



Workforce Development Board
County of Middlesex

Reentry Employment Committee
March 21, 2017 – 9:30 AM

Present:	Amy Bellisano, Roseann Bucciarelli, Luis Fernandez, Barbara Koonz, Melyssa Lewis, Angel Perez, Donna Scalia, Kathy Shaw
Staff:	Shamara Gatling-Davila, Kevin Kurdziel, Diane Seavers

1) Welcome/Introductions

- a) Kevin Kurdziel greeted those in attendance and updated members on purpose of the Reentry Employment Committee. The purpose of this committee is how we can make employment more accessible to people coming out of the criminal justice system.

2) Review & Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting

- a) Everyone introduced themselves and the minutes from the previous meeting were approved. There were no questions/concerns about the minutes, so Kathy Shaw made the 1st motion to approve and Shamara Gatling-Davila the 2nd. Mr. Kurdziel gave an update on the THREAD committee headed by Freeholder Polo. THREAD is currently not holding any meetings and as a result, this Reentry committee may take on some of the issues once covered through the THREAD committee.

3) Distribution of Re-Entry Report

- a) The Hamilton Project report from October of 2016 was distributed with information regarding the barriers and experiences ex-offenders have when trying to reenter society and the job market. Kevin Kurdziel has asked for feedback from those that review the report. This can be a great tool to use if applying for grants in the future for funding to serve the ex-offender population.

4) WIOA Transitional Employment

- a) New guidance under WIOA from the government state with the WBD approval, up to 10% of Adult and Dislocated Worker funding can be used for transitional jobs for “special populations.” In this case, the special population can be ex-offenders, those on parole and those that have maxed-out of their sentence. During the April 2017 WDB meeting a policy resolution will be presented to outline a time line for payment and those eligible for this type of funding. The WDB will be able to vote on this policy.
- b) A meeting was held with Glopak Corporation which is a manufacturing company located in South Plainfield, NJ. This company manufactures custom plastic bags. This company is ex-offender friendly and wants to hire ASAP. Looking to fill the following positions: Warehouse Supervisor/Manger, machine operator, foreman, and willing to train those that are hired. The facility is open Monday through Saturday. This company does random drug testing, but unsure if background checks are completed.
- c) OJT and the incentives attached were mentioned, but not the center of the discussion while meeting with Glopak. They are looking to hire immediately and are open to OJT and the incentives in the future, if applicable, but not their focus now.

5) Apprenticeship Program at County Jail

- a) Kevin met at the County Jail in September with Brian Ferguson and Donna Scalia in reference to Landscaping Technician and Horticultural apprenticeship for youth ages 18-24. In the future, the age range may change, but the pilot program will start with youth. WIOA youth work experience funding can be used to subsidize their wages.
- b) More details to come as Warden Cranston partners with MCOWD to create programs for the youth in the Middlesex County Jail. In the future we can look into apprentice programs for adults.
- c) There is a Social Work Team located in the Jail to help with discharge planning.
- d) Discharge planning is also done by NJ Association of Correction 2/3 days a week 60-90 days prior to the release of the inmates. They are connected to Social Services and other agencies so they can receive the help they need.
- e) Important aspect of this apprenticeship program to have jobs waiting for those that complete the program once they are released. It would be great to get some additional state funding to help in this endeavor.

6) Marketing One Stop Services to Re-Entry Population

- a) Strategizing the best method of marketing to jobseekers and employers. Goal is to have employers lined up for those that complete training. Buy in also has to come from the Probation/Parole agency as well, so that the information is filtered to those in the reentry population. The bail reform process is crucial to connect with.
- b) Kathy Shaw suggested the One Stop Centers host an Ex-offender friendly service/job fair.
- c) Amy Bellisano mentioned it would be great if probation officers were able to meet with their clients at the client's workplace. Transportation to work and to the probation office might be stringent on a person that might not have a license or own a vehicle. She also mentioned having a business card/person of contact attached to the marketing brochure used for the Reentry population.
- d) Diane gave a brief overview of the presentation held by the Reentry Corporation on the expungement process.
- e) Kevin has an idea of one day having a One Stop Career Center that focuses on the Reentry population. They will be able to receive all the services geared to their possible barriers in one location. He will look more into that option once the Non Profit status is achieved. For now, the focus will remain on the marketing Road Show to inform the municipalities about the One Stop services.
- f) Barbara mentioned a good marketing tool could include a resource card with not only a contact number for the One Stop Career Center, but other county resources like AA/rehabs, social services, food banks etc.

7) County Golf Course Landscaping Jobs

- a) County Golf Course is hosting a recruitment event on 3/22/2017 to hire 10-12 people for full-time, seasonal positions. Ex-offender friendly and willing to train if those hired do not already have the skills. The positions will be for Golf Course Landscaping. Applications will be available on site during the recruitment and the average pay is expected to be \$12 an hour.
- b) Business Development and Education office is working with the new Master Gardener at Rutgers to teach people the proper way to maintain a garden/flower beds and general landscaping. This type of training can help people successfully start a landscaping business if that is their career path.

8) Meeting Schedule for Remainder of Year

- a) The plan is for this committee to continue to meet quarterly.
- b) The meeting schedule for the remainder of the year is:
 - June 20, 2017
 - September 19, 2017
 - December 19, 2017
- c) If there are any changes in the schedule, a notice will be sent out to keep everyone informed.

9) Misc./New Business

- a) Updates were given on the status of the Incumbent Worker Training with Sunny Delight scheduled to start at the beginning of April.
- b) We should start thinking about an award/recognition for the businesses we are working closely with. This can be used as a marketing tool for other businesses to then work with us for recruitments/incumbent worker training, etc. Sunny Delight will be submitted for nomination of the Business Award through GSETA.
- c) An ex-offender friendly, participation, logo to be used by companies is a good idea for marketing, but a slippery slope due to ban the box and some companies that are ex-offender friendly may not want to use the logo.

10) Adjournment

- a) Kathy Shaw made the motion to adjourn and Donna Scalia 2nd the motion.

The next meeting of the Reentry Employment Committee will be June 20, 2017.