



Workforce Development Board
County of Middlesex

Economic Development and Business Services Committee Minutes

April 15, 2016

Present: Baden Almonor, Arati Chaudhury (for Padma Arvind), Mariana Beshai-Ascander, Craig Jez, Veronica Jones, Elayne McClaine, Julie Piano, Kathy Shaw
Staff/Guests: Kevin Kurdziel, Carla Cefalo

- 1. Welcome and Introductions Kathy Shaw
a. The lack of employers on the committee was noted. A few are listed as members, but they did not respond to notices of the meeting. Since, the committee has not met in over a year, we may need to re-look at where we are going.
b. Cards for the BRC were handed out. The cards replace a large folder and drive you to the website.
c. Emails are collected at SCORE workshops for emerging entrepreneurs from participants so we can send out Constant Contact blasts. The BRC does have a data base for job seekers and employers so that they can match when requests come in.
d. Kevin Kurdziel spoke about a recent recruitment held in the office that no one attended. We need to find more/other ways to advertise. Baden Almonor said the turnout in Perth Amboy is usually pretty good, but repeat employers don't do as well. Mr. Kurdziel suggested we "vet" the employers better and not accept those who are not getting a decent turnout. Julie Piano spoke about the coding in OSOS and how it has to be exact in order to contact the correct clients. Veronica Jones, veteran's representative, said they had recent recruitments for Wenner Bakery and W. Danley Electrical and even though they work with the state and provide a template for information and request the audience, very few showed up. Mr. Almonor explained that many of the jobs are for commission only or the employers are offering extremely low salaries for the work offered and are using us as a last resort. Resume collection does not always work because many people do not bring resumes or they are poor quality. Some job seekers also do not have the transportation to the recruitment or the job itself. Ms. Shaw offered that the County Business Portal would be a way to let the employers find out about transportation options to their site.
e. We need to connect better with employers in this area and be aware as new ones move into Middlesex County. We need to pool our resources as County departments and may start some discussions with Uber for a project that provides transportation to jobs for 30 days.

- 2. Current Labor Market Information, New Jersey and Middlesex County.....Kevin Kurdziel
a. Current unemployment is 4.4% statewide and 4.2% in Middlesex (18,000 people.) We are third highest in state in raw numbers. Knowing the educational background, and skill sets of these people would help us know what recruitments we should be holding. As usual, the numbers do not include those who are no longer receiving unemployment benefits and have stopped looking for work and those who are again in the job market as the economy improves. The people we are working with now are possibly the harder ones to employ. Overall though, the indicators are positive. The national unemployment rate is lowest since 1973.

3. **Upcoming Job Fair**Kevin Kurdziel
 - a. WCTC will be broadcasting live from the venue before it opens.
 - b. Maybe someone from the Dept. of Labor can be scheduled to appear on air.

4. **Guide by Cell**.....Kathy Shaw
 - a. The County receives inquiries from people looking for locations for businesses and long and short term planning solutions. NJTPA regional planning that includes Middlesex County concerning water borne freight transportation and what areas would be feasible. Manufacturers look at this area because of our location and proximity to transportation, both land and water
 - b. A big challenge for people is trying to find out where to go for information.
 - c. Knowing ahead of time what businesses will be coming into the County and what kind of employees they will need will help us prepare potential employees.
 - d. Guide by Cell is a new marketing, mobile site that can also link with social media. Culture and Heritage already using it and Workforce will be soon. It can send out messages to those who have connected as well as give feedback and analytics to us. We are aiming to be up and running by May 12 so we can get people to sign up at the Job Fair.

5. **WIOA, Developing High Quality Employer Relationships**Kevin Kurdziel
 - a. The fact that no employers are at the meeting today, is something that has to be addressed. Even if they do not have current job openings, we need to have them more involved with the Board and on committees for advice, technical assistance and input on the type of employers and skills that will be needed. It will be a performance measure for the local areas but we do not know how it will be measured yet.
 - b. Other states focus on relationships with businesses with the needs of job seekers coming next. Career pathways and apprenticeships with one organization are being used worldwide. We may need to make some changes.

6. **New Jersey's Talent Networks and Talent Development Centers**Kevin Kurdziel
 - a. Talent Networks have shifted from job seekers to creating high quality relationships with employers. We need to reach out to the other talent networks for representation on this committee.
 - b. County Colleges will partner with the specific Talent Networks to serve dislocated workers and incumbent workers. The colleges will help create the curriculums.
 - c. There is a strategic connection between the arts and economic development of areas.

7. **New Business**
 - a. The next meeting will be in July and we should look to bring more employers into the committee.
 - b. County and State need to coordinate new, consistent marketing information.
 - c. It was mentioned that the Chambers of Commerce might be able to help us network with employers. The key to what we do is businesses and we need to get them on board.

8. **Adjournment**

The next meeting of the Economic Development and Business Services Committee is scheduled for Thursday, July 7, 2016 at 9 AM in WIOA Conference Room B at 550 Jersey Avenue, New Brunswick.