

MIDDLESEX COUNTY WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD

BUSINESS OUTREACH TASK FORCE MEETING

JANUARY 10, 2013

Present: Baden Almonor, Hilda Alonso, Jane Brady, Robert Crawford, Elliot Fishman, Garret Gega, Jennifer Gonzalez, Maria Gonzalez, Veronica Jones, Adrienne Keaton, Maryann Lovas, Chris Murphy, Nina Rios-Rivera, Vin Samuel and Bernice Venable

There were no additions or corrections to the meeting notes from the October 4, 2012 meeting. Jane noted that the chair, Kathy Shaw was unable to be present due to a conflict and would give her report on activities of the Economic Development unit of the county at the next meeting. Jane told the members that Freeholder Director Christopher Rafano did mention in his message at the reorganization meeting that the Freeholders were going to look into building a minor league baseball stadium in south county. Jane also reminded the committee that Kathy was working on a GIS software system for the county but Jane did not know the expected completion date.

Nina gave the task force members data on the activities of both the business resource center (BRC) and the business development unit (BDU). The BDU has contacted over 900 companies to date and continues to hold workshops and consultations for small businesses. 3 OJT contracts have been written. Positive recruitments are held for companies and staffing agencies are now requesting positive recruitments here as well. The BDU unit is developing a survey so we can evaluate our services by the feedback of those companies who have utilized our services. The results will be shared with the task force.

Hilda Alonso, the MCWAG coordinator, noted 6 young people have been placed in full time employment in medical offices or day cares as part of our new youth program. After an out of school youth has completed a training program, the youth is placed in a full time position to get experience and we pay the salary for 3 months. The expectation is that the company will hire the youth after the 3 months but that is not required.

Chris Murphy, a Business Representative, said NJ hopes to have the software, Salesforce, ready for use by business development units, talent network coordinators and business representatives by the spring. This will produce a database showing all the companies contacted by all entities and the outcomes of those contacts. The database will make certain one company is not contacted by multiple state folks and allow all entities to use the data for planning and outreach. Chris also mentioned the push to get companies to place their job orders in Jobs4Jersey.com. Whenever the state starts a new funding program, they are trying to name it with ...4jersey at the end to be consistent (Recovery4Jersey, etc.).

Jane asked Chris if he has heard of any attempt by the state to research all the companies impacted adversely by Superstorm Sandy so recovery efforts can be focused where needed. Chris is not aware of any such effort but he will check with state officials in his unit. Bernice commented that one company being adversely impacted means many companies will be impacted from that one company due to how that company did business and with whom. It has a snowballing effect throughout the region.

Jane informed the task force members that she has asked for assistance from the talent network coordinators to make certain the training programs we use are including the essential skills in their programs that match what the employers need. She cited the example that some training schools do not include certification in CPR for medical assistants yet doctors want their staff to have that certification. Jane is waiting for replies to her requests.

Bob Crawford, the Financial Services Talent Network Coordinator, was present at the meeting and gave an overview of the TN efforts in doing presentations to Jersey Job Club members as well as One Stop Staff for their respective industry sectors. He noted that the customized training grants from the state are now specific to companies who are looking to train for specific skills with employment at the end.

The task force was delighted to hear that there is now an SBDC in Middlesex County on the Livingston Campus of Rutgers University. Garret, Nina and Jane visited the location which opened on January 2. The staff of the One Stop will work with the SBDC to advertise this service and Bernice noted it is essential that information be broadcast as soon as possible and as broadly as possible to help small business. All workshops and consultations will now be held at that location rather than at our location, although our staff did express concern over business folks finding the site and parking for the events to Elayne McClaine, the Director of the Center. Elayne is very open to all suggestions about providing services in the most effective way possible at her Center and is eager to work with the business community in Middlesex. Jane asked for suggestions for other companies who would be interested in serving on the task force since we do not have many business partners at this time.

Chamber events attended by staff were reviewed, with Nina noting how the MCRCC Hispanic Outreach events have been growing over the last 2 years and that the Hispanic Expo at the Pines had 80 vendors and was very well attended by the public. The next expo will be in the middle of July, with Meet and Greet events held every other month during the year. A job fair will be held on March 14 in Piscataway at a location to be selected by the township. Middlesex County College has begun adding ex/internships to more of their training programs to assist the graduates to obtain jobs more easily. This had been discussed at meetings between our staff and MCC previously. They are developing MOUs with firms to assist with internship placements.

Jane made the task force aware of the issue in the healthcare sector that almost all jobs are per diem jobs, including RNs. This will make convincing people to go into the healthcare field

difficult in the future, although right now in our region, there is very little demand for workers in this sector.

Bernice suggested we invite the new SBDC director to the full WIB meeting on January 29 and staff will do so.

NEXT MEETING DATE: April 4, 2013 – 8:30 am (Meeting notice reminder will be forwarded prior to meeting)