



Essex County
Workforce Development Board
Zoom 9AM

Minutes from Meeting: April 25, 2024

Attendees: Aleksandra Adamczyk, Mary Alexander, Cristhian Barcelos*, Apryl Caldwell, Maureen Clifford, Evanthia Corrado, Damaris Cruz, Jonathan Iherobien, David DelVecchio*, Bob Diehl*, Carol Dorazio, John Ehret, Keisha Flemming, Joe Hafez*, Amir Hashemi*, Sean Hendricks, Everett Kilgo*, Jackie Lue Raia*, Waltasia Mansano*, Wendy Melendez*, Jobi Odeneye, Valentina Richardson-Green, Maureen Ritchie*, Janine Schaeffer, Nancy Shoukry, Lynn Sternstein, Carla Tention, Willie Tolbert*, Jessica Torres, Amy Vazquez*, Howard Weiss, David Weiner*, Ann Wright

***WDB members**

Minutes from last meeting in February were approved.

Welcome and Introduction

Willie Tolbert welcomed everyone to the meeting and made introductions. He asked for a moment of silence for Congressman Donald Payne who recently passed away.

Pre-Apprenticeship Program

Everett Kilgo, Senior Program Coordinator at the NYC District Carpenter's Training Center in the West Village of Manhattan. They train local residents for union positions with a direct entry program. They are currently recruiting for their newest class which starts on May 6th. The applications are on-line at www.nyccarpenterstrainingcenter.org. There are some documents that need to be attached, like a high school diploma or a GED and a state ID. The program itself is four (4) to five (5) weeks long and gives men and women the opportunity to get a position in the Carpenter's Union. He added that they are in their "hot" period where they are finishing working on the Hudson Yards and they are in the midst of a full renovation of JFK Airport. They only do commercial, large-scale projects. They have been working since 1995 and trained thousands of people and offices were located in Newark but are now located at 395 Hudson Street, NYC. They are still serving all the counties in Northeast New Jersey.

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Director's Report

Howard Weiss stated that we have three (3) new members on the Board that were recently appointed by the Board of Commissioners, Cristhian Barcelos, Gloria Vrabel and Joseph Hafez. Howard added that Waltasia Mansano is scheduled to be on the agenda for next month's Board of Commissioner's meeting.

Howard stated that we are still working on the local plan and hope to get it out to everyone by next week. Also, we are still waiting for some of the organizations to send some information to finalize the MOUs. He added that the committees have been very busy, as we just had a One Stop Training in Mental Health by the Mental Health Association of NJ that was sponsored by the Disability Committee. The next event the Literacy Committee is working on called the Haitian Refugee Symposium and will be on June 10th at Essex County College, West Caldwell Campus. He stated we did push back some other events that the committees are working on to the fall.

John Ehret stated that the unemployment rate in February was at 6.1% for Essex County, which is up from 5.0% last February. However, the labor force has been growing, in January it was 293, 600 and in February it had risen by 2,800. John added that the two (2) largest industries are health care and social assistance, which employees close to fifty thousand (50,00) people. Also, transportation and warehousing employed thirty-four thousand six hundred (34,600.) These two (2) sectors are one third the employment in Essex County. The non-seasonally adjusted rate was 5.1% for the State of New Jersey.

Division Report

Valentina Richardson-Green stated that they are having an ITA Event where they are inviting ITA Vendors and all the participants have been screened to know that they are eligible for an ITA. Participants will be able to see all the offerings and ask questions, employment specialists will be there as well. She added that on May 10th a DMV Bus will be parked at the building for services, but an appointment is recommended. The Job Fair is scheduled for May 30th at Essex County College.

Valentina stated that there are some changes to the ITA policy whereby an individual submits for an ITA and they are denied, there is a panel that will review that decision. They include that an ITA can be done every four (4) years. They are also in the process of developing a fillable complaint form and a fillable determination form. She added that they will be putting together the specs for RFP for some additional class contracts: building & maintenance, childcare, bookkeeping and accounting, social service support assistance, culinary including food service management, security, fire alarms installation, dental assistance, solar panel installation, electrical assistance, construction and HVAC.

Apryl Caldwell stated that the summer youth application is now open until May 12th. They have already filled the two hundred (200) slots and are now running a waiting list. Mary Alexander stated that they are excited about the upcoming Job Fair. She added that for the first time this year they will be providing transportation throughout the county.

Aleksandra Adamczyk stated that there is a big change regarding the reinstatement of sanctions for TANF customers, that do not comply with the work requirement. She added that they are currently working on processes and procedures in order to make everything more seamless and efficient. Valentina added that the state has deferred to the county in the contacting of customers regarding this change and the county will be sending out a letter to let customers know so they won't be negatively affected by it. That is also why they are expanding their offerings. Carla Tention reported that the TANF load is 1,393 current cases.

Industry Partnership

Jobi Odeneye stated that at last month's North Jersey Support Partners meeting an Out of Hospital Nurse Residency Program facilitated by Rutgers University and the DOL apprenticeship program was discussed. It is a twelve (12) month program designed to promote nursing careers in non-hospital settings. There is no tuition cost to the nurse resident. This program assists new graduates in finding work in non-hospital settings and provides on-going support throughout the first year of employment. It offers new graduates the knowledge and tools to transition from student life to a career in non-hospital settings. For more information see: <https://nursing.rutgers.edu/students/residency/>.

Committee Reports:

Business & Economic Development Committee Report

Bob Diehl stated that the committee has been working with the Disability Committee on a training course on the benefits of hiring people with disabilities and also addressing some of the perceived challenges of employing people with disabilities. It was originally scheduled for June but has been

rescheduled for the fall. He added that all of the speakers are lined up except for one. He added that he needs to connect with Apryl at some point in order to address her concerns regarding youth.

Disability Committee

Maureen Ritchie stated that the Disability Committee put on a great training for the One Stop staff on Conflict Resolution. She added that the New Jersey Mental Health Association provided the presentation, and we also had the Mental Health Players. The Mental Health Players are a wonderful group of actors that come in and portray a live scenario with discussion and resolutions. Maureen added that the Employment First Contracts were recently renewed. JVS was one of the recipients and it will be extended for another nine (9) months and giving them another hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) to help individuals with disabilities find work and as a result of the extension can again help to fund an Employer Recognition Event in October.

Literacy Committee

Lynn Sternstein stated the Literacy Committee is working hard on a Haitian Refugee Symposium that is scheduled for June 10th at Essex County College, West Essex Campus. The sub-committee is currently working on finding speakers to address the unique challenges the Haitian immigrants face. She added that with the huge influx of refugees into Essex County this event is very timely and informative for everyone attending. The next meeting is May 7th at 10 pm by Zoom. There is another Literacy Symposium that we are also working on that we hope will be rescheduled for the fall.

Welfare to Work Committee

David Weiner had to leave the meeting early.

Youth Investment Council (YIC)

No Report.

One Stop Committee

Howard stated that the One Stop Committee has been meeting every month.

Oversight Committee & Fiscal Committee

Howard stated that there was one initial meeting and the next one was cancelled. Howard stated that we will be regrouping with these committees and will be rescheduling them.

Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by

Janine Schaeffer

NEXT MEETING DATE: August 22, 2024, 9am

