



Workforce Development Board
County of Middlesex

Special Populations Committee
November 12, 2019 – 9:30 AM

Present:	Amy Bellisano, Mary Ann Bossio, Denine Bruzzo, Roseann Bucciarelli, Sandra Ciccone, Elizabeth Conte, Jennifer Goodin, Tasha Hogan, Miriam Ruiz, and Marc Schweitzer
Guest & Staff:	Shamara Gatling-Davila, Kevin Kurdziel, 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 May 14, 2019 Meeting** **Amy Bellisano**
 - a) Marc made the motion and Kevin seconded the motion to approve the minutes. Sandra is present not voting.

- 3) **“SkillUp Connection” Sites** **Kevin Kurdziel**
 - a) The study that was conducted by The Heldrich recommends One Stop Satellite Locations. There is no additional funding to run the satellite locations, but there will be a partnership agreement. The employees at the chosen satellite locations will know how to direct people to SkillUp Middlesex on the computer and how to refer clients to the One Stop for additional services.
 - b) The purpose of the satellite locations is to bring resources closer to those that have limited transportation and to make resources available during the time in which the One Stop offices are closed.
 - c) Jennifer Goodin of Jewish Family Services of Middlesex County mentioned the office in Milltown has nine (9) computers available. Her agency would be interested in the partnership.

- 4) **Review of Priority Populations** **Kevin Kurdziel**
 - a) Kevin distributed a Priority Population Handout for everyone to review. The handout will help the members understand the dynamics of this population.

- 5) **Creating Career Opportunities for Priority Populations** **Diane Seavers**
 - a) The Heldrich report mentioned the office should implement new ways to enhance how Special Population people are placed in employment, career opportunities, and career pathways. That is one issue this committee can focus on.
 - b) Starting in 2020 a focus will be made to identify strategic ways to implement the new process.
 - c) A joint meeting with this committee and the Human Service Advisory committee can be beneficial. Some of the same issues/common barriers are discussed at the individual meetings. This is an ideal way to network.

- 6) **Middlesex County Parole Taskforce Meeting** **Diane Seavers**
 - a) The Parole Taskforce was active in the past under Freeholder Polos. It has since lost its momentum. Over the last year, progress has been made to bring it back.
 - b) The next Taskforce meeting is on November 26th at 9:30am. The taskforce will work in conjunction with parole.

7) Update on RESET

- a) The Department of Labor Opioid Grant RESET (Woodbridge Township, Mainstream Recovery, Middlesex County Office of Workforce Development and Middlesex County College) primary purpose is to find/secure employment for those that are eligible for the grant. Recruiting/eligibility assessments are done twice a week at various locations. Individualized Employment Plans are created for those that are approved. Middlesex County College is responsible for work readiness preparations and training/certifications for those that require it.
- b) There will be a mini job fair for RESET individuals on Friday, November 22nd.

8) WorkFirst NJ Participation Rate

- a) For the month of September, Middlesex County was in the top 5 throughout the state for the amount of participation at 28%. The federal government wants a participation rate of 50%, but that is difficult to achieve when only about 33% is referred to the One Stop Career Centers for services. WorkFirst participants that work part time also hinders the participation rate.

9) Old/New Business

- a) Someone from the agency Coming Home can present in the future. A discussion on the homeless count and how important is in can be made at that time.
- b) The Census of 2020 is approaching. It is crucial that not only the adults are accounted for but the children as well. The Census department is looking to hire people from hard to count areas to work as census workers. People are more willing to give information to a familiar face from the community than a stranger.
- c) This committee would like for someone in the Mental Health sector to present on the various resources in Middlesex County.

10) Adjournment

Meeting adjourned

**The next meeting of the Special Population Committee will be Tuesday,
February 11, 2020, at 9:30am.
Conference Room B**