

UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
Adult Education and Literacy Focus Group
December 14, 2022 10:00am Via Zoom
MEETING MINUTES

Attendees

1. Lillian Roman, American Job Center
2. Julio Sabater, Workforce Advantage
3. Perle Almeida, American Job Center
4. Maritza Batista, Union College
5. Dr Lyle Mosley, Elizabeth Board of Education
6. Jasmine Sowah, Youth Forward
7. Barbara Bagger, Literacy of New Jersey

UCWDB Staff

Meredith Barracato

Meeting Summary

I. Welcome and Introductions

Chairman, Julio Sabater welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Strategic Plan information:

Meredith Barracato reviewed slides that discussed the various elements of the strategic plan.

Adult Education Discussion:

Throughout the meeting Meredith Barracato released a series of poll questions and shared with the attendees the results.

Poll Questions:

1. Which of the following are your client's barriers to employment?
 - o Transportation
 - o Childcare
 - o Lack of English Skills
2. Is there a well-established coordinated service model among Title I and Title II partners?
 - o Yes and No 50/50 Split
3. What are your clients greatest supportive service need?
 - o Childcare
 - o Book fee school supplies
 - o Training and employment fees
 - o Transportation

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4. Is priority of service given to public assistance recipients, low income individuals, and basic skills deficient individuals?
 - o Yes
5. Is your organization focused on developing career pathways?
 - o Yes
6. Is there a well-defined customer flow referral process?
 - o Yes
7. Has your service delivery been affected by the pandemic?
 - o Yes
8. Does your organization focus on employer engagement?
 - o Yes

Discussion Questions:

How does your organization identify clients' barriers to employment?

Julio Sabater, Workforce Advantage Collaborate with American Job Center Representative at Literacy Consortium meeting to discuss Title II client's transition plan/progress.

Dr Lyle Mosley, Elizabeth Board of Education, develop a process to offer wrap-around services/ supportive services to Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Eligible Clients. Many times, their students are working and not apply to receive services from the American Job Center due to the hours. It is important for their students to attach a face to the services and they have asked the American Job Center to come to their site to meet with their students. Many of their students are suspicious of programs and referrals.

Maritza Batista, Union College, suggested that the American Job Center conduct a three-hour workshop once a month on various job readiness or soft skills workshops to help students overcome their barriers to employment. The American Job Center should also do face to face person to person informational session on the resources available.

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Julio Sabater, Workforce Advantage, barriers to employment are also barriers to training and should be identified throughout the students experience with the program.

Part A:

What are the most common challenges to integrating Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I and Title II programs?

Julio Sabater, Workforce Advantage, need to identified a liaison from each program, need to streamline the enrollment paperwork, need to identify only Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act eligible clients. Currently Title II and Title are in the process and making strides.

Maritza Batista, Union College, the partners are working on it and making moves but not integrated at the moment.

Part B

What programmatic or policy changes are needed, at the local, to facilitate better integration of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I and Title II services to make a more seamless service delivery system for the consumer and achieve improved educational and employment outcomes?

Julio Sabater, Workforce Advantage, mentioned this might be a question that can be discussed further at committee meeting because he has a few suggestions that he would like to bring up at a later meeting.

Part C:

How can we strengthen integrated service models for cross-training staff and technical assistance to support service integration across required One-Stop partners?

Maritza Batista, Union College, Marlene Loff has had meetings with the American Job Center and will be scheduling a meeting to discuss Integrated Educational Trainings.

Dr Lyle Mosley, Elizabeth Board of Education, mentioned his staff will be meeting with the American Job Center to discuss training cross training.

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Part D:

How can we operationalize the coordination of assessment, testing, and services across One-Stop Centers and adult education providers, as well as literacy services provided through the Workforce Learning Link, WorkFirst New Jersey, and other Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act services?

Julio Sabater, Workforce Advantage, testing is reported into LACES. The test results are shared with American Job Center on the referral form. They cannot enroll anyone without sharing the test scores.

Maritza Batista, Union College, Union College shares test results with American Job Center staff.

How can American Job Center (One Stop) expand access to supportive services?

Julio Sabater, Workforce Advantage, asked if translation services be a supportive service? He added the need for the American Job Center to work on their diversity and having more bilingual counselors. He feels this is a major barrier. As a result, he wants to know if this barrier would be considering a major issue. Meredith Barracato mentioned it would be a best practice to offer services in client's native language. Meredith Barracato asked Lillian Roman or Perle Almeida from the American Job Center to discuss the translator tablet.

Perle Almeida and Lillian Roman, American Job Center, discussed the translation tablet called VOYCE that the American Job Center uses to overcome the language barriers at the centers.

Julio Sabater, Workforce Advantage, asked if Perle Almeida could share more information about the program so other programs can get more information since there are many English Language Learners. He asked that the American Job Center do a demonstration.

Perle Almeida and Lillian Roman mentioned they did not have the details about the device and would follow up with the group on a link to the product website.

How will the priority of service for adult career and training services be given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient.

Maritza Batista, Union College, mentioned it would be beneficial to send the American Job Center an update of the Intake assessment form because the information might change. She also added that Union College conducts one on

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one sessions and complete the Individualized Employment and Education Plan to discuss their goals and barriers. This plan also focuses on those individuals who are coming from another country with degrees and higher skills. These individuals are then referred to the American Job Center. Isaias Rivera will go into each Title II class to discuss the various programs offered by the American Job Center and their next steps in enrolling in Title I services.

Julio Sabater, Workforce Advantage, most of the clients are basic skills deficient and tend to be low income but before anything Title I and Title II need to develop a flow and do full integration. There should be an urgency to do this integration.

Lilian Roman, American Job Center, mentioned the American Job Center is doing a lot of CASAS testing and flagging public assistance recipients from the beginning to ensure they are giving them priority. She added they have trained all their staff to do testing.

How are career pathways strategies aligned with serving Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title II individuals with barriers to employment?

Enhancement of career exploration for Title II clients by partner agency. Sharing of tools-Career/interest Inventory/ Individualized Employment Plan or Individualized Service Strategy.

Dr Lyle Mosley, Elizabeth Board of Education, mentioned their program had a hard time transitioning from in person to virtual. He added that in person services are better and they are trying to get back to that service.

What is the customer flow and referral processes for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title II participants?

Julio Sabater, Workforce Advantage, there is no formal process but everyone knows what they should do. He agrees it would be important to formalize it to ensure everyone follows specific procedures.

How has the COVID-19 public health crisis affected local Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I and Title II service integration strategies and what do local areas need in order to implement them during the current COVID-19 public health circumstances?

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Lilian Roman, American Job Center, mentioned the pandemic pushed everyone to become virtual but Union County Works helped moved services virtually. This virtual service allowed for the American Job Center to become more flexible especially for clients who would have problems coming into the office.

Julio Sabater, Workforce Advantage, mentioned there still needs to be a way to streamline the virtual eligibility enrollment process and the language barrier of the virtual services. To improve services to low income, basic skills deficient individuals with a language barrier the eligibility process must change and should not be a barrier.

Lilian Roman, American Job Center, mentioned Union County Works is not fully translated in Spanish but that is something that should be considered to improve the system.

How can we create linkage during program delivery between individual customers and employers?

Lilian Roman, American Job Center, mentioned that during assessment counselors will determine if the client is work ready and if they are then they are referred to the business team members. This is usually done as a warm hand off or through job fairs. Any client who is not work ready they will then be referred to training.

Meredith Barracato asked Dr Mosely if his staff have access to the American Job Center Business team? Dr Mosley said yes but there is usually a breakdown in the follow up and there is challenges with the availability with the American Job Center due to the hours of operations and their client schedules.

Jasmine Sowah, Youth Forward, mentioned they work with businesses to employ the youth for their work experience.

Meredith Barracato reviewed a slide on the next steps in the strategic plan process. Meeting was adjourned.