



Workforce Development Board
County of Middlesex

Reentry Employment Committee
March 20, 2018 – 9:30 AM

Present:	Amy Bellisano, Julio Briones, Roseann Bucciarelli, Anthony Capece, Luis Fernandez, Melyssa Lewis, William Lim, Yvette Molina, Miriam Ruiz, Donna Scalia and Kathy Shaw (via phone)
Guest & Staff:	Tasha Hogan; Kevin Kurdziel, Diane Seavers

1) Welcome/Introductions

Kevin Kurdziel

- a) Kevin Kurdziel greeted those in attendance and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

2) Review & Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting

Kevin Kurdziel

- a) There were no questions/concerns about the previous minutes, so Kathy Shaw made the 1st motion to approve and Roseann the 2nd.

3) Presentation

Tasha Hogan, NJ Reentry Corp.

- a) Office of Workforce Development gained a major partner with New Jersey Reentry Corporation (NJRC). There is now a NJRC office located in New Brunswick. The Middlesex County One Stops and Office of Workforce Development have increased the partnership by offering on-site, weekly presentations at the NJRC office in New Brunswick.
- b) February 26, 2018 was the first date NJRC started accepting client. Initially, there is a 5 (five) day program. Customers are more than welcome to visit the NJRC after that time period if they are in need of further assistance. Employment specialist are also part of the staff to administer mock interviews and to identify Job readiness, resumes, workforce etiquette, importance of appearance, there is a case worker and social worker that meets with each customer.
- c) Short term and Long term goals are discussed with the customers. Gainful employment is a goal after the first week or so of services. NJRC offers license restoration assistance. Surcharges are not covered, but restoration fee alone is. NJRC helps customers navigate the process and William Lim is the General Counsel to help along with Breanne Peters doubling as the legal. She pulls the driver’s abstracts to help with the process. Assistance is also provided for housing resources and obtaining their driver’s license. Customers also have access to computers at the NJRC New Brunswick location. SkillUp is encouraged for those that frequent the office.
- d) Resources are centralized to help customers navigate the process smoothly. TD Bank has partnered with New Brunswick NJRC to assist in financial literacy. They allow customers from NJRC to open checking bank accounts and they put down the first \$25 to start those accounts.
- e) Referral tracker is used to track customers. Walk-ins are welcome as well. Registrations can also be completed over the phone.
- f) NJRC works with expungement on a case by case basis. Filing fees is not an expense the NJRC can provide for every customer at this time. Every situation is different and some cases are not eligible for expungements. Very few customers are eligible for expungement after being released from county or state facilities.
- g) Has been pushing back against the Trades/Construction Unions for them to be more lenient on requirements.

4) County Jail Apprenticeship Project

Kevin Kurdziel

- a) The plan was to build a Hoop House at the County Jail for an agriculture pre-apprentice training. The Hoop House would allow those being released to have an agriculture training background to then attend a more comprehensive agriculture training or obtain employment. With the transition in Trenton and other factors, the funding for the Hoop House was not granted. The intention is to still acquire some type of agriculture/landscaping pre-apprenticeship training at the county either by reapplying for this grant or any other Department of Labor Notice of Grant Opportunity. All updates will be provided as they become available.

5) NJ DOLWD Transition

Kevin Kurdziel

- a) NJ has a new Governor, Phil Murphy. There have been numerous transitions with administration and Department of Labor. Robert Angelo is the new Commissioner. He is a resident of Middlesex County and aware of the county's challenges and best practices. He is committed to innovation and best practices, even as it relates to reentry. Confident he will work with us and become a great partner. He would like to see the local areas operate autonomously. His notion is to give local areas opportunities to develop programs specific to that county.
- b) New Assistant Commissioner for Workforce Development, Hue Bailey comes from Philadelphia works. He has expressed the desire and commitment to work with local workforce areas and bring innovative ideas to NJ.
- c) As new people are appointed, updates will be given on the role and how it effects the Department of Labor and workforce.

6) ITA Funding Remainder of PY 2017

Kevin Kurdziel

- a) Middlesex County Office of Workforce Development is winding down on the funding for this program year. Some Adult funds were transferred over to Dislocated Worker (DW) funds because majority of the DW funds were exhausted. Calendars are booked through the first week of May with counselors.
- b) A few appointments have been set to the side for customer referrals from the NJRC.
- c) If any clients from NJRC have work restrictions due to being on probation or parole, please inform the counselor so the appropriate steps can be made to ensure training and employment requirements are met. The client's probation or parole officer details along with any driver's abstracts would be helpful for the counselor as well.

7) SkillUp Middlesex

Kevin Kurdziel

- a) SkillUp has increased the profile of Workforce Development in Middlesex County. On October 3, 2017, internal staff were registered through 2/15. During that time period 109 people were registered. The official Middlesex County roll-out was on February 14, 2018. Since then, another 255 have been registered. There are approximately 4,500 courses online to choose from with SkillUp ranging from: Academic to work-readiness, Microsoft, Project Management, Six Sigma and IT courses, just to name a few.
- b) SkillUp Middlesex is important because about 8,000 people walked through the Middlesex County One-Stops for some type of service during the 2016 program year. Of that estimated 8,000 only about 500 people were sent to an Individual Training Account (ITA). In order to reach the other 7,500 people that did not attend training for various reasons, SkillUp was purchased.
- c) Kevin has allowed staff to use SkillUp for up to an hour a week, during worktime, to update their skills as well.
- d) Guide by Cell is used to market SkillUp along with the county newsletters and social media.
- e) Each license for SkillUp is for six months. After six months, the license can be renewed as long as the Middlesex County Office of Workforce Development has its subscription.
- f) The Federal Government annually releases Reentry Employment Opportunity information comprised of ex-offender programs. There is a webinar on April 6, 2018. The link to the webinar can be emailed, but the link is not operational yet. An advertisement for funding for a One-Stop Career Center within correction facilities is usually mentioned. If funding for it becomes available, with blessings from the Warden, Middlesex County

Administration and Freeholders, Kevin would like to eventually have a dedicated Reentry One-Stop within the correction facility.

8) Identification of Reentry Priorities for WDB Strategic Plan

Kevin Kurdziel

- a) Through the Governance Planning and Performance Committee a strategic plan will be created. Each Workforce Development Board committee will come up with two or three priorities for the committee. Since this reentry committee is currently working on creating a more seamless system for the reentry population, creating a clearing house of employers that work with reentry population and transitional jobs, those can be priorities.

9) Election of Committee Chair and Vice Chair

Kevin Kurdziel

- a) At the next meeting we would like to identify or elect someone for Chair and Vice Chair. As you chair the committee, you will have staff support.

10) Misc./Old/New Business

- a) Julio Briones, Answer Man Specialty Service, is a self-proclaimed personal crisis manager. He was previously incarcerated and has started his own business to help those in need. He does Reentry coaching for people and their families on how to relate to one another, deal with divorce, and prepare for a positive reentry from the time of arrest. He also helps to setup services for drug rehab as well. This is a private-pay service. He hosts lectures and workshop for non-profit organizations. He is the co-author of a book entitled, Stress Free Divorce. More recent, Julio has created for-profit training/coaching programs for small corporate entities. He trains the management staff to understand the difficulties and transition problems the reentry population have. They will be able to identify/relate to their employees as a result of this training/coaching. He has created a new position as the First Personal Crisis Manager in the country. He started a Pod Cast called An Ounce of Prevention and releases two episodes a week. Feel free to visit AnswerManSpecialtyServicesLLC.com for more details.
- b) Julio will have a press release in the near future to announce the partnerships he now has.
- c) Julio also hosts workshops: Your Personal Crisis Tool Box.
- d) Kevin would like to host a summit on how important it is to the economy for employers to be “returning citizens” friendly. The various incentives associated with hiring this population along with success stories should be highlighted

11) Meeting Adjourned

The next meeting of the Reentry Employment Committee will be Tuesday, June 26, 2018, at 9:30am.

Conference Room G