



**Workforce Development Board**  
County of Middlesex

**Reentry Employment Committee**  
**September 28, 2016 – 9:30 AM**

Present:	Julio Briones, Luis Fernandez, Robert Kantor, Yvette Molina, Peter Ruffini, Donna Scalia, Kathy Shaw, Pearl Thompson
Staff:	Shamara Gatling-Davila, Kevin Kurdziel, Melinda Walton

**1) Welcome/Introductions**

- a) Kevin Kurdziel updated members on personnel changes in the Office of Workforce Development. Nina Rios-Rivera retired and Nelson Laguer-Crespo will take over the Business Development Unit in November. Shamara Gatling-Davila will be the Workforce Development Board policy analyst.

**2) THREAD Reentry Committee, Video**

- a) Mr. Kurdziel gave an update on an “orientation” video for the THREAD committee headed by Freeholder Polo that is planned to be shown upon entry to the County jail explaining the services that are available including information about employment upon exiting. Some members on this committee are also part of the THREAD committee and Parole is a lead reentry agency. We would like this WDB committee to be involved with THREAD. If anyone has any suggestions on things to be included, please let us know. We need to have included a comprehensive overview of the One Stop and services we offer. THREAD is trying to attract employers to the County and educate them on the advantages of hiring ex-offenders and the best way to do this is one-to-one networking, not general meetings.

- 3) Meeting Schedule** Going forward the committee meetings will be held on Wednesdays on a quarterly basis, the same as the other WDB committees.

**4) Business Partnerships**

- a) New directives under WIOA are to develop “high quality partnerships” with employers. Our focus will be more on what businesses need in terms of employees rather than on “customer choice” when it comes to career training. We will make sure they know all the types of clients we serve without emphasizing “ex-offender.” Salesforce has a way of indicating any “second chance” employers. Our supervision and incentives will garner better results for both employer and employee and encourage employers to participate.
- b) Business relationships will be relevant to all partners at the One Stops and we should try to promote apprenticeships to ALL types of businesses, not just the usual ones in the “trades.” Donna Scalia pointed out that using WIOA grant money and going through apprenticeship does not mean not going to college. There is currently a “Construction Career Awareness for Women” in place right now. Mr. Kurdziel asked how we could be informed when someone completes the program and when they are released, so we can work with them.
- c) Apprenticeship programs had been in place in Rahway but it no longer exists. There were issues finding instructors with the proper credentials. When the Department of Corrections was approached, they said that no

one was interested in going into the programs. It was suggested that retirees who were union members could be approached and that the prison population itself might have inmates who were union members and could provide instruction.

- d) This committee will work in conjunction with the TREAD committee, focusing on the employment aspect.
- e) At or by the next meeting, we should identify employers based on relationships we have developed and appropriate employment sectors and come up with an outline and goals. Members will decide who will be handling heading or involved with the different areas. Kathy Shaw stated that we should create a model for reentry in Middlesex County. Mr. Kurdziel stated that we need someone from the Department of Corrections on this committee.

#### **5) WIOA Updates**

- a) WIOA is entering its second year and the rules and regulations have been published on the DOL website.
- b) We are preparing the local and regional plans to submit for approval by the State and Freeholders.
- c) There are not many specific references to “reentry” in the Regional plans but are included as “special populations” and there will be more specific information in the Local plans.

**6) GSETA Conference** There are not many workshops on reentry or WFNJ at the upcoming conference.

**7) Job Fair October 4, 2016** at the Woodbridge Community Center

#### **8) Miscellaneous**

- a) Donna Scalia raised a question about the \$5,000 funding for apprenticeships appearing on new brochures. Mr. Kurdziel said we get that information from the state and have been told that WIOA allows us to use some funding for apprenticeships.
- b) At the next WDB meeting we will discuss the requirement that 20% of funds be used for incumbent worker programs and ways to build a partnership with employers, but are still waiting for more details.
- c) Wednesdays is still the best day for this committee to meet.
- d) The next WDB meeting is October 25 and is open to the public.
- e) Yvette Molina spoke about upcoming events at Elijah’s Promise.

#### **9) Adjournment**

**The next meeting of the Reentry Employment Committee will be December 20, 2016.**