



Workforce Development Board
County of Middlesex

Special Populations Committee

May 14, 2019 – 9:30 AM

Present:	Amy Bellisano, Mary Ann Bossio, Julio Briones, Denine Bruzzo, Roseann Bucciarelli, Luis Fernandez, Tasha Hogan, Melyssa Lewis, Rich Liebler, Miriam Ruiz, Donna Scalia, and Marc Schweitzer
Guest & Staff:	Elizabeth Conte and Jen Goodin Shamara Gatling-Davila, Kevin Kurdziel, Carmen Mercado and Diane Seavers

- 1) Call to Order/Introductions** **Amy Bellisano**
 - a) Amy Bellisano greeted those in attendance and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

- 2) Approve Minutes March 19, 2019 Meeting** **Amy Bellisano**
 - a) Minutes were approved as is.

- 3) Re-Establishment of Parole Reentry Task Force** **Kevin Kurdziel**
 - a) Every county across NJ has a Parole/Reentry Task Force. About three years ago the Middlesex County Task Force stopped meeting. Kevin reached out to Middlesex County Parole months ago and they are now in the process of reestablishing the Middlesex County Task Force. The first meeting was on April 30, 2019. The next meeting will possibly be in June.
 - b) The Task Force is looking to put together an Employer Forum in which the topic of hiring ex-offenders will be discussed. The importance of internships, job-shadowing and apprenticeships will be discussed as well. The task force is aiming to have this forum in the fall of this year.
 - c) If anyone from this committee is interested in attending the task force meeting, please let Kevin know so your name can be added to the email list. Melinda will send out an email reminder for the meeting.
 - d) Back in March Kevin and Diane met with Warden Cranston, Mr. Ferguson and Denine from the county jail about bringing service to the jail instead of waiting until people are released. Once Denine is able to establish a protocol of what is needed, in an effort to not duplicate services, we will begin to offer services in the jail.

- 4) R.E.S.E.T, Pathways to Employment Grant** **Diane Seavers**
 - a) The four entities attached to this grant are: Woodbridge Township, Mainstream Recovery, Middlesex County Office of Workforce Development and Middlesex County College.
 - b) For purposes of this grant, people impacted by the opioid epidemic is defined as an individual who has a friend, family member or personal history of opioid use. The goal is employment for those in the program.
 - c) Two days a week (Tuesday afternoons at the college and Thursday mornings in Woodbridge) counselors from the Middlesex County Office of Workforce Development, staff from Middlesex County College and staff from Mainstream Recovery will meet with those interested in the program to gain more information.
 - d) This grant also has built in supportive services which include: Transportation, childcare through Community Childcare Services.
 - e) The contact number for non-emergencies is 732-855-0600 ext. 5022 Mon-Fri 8:30-4:30.

5) WorkFirst NJ Participation Rate

Diane Seavers

- a) For the first time in about seven years or more, Middlesex County reached 30% participation rate. NJ overall has an expected rate of 50% for each county.
- b) TANF referrals from the Middlesex County Board of Social Services has declined. There are approximately 100 clients among the four case managers. We would like to believe it is due to more people being placed in programs and employment.
- c) Those referred from the board have to maintain at least thirty-five hours a week of participation in one of our programs.
- d) The Business Engagement Team has also helped by hosting the on-site and off-site recruitments. All of the participants are required to attend the recruitments.
- e) There is grant from DFD to assist those that meet the location requirements with transportation, Shared Ride. This service has also aided in getting people back to work.

6) PY19 Funding Status

Diane Seavers

- a) The funding for the past two years has been cut by 18%-20% for a cost of about two-million dollars total. This resulted in a few layoffs and a reduction in the amount paid for I.T.As written for people attending training. For instance, instead of paying up to six-thousand dollars for an I.T.A, it was reduced to four-thousand.
- b) The funding for this year is expected to be flat.
- c) The office is still waiting for the Notice of Award (NOA) from the state to know the details of the funding.

7) Committee Priorities PY19

- a) This committee should work towards getting other agencies to join especially those that specialize in mental health, immigration and homelessness.
- b) Melyssa Lewis will ask Bobbin from Coming Home Middlesex County to speak with the committee about the 211 process as it relates to shelter.

8) Old Business

- a) No old business to discuss.

9) New Business

- a) Rich Lieber received the GAINS grant and has openings for 35 people, ages 18+, with some form of automobile technician experience. The pay is \$15 an hour.
- b) The NJRC will work with Denine from the county jail to identify clients with outstanding warrants in other counties. This is important as it will work towards eliminating the fear of applying for services due to the possibility of arrest due to outstanding warrant(s).

10) Adjournment

Meeting adjourned

The next meeting of the Special Population Committee will be Tuesday,

August 13, 2019, at 9:30am.

Conference Room B