



Joint Welfare to Work/ Newark & ECWIB
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Agenda

March 10, 2015, 2015 10:00AM

1. Introductions
2. Approval of Minutes
3. Synopsis of ECDW Issues: (New Division of Welfare Director; Statistics; Problem areas)
4. Synopsis of the Interaction between the DEDTE & ECDW (Respective, and problems faced by both)
5. New Initiatives for Urban Jobs Creation (Vertical Farm, UC Labs, President's initiative Tech Jobs)
6. Develop a Plan/Evaluation Process for the Employment, Training, and Educational Programs.
7. WTW Committee's Oversight of Creation and Awarding of RFP's:
 - a) Reviewing the creation, evaluation and approval of WTW RFP's;
 - b) Ways to contractually compel vendors find clients' self-sustaining employment and tracking clients' progress, post job placement successes and failures;
 - c) Review what does now, and what should, constitute meaningful measurement of the "success" and "failure" of contracted WTW vendors.
8. Women and Poverty: Education, job training, child care, health care, housing, domestic violence, and social service delivery (March is Women's Month).
9. Invitation to Meet with EC Executive & Newark Mayor:
10. Reviewing the "Silo Effect"
11. Advocacy- Developing liaisons that will be pivotal in influencing welfare reform
12. New/ Open Business and calendar for 2015
13. Adjournment

Next Meeting date: TBD

Putting Essex County First

ESSEX COUNTY IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER



Joint Newark & Essex County Welfare to Work Committee

Wednesday, March 10, 2015
50 S. Clinton Street, East Orange, NJ
Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

Alexandra Adamczyk, Kelli Bell-Taylor, Dashay Carter, Joe Epps, Davetta Lane, Curtia Orr, Miriam Rodriguez, Janine Schaeffer, David Weiner, Howard Weiss

Meeting Called to Order: Co-Chairperson David Weiner

Mr. Weiner started the meeting off with a brief synopsis of former meetings. He advised that the Essex County Division of Welfare will have a new director as of April 1st. It had been two months since a director was in place. He advised that challenges have continued, i.e. staffing levels are the same, yet caseloads have gone up 75%. Case banking has made tracking clients difficult for caseworkers. The Division of Welfare managed to wheel down 100,000 Medicaid redeterminations to 50,000 by offering overtime; the intake office has 10,000 overdues. Mr. Weiner declared that the USDA oversees the Food Stamp Program and expressed that they want the State of New Jersey to be at 85% completion of all cases; we are not close at all. The phone system has been inoperable and computers have been down. There was an instance where the Division of Welfare was out of ink cartridges, resulting in staff being unable to print documents for two weeks. It was also recently discovered that the postage had not been paid; letters for clients' redetermination never went out. This caused clients to automatically be cut-off from benefits and forced them to start the intake process from scratch.

The Welfare to Work Committee usually meets quarterly, but it had been about six months since there has been a meeting. The committee is supposed to oversee and review matters that impact clients and service. The fact that there hasn't been a director has further complicated things. Accountability seems to be an issue because there seems to be no one who is addressing the issues. Mr. Weiner suggested that the focus at Essex County is most certainly not social service.

Mr. Weiner advised that the dysfunction of Essex County Welfare will somehow have an adverse effect on the City of Newark. He suggested that many of the crowds that go to Newark are probably there by mistake and should be at Essex County. Newark contracts are currently being used for training, which are funded through referrals. For example, Welfare to Work moneys is being used to fund ITA's. Primarily, Newark residents have preference when it comes to funding, however clients from other towns who need services will not be turned away.

Low literacy has been an issue that has impacted the client population receiving welfare benefits, so there was talk about collaborating with the Newark and Essex Joint WIB Education and Literacy Committee. It was suggested that these two committees discuss the deficiencies and come up with a plan of action.

Mr. Weiner instructed that this committee should be reviewing and evaluating the approval of Welfare to Work contracts and tracking clients after job placements. He expressed the need to expand the talk about welfare issues that other municipalities deal with as an agency.

Mr. Epps raised a concern about the growing number of individuals who have degrees, who are unemployed or underemployed. He suggested that bringing them into the fold, would help with the committee's ability to be more effective in putting people to work. Ms. Carter spoke of the services offered at 1008 Broad Street. She declared that there is a career developer who focuses on and solely targets this population. Even clients who have a degree, if they meet the requirements, can take advantage of the opportunity to receive vocational training which is funded. They can apply for services through the One-Stop at 990 Broad Street or through the Youth One-Stop at 500 Broad Street.

Mr. Weiner asked if there were any questions, comments or concerns that should be addressed. It was suggested that the next meeting be skipped because the committees will be meeting at the retreat. The next meeting is scheduled for May 12, 2015. Meeting adjourned.