



**Workforce Development Board**  
County of Middlesex

*Quarterly Meeting – April 26, 2016*

Present:	Gloria Aftanski, Amy Bellisano, Roseann Bucciarelli, Sergo Corvil, Alan Fialka, Janice Fishbein, Dan Frankel, Jason Friedman, Melyssa Lewis, Poo Lin, Brian Loughlin, Henrietta Wilson (as designee for Angela Mackaronis), José Montes, Laura Morana, Julie Piano, Miriam Ruiz, Jill Schiff, Tim Timberlake, Bernice Proctor Venable, Joanne Vogel
Staff:	Kevin Kurdziel, Baden Almonor, Nina Rios-Rivera, John Ross, 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 members Jason Friedman, Sergo Corvil and Poo Lin were introduced.
- A motion was mad by Bernice Proctor Venable to accept the minutes of the January 26, 2016 as written and forwarded to the member by email ahead of the meeting. It was seconded by Laura Morana. A vote was taken and passed and the minutes were accepted.

**Chairperson’s Report**

- As we begin to close out this fiscal and program year, the local workforce system here in Middlesex County remains in transition, with the continued implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. New Jersey has submitted its state workforce development plan to the US Department of Labor, and we await the final WIOA regulations which should be published in the next several months.
- I am pleased to announce that with the most recent appointments to the board, our membership make-up is in full compliance with WIOA regulations. Some of you will be up for reappointment soon, and you will be receiving a letter confirming that you would like to return to this board.
- The State Employment Training Commission (SETC) continues to revise its policies to be in compliance with WIOA. We will give you a brief over of the most recent changes enacted by the SETC.
- Our committees continue to meet on a quarterly basis, and we will hear reports this morning from the chairs of those committees.
- Finally, I would like to once again thank all of you for your commitment to this board. Your participation and input are appreciated. This is an exciting time for workforce development as we see the economy improve. Our continued focus on the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act will ensure that we have a quality system in place to meet the training needs of Middlesex County residents.

**Director’s Report**

- There are positive indicators in the local economy that are consistent with the decline in the unemployment rate. However, there are still 18,000 unemployed in Middlesex County and they are probably among hardest to serve being long term unemployed, those trying to return to the workforce after not looking for a long period because nothing was available and the WFNJ population. We need to reach out to these people.
- WIOA implementation continues
- The SETC policies are fluid and the changes, both major and minor continue. We will keep you updated.
- A number of deadlines are approaching for implantation of the new WIOA regulations.

### **Presentation by Edison Job Corps**

- Tammy D'Alto from the Edison Job Corps spoke to the members about the programs they offer to 16 – 24 year olds to improve the quality of their lives through vocational and academic training and gave out some materials describing their programs. They live at the facility for 12 to 18 months emphasizing discipline and focus. There are 124 of these facilities around the United States. This branch in Edison has approximately 500 students from all of New Jersey and some from New York and receive WIOA funding. They try to match the training received to the jobs obtained and in some cases steer the youth to higher education or the military. Follow-up is done for up to a year and they do try to steer the clients to the One Stops. Ms. Venable thought the program sounded very impressive and that a successful student should be asked to recommend the program and explain that it was their road to success at events. A video of some graduates speaking about the program as a Public Service Announcement would also help get the word out.
- The Edison Job Corps will soon have a representative on this Board, Ingrid Coutinho
- Laura Morana offered the assistance of her office to the Job Corps.

### **Board Committee Reports**

#### *Youth (Julie Piano)*

- The Youth Advisory Council (YAC) met on February 2. Since then, the program has been re-integrated into the One Stop Operations team and the Youth Program is now called Entry level internships and Employment and Training (ELITE.)
- The WIOA Youth Transition plan was submitted to the SETC and a copy was given to member of the YAC.
- WIOA requires the 75% of state and local Youth funding must be used for out-of-school youth. Middlesex County had already been using 100%. Emphasis is now on work-based learning and requires that at least 20% of youth funds be used for Work Experiences/work activities. This is proving to be challenging.
- A graduation ceremony is being planned for June 14 at Middlesex County College for the youth who have passed their High School Equivalency exams.
- Industry tours will be revisited as transportation continues to be a challenge.
- The Request for Proposals (RFP) for Out of School Youth/Young Adults (ages 16-24) will be made available online at the county website once it is finalized. It will probably be due in early June.
- We are seeking program providers who are able to deliver the fourteen elements that must be made available to the youth participants under WIOA plus the three additional elements required by MCOWD.

#### *Literacy (Gloria Aftanski)*

- The Literacy Committee met on March 8. A core topic is identifying available resources and literacy service providers and then leveraging and collaborating these resources to optimize access.
- The population group that the committee identifies as lacking in available literacy services are the very low literacy or functionally illiterate group as well as individuals with disabilities.
- They also discussed the recently approved SETC Policy Resolutions that directly impact adult literacy
  - #2016-05 College and Career Readiness Standards for Adults

- #2016-06 New Jersey's Definition for Employment first. Competitive employment is the first and preferred post-education activity for everyone, including individuals with the most significant disabilities.
- It was reported at a recent meeting that 85% of the individuals pursuing educational advancement through public programs are not born in the United States.

#### *One Stop (Julie Piano)*

- Program Year 2015 is 3/4s finished and we are doing well in meeting goals in all areas. We need to find more work activities for Youth. Nina Rios-Rivera explained how to interpret the Performance Measures chart included in the meeting folder to the members.

#### *Disabilities (Julie Piano)*

- The Workforce Development Board does not have a stand-alone Disabilities Committee. We have a representative on the JFK Interface Committee. In the future we may want to run our own.

#### *Economic Development and Business Services (Kevin Kurdziel)*

- The next meeting of this committee will take place on July 12.
- A goal is to get the County and State marketing materials uniform and consistent so as not to cause confusion for customer, both business and individuals.
- We are moving toward a multiple media platform, especially in the use of "Guide by Cell" which is a texting application that people can use to get updated information about the Office of Workforce Development and its events.
- This committee needs to have more business member representation. If anyone is interested or knows of any business person not on the Board itself who is interested, please let us know.
- There was a criticism of the upcoming meeting being moved to 10 AM because it interrupts the business day and people can't always leave their office to attend a meeting. Earlier, as usual, is better. We will survey members to come up with an agreeable time and day for future meetings.

### **Staff Reports/Ad Hoc Committees**

#### *Business Development (Nina Rios-Rivera)*

##### *Business Services*

- The BDU is continuing outreach with the team of four business representatives from the NJ Labor and Workforce Development and County staff.
- Recruitments are held weekly. They are advertised through State and County resources but participation is lower than expected. There are fewer "walk-ins" because Unemployment has moved out of our building.
- The business climate has been changing and it is again becoming a jobseeker market which is a positive sign that the economy is rebounding.
- The state has a list of what they consider appropriate credentials, but employers are looking more at soft skills in employees. Registered apprenticeships are automatically eligible to be on the ETPL. The employer has to request them and there is a much shorter application process.

##### *Community Relations*

- We have presented 11 workshops, serving 110 at libraries in the county on the services of the One Stop, job search techniques, resumé writing, interviewing tips and what employers are looking for
- In partnership with SCORE, quarterly sessions are presented on various Entrepreneurship topics serving 324 participants.
- Member of the Small Business Development Advisory Council.

- Attend and present at numerous community and Chamber of Commerce events.

#### *Monitoring*

- Staff is also responsible for monitoring and coordinating employment services with training providers. We review compliance with the Master Agreement and ask for corrective action if needed and meet with customers to assess their needs. We may need to relook at the policy of allowing repeat training for a client so that we can have them work toward stackable credentials.
- Amanda Whelen from the Health Talent Development Center introduced herself and explained that they are working to stabilizing requirements for training programs to provide more consistency.

#### *WorkFirst New Jersey (John Ross)*

- Contract monitoring and program reviews have been completed with our service providers for WFNJ customers. Areas of concern have been cited and remediated or addressed by the vendors. Each are in substantial compliance with contractual obligations.
- The RFP for programs for WFNJ clients is now called Statement of Work. Since both current vendors (New Brunswick Adult Learning Center and Middlesex County College) are providing a high level of service we decided not to do a competitive RFP. Responses from them are due on May 2, 2016 with programs starting July 1.
- The ABAWD (Able Bodied Adults without Dependents) program now becomes operational on May 1, 2015 in Middlesex. Cooperation between the Board of Social Services and One Stop staff brought the expected number of participants down to 375-400 from 1,100 individuals; a high percentage of those are not responding or applying for exemptions. Programs are in place to comply with the State and Federal Government's requirements of 20 hours of work related activities. Multiple notices are sent to clients before the Board actually cuts off benefits as required.

#### *Reentry Employment Committee (Kevin Kurdziel)*

- This is a new committee focusing on creating employment opportunities as an ex-offender exits the County and State facilities.
- While similar to a committee formed by Freeholder Polos, this committee has the single focus of supplying a benefit to both the employer and the ex-offender.
- In trying to find a different approach, apprenticeship will play a big role in plans being made.
- Committee members include Donna Scalia of the NJ DOL Apprenticeship Program, Len Ward, Department of Corrections and representatives from DVR.

#### **Recent Policy Updates – SETC** *(Kevin Kurdziel)*

- Our designation as a Local Area has been requested and approved.
- The Combined State Plan was submitted to the federal government. That submission is being considered a draft and another one will be submitted. A longer public comment period will be given because of the criticism on the very short amount of time allowed for the first submission.
- Additional performance measures are being put in place. A significant one will be the requirement to establish high quality employer partnerships. More can be seen on the SETC website.

#### **New Jersey Career Connections** *(Julie Piano)*

- Career Connections will be replacing Jobs 4 Jersey and will roll out on July 1 as an improved way to interact with us on one website. Middlesex is a beta site and will start using it soon.

#### **WDB and the Program Year 2016 Budget** *(Kevin Kurdziel)*

- We are waiting for our Notices of Obligation from the New Jersey Department of Labor for Program Year 2016. New Jersey was given a slight increase from the federal government, so we anticipate flat funding or a slight increase.
- For the first time, the WDB must now approve our budget for the year. The Executive Committee will act as a Budget Committee and review it and make recommendations and present it to the WDB at the July meeting to approve. There could be some timing issues with the dates information is available and due to the Freeholders.

#### **2016 Board Resolution Format** (*Kevin Kurdziel*)

- We will adopt the SETC process of presenting in writing to the Board any proposed action items before the meeting so everyone has the information to look over ahead of time.
- We hope to have an orientation for new members soon. Everyone is encouraged to attend because of the many changes in the past year.

#### **Election Process for Program Year 2016** (*Nina Rios-Rivera*)

- The By-Laws/Membership committee will meet in May to review and make any changes to the current By-Laws. New members for this committee are needed.
- They will also develop a slate of officers to be voted on at the July meeting. We may need to add the position of Treasurer since the WDB now approves the budget.
- If anyone is interested in running for office, please let a staff member know.
- The slate must go out to the membership by June 26.

#### **New Business**

- We are preparing for a job fair to be held at Middlesex County College on May 12. We expect to have close to 100 employers. WCTC will broadcast live from the venue that morning as well as having Mr. Kurdziel as a guest on the regular morning show on May 3.
- Mr. Kurdziel attended the recent presentation of awards to the Middlesex County VoTech schools. Brian Loughlin explained that they have a new Advanced Manufacturing program that is progressing nicely with the possibility of becoming a pre-apprenticeship program. The carpenters already have a program in place. Each county has a coordinator for apprenticeships; Dawn Lystad is the one for Middlesex County. Many jobs can be adapted for apprenticeships and we should encourage employers to develop apprenticeship programs.
- Mr. Kurdziel acknowledged that it was good working with Mr. Laughlin and Dr. Morana as some counties do not have such a good working relationship with the schools.
- Ms. Rios-Rivera explained a grant opportunity of \$250,000 for 2 years for those who complete an ESL Civic Education program that will be utilized by PRAB and MCC. We will collaborate with them by offering \$200,000 worth of training to 200 people.

#### **Adjournment** (*Jill Schiff*)

- A motion was called for and made by José Montes to adjourn and seconded by Julie Piano.
- A vote was called, the motion passed and the meeting was adjourned.

#### Handouts:

- Emailed ahead of the meeting:
  - Agenda
  - Minutes from the January 26, 2016 meeting
  - WDB Report
  - Performance Report
  - Placement Report
  - BDU Report
- Included in Meeting Packet:
  - Agenda
  - Minutes from the January 26, 2016 meeting
  - WDB Report
  - Performance Report
  - Placement Report
  - BDU Report
  - Letter from Howard Wirths concerning the ABAWD notice
  - 2016 Resource Directory
  - 2014 WIB Annual Report
  - Job Fair Flyer

**The next meeting will be on July 26, 2016 at 9:00 AM.**