

MIDDLESEX COUNTY WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD

BUSINESS OUTREACH TASK FORCE

MEETING OF JULY 11, 2013

Present: Baden Almonor, Hilda Alonso, Sharita Brown, Bobbi Budd, Elliot Fishman, Kirsten Giardi, Peggy Kotlarz, Leonor Mamroud, Adrienne Keaton, Maryann Lovas, Elayne McClaine, Chris Murphy, Vin Samuels, Charles Stovalle

Staff: Nina Rios Rivera, Jane Brady

Chair Kathy Shaw had a last minute conflict so Carla Cefalo, Economic Development Representative, chaired the meeting. Carla noted that the county business portal was almost ready for release. This GIS-based website will offer comprehensive information on our towns, real estate information in the county as well as county resources and funding possibilities. Interested companies can learn about Middlesex County from this website and then initiate contact as appropriate. The Office of Economic Development works closely with partners such as the BAC, UEZ and others in the field. A South Korean delegation visited the office last week to learn about economic development(ed) in the United States.

Rather than duplicate the efforts of the Convention and Visitors Bureau of the Middlesex County Regional Chamber of Commerce, the county ED office will not offer services to businesses regarding the 2014 Super Bowl and Special Olympics. This idea had been discussed at the last meeting, but the efforts of the Chamber are sufficient for this endeavor. Carla noted that perhaps businesses in Middlesex could begin now to hype the Super Bowl by using it in their ads for specials for customers to build awareness and interest for those businesses.

Jane informed the members that unfortunately the "Made in Middlesex" day scheduled for May 10 had to be cancelled due to lack of response by manufacturing companies. While the program had outstanding speakers for the panels, with only 10 companies registered, it was not feasible to hold the event. Over 500 companies in the county each received 2 letters about the event so marketing was more than adequate but response was not.

Jane gave the statistics for the 2 job fairs held this year and noted the three that will be held from July through October. Now there are waiting lists of companies who want to attend but we do not have space for them. More than 360 job seekers are attending the events as well. Each company attending is now asked to complete a very short survey before they leave so we can have data on their evaluation of the job fair relative to their hiring needs. Jane noted they try to not have to pay for space for the job fairs, but the one in October at the Labor Ed building of Rutgers in New Brunswick will require payment for tables and chairs, plus the use of the space. Unfortunately, there are no other locations with parking in New Brunswick that can handle such a large event except for hotels and their cost is even higher.

Nina distributed a hand out with the year- end report for the BRC and reviewed the highlights. This copy will be forwarded to those members not present at the meeting and a copy will be included on the website with these notes as well as in the official file. As part of the report, Nina noted the shift to staffing agencies being used more by companies; the rise in contingency jobs; the increase in per diem positions and temporary hires. Jane noted that this is a major shift and that the entire workforce system needs to adjust to this shift and asked Kirsten to discuss this with her colleagues in Trenton so the One Stops can make adjustments in how we conduct our services. The efforts of staff in assisting the retail store, Boscov, moving into Woodbridge Center, was also noted for the information of the members.

Chris Murphy reviewed how the Business Representatives like himself and Sharita are to market the Jobs4 Jersey website. It was noted, however, that companies are not getting referrals from this site and this is frustrating many companies and turning them away from using the site. Chris also noted that when companies enter their own job orders, many times the information is not complete and Nina also said the BDU staff encourages companies to allow our staff to enter the job orders to ensure accuracy. Chris does the same to the companies he speaks to. Chris noted the BRS are working to develop on-the-job training grants with funds from Recovery4Jersey funds. 700 grants are to be written in one year with these funds, directed at long term unemployed. Salesforce, the database for inputting all contacts with companies in New Jersey by ALL staff, whether state or county, is now up and running. Chris also noted that many of the available jobs are sales jobs, commission based, and that is difficult for most job seekers.

Jane informed the members that the contract with Middlesex County College which helps to pay for a job developer to work with WIA grads at MCC will be renewed. The funds for this part time position come from money that was part of the hold back funds for each of the ITAs at the college. Now MCC receives 85% of the cost of the training and the rest of the money is used for this contract. Thus we have the job developer for the WIA grads at MCC, plus Garret who is the job developer in our office for other WIA grads, and Hilda who is the job developer for our WIA youth, all working to help our customers get employment. Of course, the Employment Services staff are doing that for their customers as well.

The SETC is forming Talent Advisory Councils for the seven priority sectors selected by New Jersey. Jane requested the members to advise her of any company they may know who would be interested in serving on these councils. The councils will assist the state in understanding the workforce needs of these sectors and how the workforce system can better serve those needs.

The next meeting will be on October 3rd at 9:00 AM.

Written by Jane Brady

Business Resource Center

Preliminary Report 2012-2013

The Business Resource Center continues to work with employers to encourage the use of Jobs4Jersey to post job orders and to search for jobseekers. We offer to provide the service or advise them how they can create their own account and post their own job vacancies. At times the J4J website does have glitches that we then are asked by employers to assist with a resolution.

Staff has been visiting companies to market our services, but in particular to encourage job postings, recruitments and to offer the other array of available services such as On-the-Job Training, incentives of WOTC, Skills4Jersey, and Opportunities4Jersey, as well other financial incentives. Unfortunately, while we offer this, we have found that many have an interest in the job posting service, but few take advantage of the other services.

Recruitments during the past year have been primarily from staffing agencies seeking temporary workers. The industries have been Certified Nursing Assistants, home health aides, CDL, security, retail, and some technical positions in IT. Most are para-professional or entry level jobs, paying from \$7.25 to about \$12.00 on average, most at the lower end.

Despite reports that the labor market has been improving over the past year, our experience is that businesses in Middlesex County are still cautious when it comes to spending money on their company including hiring new employees. Some factors are a result from the slow economy and the uncertain cost of the impending new healthcare insurance law and it is affecting most industries.

To save money, some companies that are hiring are not offering the same wages as they were previously for the same job. They are increasing the cost of the employee's insurance contribution or they are reducing full-time work hours to part-time to avoid paying insurance altogether and yet they are expecting to hire high caliber candidates since they know it's an employer's market.

Many employers are not satisfied with a growing number of resumes that they see because they are not tailored to the job descriptions. They are also complaining that many candidates that they interview are not prepared or seem motivated and that's why more companies are using staffing agencies for screening purposes. Employers are taking more time to decide on candidates after interviewing them believing they can get a stronger one if they wait for more job seekers to apply.

Placements have become more challenging since many job seekers that I have interviewed have poor skills in resume writing, interviewing and basic job search techniques. They are encouraged to update me whenever they are given job referrals, set up with interviews and overall job search progress but many don't so multiple contacts have to be made to them for follow ups.

Employments trends have been mixed. More part-time, temporary, contract work (contingent) and commissioned sales positions have opened , however most job seekers are seeking full-time permanent positions that offer straight salaries with benefits and therefore are not willing to acknowledge or accept these types of employment opportunities. One positive note is that after educating job seekers on how some of the temporary and part-time jobs are sometimes trial periods for companies to see whether they would like to hire them full-time, more job seekers seem to be accepting that trend.

PRELIMINARY STATISTICS

RECRUTIMENTS	49
JOB ORDERS	317
# OF POSITIONS	1,033
# APPLICANTS	716
# COMPANIES VISITED	196
# COMPANIES CONTACTED	334
# PROFILES CREATED	111