Tina Lopez mentioned they are open for business and they have restructured the client flow process. They have been doing a lot of case assessments, referrals, and as of 7/1/2022 clients will be sanctioned and they will be mandated to attend an activity. Tina Lopez said there will be an increase of GA and TANF clients who noticed they do not have funds as of 8/1/2022. They are expecting a huge wave of clients mid August.
- 2. NJ Department of Labor Employment Services (ES)**- Ingrid Macias is the new Veterans Business representative. Ilesha Armour introduced herself as the new OJT provider. Juanito Chiluisa mentioned the Elizabeth and Plainfield office is open by appointment even for clients who need help with their Unemployment claims.
- 3. Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS)**- NA
- 4. Simon Youth Academy**- NA
- 5. Job Corp**- NA

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- 6. Youth Corp (United Way of Greater Union County)-** Juanita Vargas mentioned they are wrapping up their 3<sup>rd</sup> cohort of youth and 7 have secured high school diplomas. She added she is looking for referrals.
- 7. Union County College-** Dr Hiscano mentioned they are actively recruiting for a few programs that will start in the fall. Title II enrollment for September will start July 1<sup>st</sup>. Isaias Rivera mentioned they have been doing a lot of programs in Elizabeth and Plainfield.
- 8. America's Small Business Development Center-NA**
- 9. Workforce Advantage-** Yunia Labaut mentioned they are still working remotely and all their clients are taking classes online.
- 10. The Family Resource Network- NA**
- 11. The Gateway Family YMCA-**
- 12. Plainfield Public Library (PPL)- NA**
- 13. Union Public Library- NA**
- 14. Bridgeway Career Services-** Christine Backiel mentioned they are in a new building and have been busy providing services.
- 15. Literacy of NJ-NA**
- 16. Easter Seals- NA**
- 17. Workforce 55+ Program- NA**
- 18. Urban League-Reconnections-** Cathy Waters mentioned they are going into the prisons to recruit and help individuals get housing, jobs, and training.
- 19. NJ Reentry Corp- NA**
- 20. Community Services Block Grant-** There are no updates since the last meeting
- 21. Housing Authority of City of Elizabeth-** Lachelle Thompson put a comment in the chat box reminding people of the Pop-Up event for their residents.
- 22. International Rescue Committee-** Veronicah mentioned they are doing a hybrid program and have virtual ESL classes. She added they have a number of individuals coming from Ukraine as refugees.
- 23. NJ Department of Labor Coordination & Support- NA**
- 24. Elizabeth Development Company-NA**
- 25. Elizabeth Public Library- NA**
- 26. PROCEED-** Srabanti Sarkar mentioned they have money for helping clients with back rent and security. The client needs to be a US resident or citizen. They will need to have a plan showing they are trying to get a job. They are also hosting virtual budgeting class.

**Meeting Schedule 2022**

Wednesday August 3<sup>rd</sup> 10:00am

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Wednesday October 19<sup>th</sup> 10:00am

**Optional Meeting**

Wednesday December 14<sup>th</sup> 10:00am

**COMMITTEE ADJOURMENT**