



Workforce Development Board
County of Middlesex

Business Engagement Committee Minutes

November 7, 2019

Present: Roseann Bucciarelli, Luis De La Hoz, Dan Frankel, Barbara Heyward, Paul Hiler, Poo Lin, Elayne McClaine, Brian Sant'Angelo, Marc Schweitzer, Bernice Venable, and Anthea Williams.
Alternates: Phyllis Boulanger and Roxane Teleck
Staff/Guests: Shamara Gatling-Davila and Diane Seavers; Guest: Juan Gonzalez

- 1. Welcome and Introductions .....Roseann Bucciarelli
a. Kevin opened the meeting by introducing himself and asking everyone to introduce themselves.
2. Approval of Minutes from August 1, 2019 Meeting
a. Bernice made the first motion to approve the minutes and Marc seconded the motion. No opposes.
3. Latest DOL Labor Market Information ..... Diane Seavers
a. For the month of August, the Unemployment rate was 3.1% for NJ, 3.5% for the US, and 3.1% (equivalent to about 13,800 people) for Middlesex County.
b. The unemployment percentages do not include those that have exhausted their unemployment, might be receiving government assistance and does not receive unemployment and those underemployed, but not eligible for unemployment.
c. For the month of September, there was an increase of 43,400 jobs since September of last year. There are two leading industries for Middlesex County's job growth over the last year. Leisure and Hospitality industry increased 14,900 jobs since last September. Education and Healthcare industry increased by 12,100 jobs.
4. Business Engagement Report/Upcoming Events.....Barbara Heyward
a. Last quarter the Business Engagement Team had twenty-two (22) recruitments. There was a total of ninety-eight (98) overall and forty-one (41) positive hires to date. The number of positive hires many increase due to the hiring process some businesses have.
b. The Edison Housing Authority event was a success. Representatives from DVR and 55+ were in attendance as well. This event is part of the federal government reevaluating the current Section 8 and Rental Assistance recipients' eligibility. Resume writing and job search assistance is also offered at the Housing Authority Events. There have been four (4) events to date. To date, there are 53 positive hires as a result of the events.
c. The Census has held numerous recruitments through the Business Engagement Team. The recruitment back in September had a huge turnout, but people were not called back for a follow-up. The Census recruitments are now regionalized. The City of Perth Amboy along with the Census had two successful recruitments in Perth Amboy. About one hundred and fifty-six (156) people were in attendance. The two recruitments thereafter, one in New Brunswick and one in Perth Amboy, had a low turnout.
d. In January, New Brunswick already has Lowes, Home Depot and Spencer Savings Bank scheduled for recruitments.
e. Elayne mentioned Self Employment Assistance(SEA) as a service that needs to return. More people should look into starting a business if it is difficult to secure employment.

- f. Barbara is scheduled to meet with FDIC in regards to a Second Chance Initiative to get people back to banking employment. There was a great candidate looking to get back into the field of banking, but was unable to due to his credit score falling when he hit a rough patch in life.
  - g. Anthea has been meeting with employers about direct hire and the federal bonding they may be eligible for as a result of the hiring.
5. **Heldrich Economic & Workplace Development Competitiveness Study**.....Diane Seavers
- a. The draft of the Heldrich Study was distributed to the local area in September. The report cannot be shared with the public until after January of 2020.
  - b. The report mentioned strengthening/expanding the Workforce Development Board by obtaining 501C3 status. Kevin has been interested in obtaining 501C3 status for over a year.
6. **Cohort Based Training** ..... Diane Seavers
- a. The Middlesex County Office of Workforce Development was already considering classroom size trainings, so it was no surprise when the Heldrich Study also mentioned sector based strategy for cohort training. This training is more in line with having trained people to work for a particular company or sector.
7. **Bridging the Gap Between Economic and Workforce Development** ..... Diane Seavers
- a. Employer engagement was also mentioned in the Heldrich study. An event like a breakfast to introduce the Workforce Development Board to local emerging businesses could be beneficial for gaining new members.
  - b. The Heldrich Study also mentions a Workforce and Economic Opportunity Council (WEOC). This council will be held accountable to the County Administrator and the Freeholder Board. Membership for this council would include, but not limited to: Board of Social Services, County Department of Transportation, and the county’s Improvement Authority; to mention a few.
  - c. Numerous suggestions were made to offer One Stop services at local community establishments like libraries, supermarkets, restaurants during closed hours etc.
8. **Old Business**.....Kevin Kurdziel
- a. No old business was mentioned.
9. **New Business**.....Luis De La Hoz (MarMar)
- a. Luis from MarMar shared a new initiative he has. He is seeking a room to hold the new program in.
  - b. The program is Latinos Entrepreneur Training (L.E.T). It is geared to help thirty (30), high potential, Latino business owners in Perth Amboy that average \$100,000 in sells a year.
  - c. He is seeking a space in Perth Amboy to teach LET. The course is for 8 weeks/3 hours per week. This course is similar to a mini MBA. It is taught by Latinos to other Latinos.
  - d. There are currently 100 people registered for the course, but they will only choose 30 to participate. This training is free to the participants. Participants need to complete at least 70%of the class to get a certification.
  - e. Diane will reach out to Gwen, the Employment Services Manager, in the Perth Amboy office. The classes are expected to start in February.
10. **Adjournment** ..... Kevin Kurdziel

**NEXT MEETING: THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2020 – 9:00AM**

**550 JERSEY AVENUE, NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ 08901 WIOA Conference Room B.**