

UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD  
LITERACY COMMITTEE  
JULIO SABATER CHAIRMAN  
MEETING MINUTES: APRIL 13, 2023 10:00am Via Zoom

**Committee Members**

1. Julio Sabater- Committee Chair, Workforce Advantage
2. Jonathan Cohen, NJ Department of Labor
3. Scott Kuchinsky, Plainfield Public Library
4. Marlene Loff, Union College of Union County, NJ
5. Isaias Rivera, Union College of Union County, NJ
6. Perle Almeida, Union County American Job Center
7. Nasrene Mondol, American Job Center
8. Robert Croom, Union County American Job Center
9. Lillian Roman, Union County American Job Center

**UCWDB Staff**

Meredith Barracato

**Meeting Summary**

**Welcome and Introductions:**

Chairman Sabater welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked committee members to introduce themselves. All members introduced themselves.

**Review and Approval of The March 9, 2023, Meeting Minutes:**

Marlene Loff made a motion to approve the **March 9, 2023 minutes**. Perle Almeida seconded the meeting minutes. Motion carried.

**Strategic Plan:**

Meredith Barracato provided everyone an update of the strategic plan. She mentioned the plan was published March 13, 2023 and was in the thirty-day public comment phase. The plan can be located on the Union County Workforce Development Board Website and will need Board approval on April 19, 2023 meeting. The Union County Workforce Development Board will submit plan to State Employment and Training Commission with any public comments. Meredith Barracato mentioned Union County Workforce Development Board is actively working with its regional partners to complete the Regional Plan by the end of March to post for a 30 public comment period. Meredith Barracato moved the conversations to the following topics which relate to the strategic plan.

- a. **Survey Results:** Meredith Barracato provided everyone with a snapshot of the Employer, American Job Center program participant, program partners, and Department of Human Service Community Needs assessment survey results. Meredith Barracato highlighted some of the

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common theme such as barriers to employment, supportive services needs, and career service needs. The Workforce Development Board will continuously meet with program participants to ensure their voice is incorporated into the workforce system by conducting periodic surveys, focus groups, and invite clients to participate in committee meetings.

b. **Oversight and Monitoring:** Meredith Barracato noted the strategic plan asked questions regarding how the Union County Workforce Development Board would conduct oversight and monitoring. Meredith Barracato gave some examples which included:

- Quantitative and Qualitative methods
- Evaluations of Program and Services
- Training and Professional Development
- Implementation of Best Practices and Evidence Base Practices
- Engage in Open and Transparent Communication with Stakeholders

Meredith Barracato then reviewed the program year 2021 and 2022 budget for participant career services. Meredith Barracato noted there were over one million dollars in unexpended funds that would be returned by June 30, 2023. Chairman Sabater asked Meredith Barracato to confirm the various funding years and when the funding should have been spent. Meredith Barracato explained the various funding allocations and grant closing dates and the need for partners to voucher so the funds can be expended. Meredith Barracato added that after June 30, 2023 the Workforce Development Board will receive funding for program year 2023. Meredith Barracato added that the Union County Workforce Development Board will be releasing request for proposals to see if partners can work on using funds for client's services. Chairman Sabater asked the difference between comprehensive career services and training. Meredith explained comprehensive career services are services such as job fairs, workshops, and any career services that falls under the basic, individualized and follow up services under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Jonathan Cohen mentioned more funding would be added to the program year 2022 Workforce Learning Link funding and those funds will not have to be expended until 2024.

c. **Performance Measures and Accountability:** Meredith Barracato then discussed the various ways the Union County Workforce Development Board would need to track performance to ensure accountability. She mentioned use of various systems such as:

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- Annual Reports
- Board and Committee Meetings
- Certification of American Job Center
- Procurement and Contracts
- Americas One Stop Operating System, FutureWorks, and Union County Works software

Meredith Barracato mentioned she is working with individuals from FutureWorks to see if she can pull the data for Title II programs. Meredith Barracato added that by tracking the information from FutureWorks and with the partners from the Title I, Title II, and Title III programs the Union County Workforce Development Board can get a better understanding of the clients being served. Meredith Barracato noted having to follow up with Employment Services, a Title III partner to ensure a representative is present at the next Literacy Committee meeting. Meredith Barracato also mentioned the need to track individuals who fall under the priority of service categories (Individuals who are low income, on public assistance, and are basic skills deficient) and understand how to meet the 50% requirement. Jonathan Cohen mentioned that at the state level they do not have any way of incorporating Title II data in the Americas One Stop Operating System aside from having to manually enter the data that is being disclosed by Title II clients. He added it is important for agencies to work together to blend that information. Chairman Sabater added that it has been a challenging endeavor trying to integrate Title II clients into the Americas One Stop Operating System. Jonathan Cohen mentioned that referrals from Title II to Title I will need to be entered into Americas One Stop Operating System. Marlene Loff mentioned that Union College of Union County, NJ has been sharing with the American Job Center all the Title II intake forms completed by their clients so they can be entered into Americas One Stop Operating System. Lillian Roman mentioned she has recently started to receive the referrals forms from Union College of Union County, NJ. Lillian Roman mentioned that for clients to count in FutureWorks for performance participants must be linked to a funding source and that's how the performance is generated. Marlene Loff asked should the college continue to send Lillian Roman the intake forms completed by Title II clients. Lillian Roman mentioned that in the past the clients that were being sent over by the college were part of the Community Work Experience Program and that is a funded source in Americas One Stop Operating System. Chairman Sabater asked what happens to the intake forms that go to the American Job Center. Lillian Roman said that the most recent batch that was sent over will be entered into the system but those will be considered reportable individuals since

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the clients are not enrolled in a funded service. She added that for the individuals who are part of the Title II program in the Able Plus program she remembers being told by Phil Kendal that those clients do not get enrolled because they are being funded separately. Nasrene Mondol clarified that if those clients are sent to the American Job Center they can be registered but those clients do not appear in the performance reports because they are not in a funded service unless they are enrolled in the learning link or another funded program. Jonathan Cohen says that it is useful to have the clients registered in the Americas One Stop Operating System to reduce duplication of getting clients information and also for transparency purposes. Jonathan Cohen added it also allows for both programs to have a record of how many clients went from Title II to Title I and that is important to know what the data says about the clients in both programs. Nasrene Mondol agreed it would be a good first step to gather the information and it will help with co-enrolling the Workforce Learning Link numbers. Isaias Rivera asked Nasrene Mondol if the intake form is the first step in the process but clients will still need to create a UCWORKS profile and upload all required documentation. Nasrene Mondol said that clients who are going for Learning Link services eligibility is easier than the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act services. She added all Title II clients will need to provide proof of NJ residence and work authorization to enroll in the Workforce Learning Link. Jonathan Cohen mentioned that even clients that have a degree can enroll in the Learning Link service to upgrade their skills or get a refresher. Chairman Sabater mentioned he is concerned that the American Job Center does not have the infrastructure to process all the intake forms and would hate to see hundreds of forms never be process because the American Job Center can not input all the data. Nasrene Mondol mentioned they have the infrastructure to process all the paperwork and the plan is to have all the partners use UCWORKS and the American Job Center is working with the state to integrate both systems. Nasrene Mondol added it is also important to know the client's outcome and what is happening after the clients exit. Jonathan Cohen added that the Union County Learning Link follow up outcomes are low and if the partners can help with that then please work together. Chairman Sabater asked Nasrene Mondol if the American Job Center will receive 800 enrollments for Title II they will be able to input the data and then request that follow up information on all those Title II clients. Nasrene Mondol said that the American Job Center will only need follow up information on those clients who are receiving funded services and are co-enrolled. Jonathan Cohen mentioned that once a client is enrolled in a funded service then that client will be followed by the One Stop. Chairman Sabater clarified that client's

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information will be sent for all Title II clients and only those who are co-enrolled will need follow up services. Nasrene Mondol agreed and said that conversations will be held with the other partners on establishing procedures on how to share the information. Marlene Loff asked if it helps clients to upload the information to UCWORKS and have an intake form completed and does the American Job Center identify those clients. Nasrene Mondol mentioned its important that the forms are uploaded in the UCWORKS. Chairman Sabater asked if uploading the paperwork would be sufficient for clients to receive supportive services. Nasrene Mondol mentioned that it would help to qualify for supportive services. She added that during the pandemic many of the partners took on uploading the clients information but now the American Job Center can be more hands on in helping with the enrollment and she can talk to the partners individually. Marlene Loff would like to see how the enrollment of the Workforce Learning Links can be streamlined and in the past the links did not offer the hours that supported the clients they service and asked if there were evening hours. Nasrene Mondol mentioned she can schedule a meeting with the Learning Link instructor who can answer more questions about how the link has evolved. Marlene Loff asked for Nasrene Mondol to send them this information so she can educate her staff and students.

Meredith Barracato noted in addition to presenting data from FutureWorks, the American Job Center and the Youth Forward team would be responsible for discussing specific client data listed on the two slides within the presentation which include client information such as:

- Demographics
- Supportive Service Needs
- Referral Source
- Barriers to employment

Meredith Barracato recommended that the American Job Center, Title III and the Title II providers meet to discuss how the American Job Center will be capturing the data and how to report the information on Title II clients.

### **Sub-Strategy Updates**

All sub-strategy updates were included in the attached presentation pages. This included action steps, committee members assigned to the sub-strategy, and completion dates. The following were the sub-strategies that were discussed at the meeting:

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- Development of training on the features and benefits of UCWORKS, the AJC Virtual One-Stop system.
  - Perle Almeida mentioned that the AJC is waiting for the upgrades done by Geographic Solutions and they will be able to post gig jobs on the system.
  - Nasrene Mondol will send email to Title II partners to start up conversation to train partners on UCWORKS.
  - Marlene Loff will ask Literacy Consortium members to identify staff who will have access to UCWORKS
  - AJC will need to create partner staff accounts and assign access/privileges to partner staff
  - Due June 15, 2023
  
- Distribution of Title II specific American Job Center orientation for Title II partners to share with their clients.
  - The general narrated orientation presentation was shared at the March meeting that is found on the UCNJ.org website.
  - Nasrene Mondol will reach out to Marlene Loff to discuss Title II specific orientation.
  - Marlene will add topic to Literacy Consortium meeting agenda for further discussion
  - The presentation will be first developed in English and then in other languages if needed and will be kept as simple as possible.
  - Due June 15, 2023
  
- Expand Cross-Training Between the Literacy Consortium and the AJC for a Mutual Understanding of Operational Process and Services.
  - Marlene Loff had a meeting with the AJC staff to understand the Title II services.
  - Each partner will share with each other staff what each partner program offers.
  - Chairman Sabater suggested to create an AJC information day with all the partners and their staff. Marlene will share dates with the partners.
  - Due June 15, 2023
  
- Develop A Process to Offer Wrap-around Services/Supportive Services to WIOA Eligible Clients.
  - Perle Almeida mentioned she is the point person for supportive services and all partner staff should send her referrals for supportive services.

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- Clients have to be enrolled in Title I program to access supportive service
- Creation of an AJC WIOA eligibility kit for Title II partners.
  - Nasrene Mondol shared the eligibility kit to Meredith Barracato and Chairman Sabater.
  - Meredith Barracato will follow up with Nasrene Mondol to get clarification on information provided.
  - Due May 15, 2023
- Create a customer flow map- Include feedback process
  - Robert Croom will schedule a meeting with the different partners to map out a customer flow.
  - Meredith Barracato will share the customer flow map that was included in the strategic plan as a guide to help create individualized customer flow maps with each partner.
  - Due May 31, 2023
- Zoom training recording will be shared with partners on UCWORKS
  - Nasrene Mondol will share with partners the Zoom recording from previous basic training.
  - Robert Croom will share any updated UCWORKS trainings that are created.
  - Due April 29, 2023
- Enhancement of career exploration for Title II clients by partner agency. Sharing of tools-Career/interest Inventory/ IEP/ISS
  - Marlene Loff has created an IEEP, shared with Nasrene and will need to meet to put together to align and combine. Will schedule meeting.
  - Nasrene Mondol will discuss with Marlene Loff the UCWORK path section and will see if there is a need for an additional IEP form.
  - Nasrene Mondol will share the IEP from the American Job Center and Marlene Loff Union College will share with the Chairman IEEP.
  - Due June 15, 2023
- Develop a Title II continuum of service process to transition the student from Title II to Title I services with specific outcome measures.
  - Marlene Loff said she will get staff access to UCWORKS and see if path section UCWORKS will help with this strategy.
  - Due June 15, 2023

Meredith Barracato informed committee members that the first quarter for 2023 labor market information data has been uploaded to the partner resources folder in the Google Drive.

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Isaias Rivera wanted to note that the process to assist client to upload the documents in UCWORKS takes 30 to 45 minutes and is very challenging for individuals who do not have scanners, who forget their passwords, or are unable to use their phones to take pictures. Johnathan Cohen mentioned this is why it is important to slowly enroll them by creating a profile in the American One Stop Operating System, then enroll them in the learning link and then enroll them in the other Title I services to make it easier for the clients and less complicated. Marlene Loff explained the outreach conducted by Isaias Rivera and the amount of support is needed for the clients. Marlene Loff gave details of specific clients who had challenges enrolling in the Title I services. Nasrene Mondol mentioned that since the American Job Center is open their staff can help and they want the clients to come into the centers to help with that need. Jonathan Cohen said he understands this is a problem for all counties. Nasrene Mondol said that timeliness matters in the co-enrollment process. Marlene Loff mentioned she will be talking to her staff so they are aware of which clients are progressing and can be moved forward to Title I services.

**Meeting Schedule:**

- Thursday June 15, 2023
- Thursday September 21, 2023
- Thursday November 30, 2023

**COMMITTEE ADJOURNMENT:**

Chairman Sabater thanked everyone for coming to the meeting.