



Workforce Development Board
County of Middlesex

Quarterly Meeting – July 26, 2016

Present:	Gloria Aftanski, Amy Bellisano, Roseann Bucciarelli, Sergo Corvil, Ingrid Coutinho, Kevin Duncan, Alan Fialka, Jason Friedman, Gabriel Lavigne, Poo Lin, Brian Loughlin, Henrietta Wilson (as designee for Angela Mackaronis), José Montes, Laura Morana, Miriam Ruiz, Jill Schiff, Carla Cefalo (as designee for Kathy Shaw), Tim Timberlake, Bernice Proctor Venable, Joanne Vogel
Staff:	Kevin Kurdziel, Baden Almonor, Nina Rios-Rivera, Julie Piano, Claudia Dorsch, Shamara Gatling-Davila, Melinda Walton
Guests:	Tammy D’Alto, Amanda Whelan

Call to Order with Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call

Welcome and Introductions

- The notice of this meeting, pursuant to the “Open Public Meetings Act” NJSA 10:4-10 has been complied with and shall be entered into the minutes of this meeting.”
- New member Ingrid Couthino from the Edison Job Corps was introduced as well as Shamara Gatling-Davila the new WDB Policy Analyst.
- A motion was mad by Bernice Proctor Venable to accept the minutes of the April 26, 2016 as written and forwarded to the member by email ahead of the meeting. It was seconded by Amy Bellisano, a vote was taken, and passed and the minutes were accepted.

Chairperson’s Report

- The start of the new Program Year has been very busy. The New Jersey Department of Labor was late in sending out Notices of Obligations to the local areas which presented many challenges. Some contracts for a couple of our programs had to be extended for 30 or 60 days. In addition, the delay in these notices, impeded the planning process for determining level of service for the new program year, and the necessary staffing levels needed to serve customers. Despite these challenges the WDB staff was able to establish a budget for the new program year, which will be presented to you this morning for your approval.
- There are two significant plans due within the next few months that you should be aware of: (1) The Central New Jersey WDB region must submit its regional plan to the SETC by October 3rd. This plan will outline how the regional partners, Middlesex, Monmouth, Mercer, and Ocean, will work collaboratively in a number different ways. Some of these areas include combining resources, sharing best practices, eliminating duplicate services, and centralizing economic development activities when possible and, (2) Our local area plan is due to the SETC in December and will incorporate all the changes mandated by WIOA. If any member would like to assist with the development of the plan please let Kevin or myself know.
- The SETC submitted the NJ state plan to the US Department of Labor, and is awaiting feedback. It is anticipated that some revisions will be made based on response and input from the Feds. On June 27 and 28, the NJ

Department of Labor and SETC hosted a conference at The College of New Jersey that focused on implementing the state plan and provided for an opportunity for the local areas to provide input to the state regarding many of the provisions in the state plan.

- The Garden State Employment and Training Association now has new leadership, as a result of elections held in May. Eileen Higgins, from Monmouth County is the new president. The Annual GSETA conference will be held September 14th and 15th, at Bally's in Atlantic City. WDB members are encouraged to attend.

Director's Report

- Our new program year has just begun. This is always a busy time when we have to update contracts, develop budgets, review proposals, evaluate employee performance, submit various reports, and close out PY15.
- The Workforce Development Board's Annual Report will be prepared soon. As always, there will be many positive outcomes to report. Some highlights from the report include a reduction in the county's unemployment rate, 40 youth completing their high school equivalency exam, two successful job fairs, numerous employer recruitments, and new businesses locating to Middlesex county, with several others expanding. These achievements along with many others would not be possible without the dedicated staff of the Office of Workforce Development. I would like to recognize their hard work, and thank them for their contribution to our success.
- Mr. Kurdziel is starting his second year as Director of the WDB and sees great opportunity for this board and its members to have a positive impact on Middlesex County. Specifically, this board has the opportunity for developing a strategy for building high quality partnerships with employers. As members of this board, your input is crucial to deciding what direction we want our local workforce area to go. We will be sharing best practices with our regional partners (Monmouth, Mercer and Ocean Counties) and looking for innovative ways to share resources in order to enhance services to our customers.
- In order for this board to develop its long and short term goals, we think it may be a good idea to conduct a one day Board member retreat. This would help in having the board redefine itself and determine its priorities and clarify some of the structure of the Board and expectations for members. Bernice Proctor Venable also noted that our recent presence at the Hispanic Business Expo and availability of materials at some Edison Chamber events is very helpful and the efforts to get out in the public should continue.

Board Committee Reports

Youth Advisory Committee (Julie Piano)

- A report was in the meeting packet giving PY15 statistics for the Youth Program.
- The PY 15 contracts have been extended to August in order to allow us to change they cycle to be September to August instead of July to June which will give us some needed time after the funding is received each spring to set up the new contracts, plan summer programs, have the contracts signed and approved by the Freeholders.
- We are in need of a new chairperson for the YAC since Susan Pasternack has left the Board. Gabriel Lavigne has expressed a willingness to take it on. A new Youth Program Supervisor has been hired.
- Transportation is in place and Industry Tours can begin again. If anyone knows of a good place to bring participants for a tour, please let us know.

Literacy (Gloria Aftanski)

- The Literacy Committee met on June 14 with discussions focusing on funding sources and the new Career Connections platform for job seekers and businesses.
- June had a lot of HSE activity with both testing and graduations. The lower graduation rate may be a reflection of the new college and career readiness standards.
- The Literacy Consortium consists of New Brunswick (as the lead), Perth Amboy, East Brunswick, and South River Boards of Education.

- Ms. Aftanski expressed how impressed she was with the dedication of the Perth Amboy and New Brunswick Adult Schools. They serve over 12,000 individuals on an annual basis.

One Stop (Julie Piano)

- A report with statistics for funding source use for PY15 was included in the meeting packet.
- The Learning Link is doing well reaching 171% of its goal. We received less money this year than last year when we were able to have three classrooms including Computer Literacy.

Disabilities (Julie Piano)

- We are part of the JFK Interface Committee which has its own training programs and graduation. The committee is usually on hiatus during the summer months and will resume in September. Janice Fishbein has been promoted and no replacement has been announced yet.

Economic Development and Business Services (Carla Cefalo)

- The Department is working on marketing, technology, and branding and the County's focus will be on relationships with businesses. Developments in the web presence are the use of Sharepoint and more interactive material. Guide by Cell is now used by both Culture and Heritage and Workforce Development with links to the website.
- In a four phase project, branding is critical and will aim at business owners, residents and employees.
- Rack cards are now available which help people connect with the County so they can find information on things that affect them. It was suggested that these be shared with faith based organizations to distribute when individuals who lose a job come to them for help.
- Workforce Development is consolidated much of their marketing material for consistency as well as planning on re-doing their website. An on-line Resource Directory is being developed.

Staff Reports/Ad Hoc Committees

Business Development (Nina Rios-Rivera)

- A chart showing the activities of the BDU for PY 15 is in the meeting packet and the BDU is continuing outreach with the business development representatives from the NJ Labor and Workforce Development. A lot of interaction with the DOL is now self-service for clients.

WorkFirst New Jersey (Kevin Kurdziel)

- John Ross could not be at the meetings today so Mr. Kurdziel presented the report for WFNJ which was a comparison of PY15 and the previous program year.
 - TANF referrals and enrollments decreased by about 3% and placements in full time employment (over 30 hours) increased by almost 5%. Mr. Kurdziel felt this could be a result of the improved economy.
 - GA and SNAP referrals and enrollments increased by about 23%, and placements in fulltime employment decreased by .4% Completions increased by 7% which includes many individuals that secured employment less than 30 hours which closes their cases because their monthly income exceeds the value of their monthly benefits. The majority of the increase in referrals and enrollments were SNAP recipients.
 - ABAWD recipients are now required to follow all the regulations that had previously been waived by the state. A problem has been identifying those who were affected with many who are scheduled to come into the office not responding. We are working with the Board of Social Services to identify participants. If an individual does not respond or does not want to comply, their benefits will be discontinued. Those who have an exemption or agree to participate will receive increased services.

- WFNJ plan for PY16 will be continued with Middlesex County College and the New Brunswick Adult Learning Center based on their proposals submitted for services TANF, GA, and SNAP participants.

Reentry Employment Committee (Kevin Kurdziel)

- Reentry is becoming a priority and a model is needed to address how to get ex-offenders onto a career path.
- There is a need to set up industries for apprenticeships. A good speaker for this approach would be employers who do work successfully with ex-offenders. Amy Bellisano said focus should be on smaller businesses because the larger ones have a lot of HR policies that make this difficult and the smaller ones have more of a community connection. It was also noted that many ex-offenders have started their own business and would probably be open to hiring ex-offenders.
- Freeholder Polos also is working on the overall reentry issue and we will work with him on the employment aspect.

Action Items

- 1) *PY 2016 Budget (MCOWD 2016-02) Claudia Dorsch*
 - a) The budget to be approved was included in the meeting packet. It gives a summary of how the grant money is spent with a large percentage going directly to clients and services they receive. Overhead is kept to a minimum. The Notices of Obligation (NOO) were received on June 30 which is VERY late.
 - b) Middlesex is one of the two Counties to use the WDP funds which helps us serve clients who may not meet the WIOA requirements. We hope to see it again this year. Most of the grants can carry over some funds into the next PY. WFNJ normally does not allow carry-over, but this year it did extend the time to use the money for one month because of the delay in issuing the NOOs for PY 16.
 - c) A motion to accept the MCOWD budget as presented was called for and made by Gloria Aftanski, seconded by Laura Morana, and passed unanimously. The budget as presented was accepted.
- 2) *Update and revision of the WDB By-Laws (MCOWD 2016-02).....Nina Rios-Rivera*
 - a) The By-Laws Committee met to make the updates and revisions and a copy of the proposed changes was emailed to the membership two weeks ago.
 - b) An addition was the requirement that every member of the Board serve on at least one committee.
 - c) A motion to accept the updates and revision to the By-Laws was called for and made by Bernice Proctor Venable, seconded by Roseann Bucciarelli and passed unanimously. The By-Laws will be updated as proposed.
- 3) *Nomination/Election of Officers Nina Rios—Rivera*
 - a) For this process, Jill Schiff, as Chairperson of the WDB, stepped down as moderator temporarily and Bernice Proctor Venable took over the meeting as Chair of the By-Laws Committee.
 - b) A question was raised if there would be a conflict if someone served as an officer of the Board as well as a Committee Chair. It was explained that this would not be a conflict.
 - c) The proposed slate of officers was emailed ahead of time, included in the packet and read out loud at this point. A motion was called for to accept the slate of officers as presented and made by Gloria Aftanski, seconded by Carla Cefalo and passed unanimously. No nominations were received from the floor and a motion was made by Gloria Aftanski to approve the proposed slate of officer, seconded by Carla Cefalo again, and passed unanimously with one abstention from Amy Bellisano. The new slate of officer was accepted and is now, Jill Schiff, Chair, Amy Bellisano, Vice Chair, and Gabriel Lavigne, Secretary.
 - d) The meeting was handed back to Jill Schiff as Chairperson of the WDB.

WIOA Updates (Kevin Kurdziel)

- Regulations
 - We are meeting tomorrow with the Regional partners about the plan and will report at next meeting what will be presented to the SETC
 - The final WIOA regulations can be seen at ETA website.

- One Stop Procurement
 - This is unprecedented and will be required by next year. We have not yet received clarification from the federal government and would like technical assistance from the state.
 - Middlesex County will go out for procurements but we are not sure of the procedures. We might possibly hire a consultant to run the RFP and the County will respond. Other states have allowed others to come in and run the One Stop but we don't see that happening in New Jersey.

New Business

- Career Connections has been rolled out and replaces Jobs 4 Jersey. It is more interactive and a tremendous improvement.
- Federal funding was given to libraries in East Brunswick and New Brunswick to act as satellite One Stops at times that we are not open.
- We had 40 HSE graduates this Program Year. The graduation ceremony is very important to them and Mr. Kurdziel wanted to thank the staff of the Office of Workforce Development and Middlesex County College for their hard work. The graduates have gone on to Community College, directly to work, and to training programs.
- Harold Wirths has stepped down as Commissioner of Labor and we are waiting to see who take his place. Traditionally, it has been from within. With a new administration coming in 18 months, we are not sure what will happen but will keep you informed.

Adjournment (Jill Schiff)

- A motion was called for and made by Laura Morana to adjourn and seconded by Carla Cefalo.
- A vote was called, the motion passed and the meeting was adjourned.

Handouts:

- Emailed ahead of the meeting:
 - Minutes from the January 26, 2016 meeting
- Emailed ahead of the meeting and in the meeting packets:
 - Agenda
 - WDB Report
 - Performance Report
 - Placement Report
 - Policy Proposal MCOWD 2016-01
 - Policy Proposal MCOWD 2016-02
 - MCOWD Operating Budget
 - Proposed Slate of Officers for PY16
 - Proposed changes to By-Laws
- Included in Meeting Packet in addition to the above:
 - BDU Report
 - Executive Summary of the State Plan

The next meeting will be on October 25, 2016 at 9:00 AM.