



*Joint Newark & Essex County Youth Investment Council Committee*

Tuesday, May 14, 2015

50 S. Clinton Street, Room 5<sup>th</sup> Floor

2:30 p.m.

Agenda

- I. Welcome and Introductions
- II. Approval of Minutes
- III. Kirk Lew
- IV. Special Guest Speaker
- V. WIB Retreat
- VI. Upcoming Programs
- VII. Program Update



***Joint Newark & Essex County Workforce Investment Board  
Youth Investment Council Committee Meeting***

Thursday, May 14, 2015  
50 S. Clinton Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room  
2:30 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

**Attendees:**

Mary Alexander, Jeff Billingsley, Apryl Caldwell, Judith Celestin, Monica Colon, Wendy Cubano, Elizabeth Davis, Lincoln Farquharson, Sanaz Hojreh, SanDonna Jones, Alicia Holman, Davetta Lane, Tom Puryear, Pamela Ross, Janine Schaeffer, Jeff Shulman, Shelton Thurman, Chike Uzoka, Don Viapree, Sonja Williams

**Welcome & Opening Remarks:**

**Apryl Caldwell- ECWIB**

Apryl Caldwell thanked everyone for being present. After the meeting attendees introduced themselves, she made a motion to approve minutes from the last meeting. The minutes were approved.

**Committee Business**

Apryl (Co-Chair) introduced Davetta Lane (NWIB), who spoke about the WIB Retreat on May 27<sup>th</sup>. She advised that Public Consulting Group (PCG) would be facilitating the WIB Retreat and assisting joint committees in formulating the framework for their strategic plans. She encouraged committee members to bring their ideas to the retreat. Sonja Williams (Co-Chair) urged committee members to RSVP.

WIA/ WIOA Handouts were distributed to show the changes in the regulations. They include, but were not limited to:

- The target population will shift from in-school youth to out-of-school youth
- 75% of the population serviced must be out-of- school youth
- There are no longer eligibility requirements for the drop-out population

The actual regulations haven't come out yet; July 1<sup>st</sup> marks the start of WIOA. The committee has been working closely with Kirk Lew and the Dept. of Labor. Kirk has agreed to meet quarterly to address concerns, answer questions and offer help as we transition. Apryl advised

that any questions about WIAO changes could be emailed to her and she, in turn, would forward them to Kirk.

Ms. Sonja Williams (Co-Chair) spoke of one the challenges that the new regulations bring; servicing the out-of-school population is difficult because of low retention rates. She stressed the need for the committee to brainstorm to find creative ways to attract and retain the drop-out population.

Resource Guides were distributed. Apryl asked committee members to complete the Information Sheet so that a YIC Directory could be created. The purpose of the directory will be to act as a resource to identify committee members, the organizations that they represent, the services that they provide and the population that they service. She advised that she will forward the sheet to Kelli so that it can be sent out electronically.

Mary Alexander told the committee that County and the State information had been updated and handouts could be picked up from the back table. She also advised that if anyone encounters TANF youth who are in need of services, she will gladly take referrals.

### **Upcoming Programs/ Services**

Apryl Caldwell

**Essex County's Summer Program** (Collaborative with Essex County College)

- Targets out-of-school youth (75 youth)
- Financially compensated (OTJ)
- Youth placed based on interest and/or assessments
- Shadowing Opportunities

Sonja Williams

**City of Newark Programs for Youth-** the Newark Youth One-Stop was in the midst of ending its RFP Programs (CNA, Automotive, Culinary Arts, Dental, Home Health Aide & Patient Care Programs)

Ms. Williams announced that the summer program normally places 1500 youth in the summer; this year funding is available for 2500 young people.

- The City of Newark has partnered with 1199J to facilitate Work Readiness Workshops
- The City of Newark has partnered with American Airlines (for college students; start date June 1<sup>st</sup>)
- Newark College Institute Program (partnership with Rutgers University) 100 WIA eligible youth are placed at various agencies in the Newark area (i.e. Panasonic, Rutgers)
- NJIT Program (25 youth will work in the IT Department)
- Adopt a Block Initiative (75 youth will focus on beautification of the neighborhood)
- 800 youth will receive work readiness training on Mondays at Essex County College

Amayra Molina

**Ironbound Family Success Center (IFSC)**

- 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Health Fair is coming up
- Spanish as a second language is offered; lunch will be provided 1-2 pm (June 4<sup>th</sup> is the first class)

-IFSC has partnered with the Department of Labor Work Board to offer OSHA 10 and Forklift Training.

Sanaz Hojreh

**Newark Arts Education Roundtable-** the organization is comprised of arts and community based organizations, leaders, members, volunteers and parents who use dance, theatre, visual and media arts to enhance the quality of life of students from pre-school to 12<sup>th</sup> grade. She spoke of the positive effects that arts education has on financially disadvantaged students who were exposed to high levels of art. She welcomed partnerships with committee members who have an interest in collaboration.

Lincoln Farquharson

**Rutgers University (Newark College Freshman Institute)-** the program was started in 2012. It offers paid internships for any Newark student going into a four year college/university. He gave out his contact information and advised that he could be called or emailed with questions or referrals.

Elizabeth Davis

**(DVR, Newark)-** she spoke of an upcoming Schedule A Hiring Expo Workshop/ Event. She explained that Schedule A allows people to apply for federal jobs without going through the red tape. She distributed detailed handouts about the event.

Steve Wilson

**Newark Housing Authority-** spoke of an upcoming Father's Day Event which is a HUD Initiative and collaboration with the City of Newark on June 19th. He communicated the need of facilitators and service providers for the event. Mr. Wilson spoke of how this day of enrichment for fathers and their children would help to empower and celebrate men. The goal of this initiative is also to assist dads with job readiness and employment opportunities.

Wendy Cubano

**Youthbuild-** the organization offers GED & vocational training for youth (ages 16 to 24). The new cycle begins in the Fall. She requested referrals for any youth in need of a high school diploma.

Davetta Lane (NWIB) invited all committee members to support Mayor Ras Baraka's initiative, Occupy the Block. The purpose is to target men, while not excluding women, to shut down blocks for a few hours by setting up tables/chairs in the street and using board games, fellowship and the sort to help deter illegal and unfavorable activities for a few hours. She also spoke of a Father's Day Event to be held at Camp Watershed targeting 250 Newark Fathers for a day of fun; details to come.

Sonja Williams advised that the Newark Youth One Stop is still accepting applications for in-school youth (ages 14-21). She relayed that students must bring report cards/ transcripts to 500 Broad Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor.

Apryl gave a program update for the Essex County Youth Program. She advised that Shelton Thurman, former youth program member has moved to another department, but will remain active the program in a supervisory position. She expressed her concern about recruitment and retention of the out-of- school population that needs to be served. She asked for recommendations and expertise from committee members. Amayra suggested that literature drops and social media recruitment might prove to be beneficial. Ms. Williams asked Judith and Wendy to share how their programs have been successful.

Wendy Cubano (Youthbuild) identified that one of the first steps is to procure the drop-out list from the schools. Second, she expressed that it would be difficult to retain young people without knowing their needs. She stressed that our youth should be viewed as partners, while collaborative efforts remain student-driven. Ms. Cubano believes that implementation should always come from a place a purpose, not power. As service providers, she emphasized our responsibilities; we must be consistent; set high expectations of our young people; follow-up with them when they fall short of the expectation; deliberately help them build a positive self-image; provide support and make appropriate referrals. She explained that we can retain our youth if we take these action steps and build positive relationships.

Judith Celestin (ECC) ECC leads a 12 agency consortium that services about 4000 drop-outs annually, which is always never enough. She expressed that funding is not available during the summer which presents an opportunity to feed her student population into the County Program. She suggested that the consortium could help by identifying 25 students, from each program, with great attendance who are passionate about attending school, but aren't able to because of funding.

Mrs. Caldwell pointed out that although the County has a good relationship with the schools; they are against giving up their dropout list. Ms. Williams added that because the schools get paid per student, releasing student dropout information means cutting school funding. This seems to be more of a Dept. of Education issue. A suggestion was made to shift the target to those students who have been out of school for some time. If they just dropped out of high school, chances are they are not yet ready to participate in a program. The population that has been out of school for a while might better understand the value of the program and services that are being offered. Mrs. Caldwell bragged on the fantastic job that Shelton Thurman had done with building and expanding the out-of-school youth program. Now that the regulations have changed, the goal is to increase the number of out-of- school youth that are serviced. Amayra recommended that a good place to do recruitment is at an agency where they go to receive services, like a WIC or doctor's office. Some of the barriers that were identified that might affect drop-out rates are the lack of child care, transportation, money and food. Addressing these issues helps to remove some of the hurdles that are in the way. Mrs. Caldwell did admit that follow-up is done with youth when they drop out of the program. Perhaps possible barriers should be addressed at the retreat so that it can be part of the strategic plan for recruitment.

One of the committee members stressed that we must handle our youth with care. Poor academic performance in a traditional school is not indicative of our young people are unmotivated, nor

uneducated. She stressed that we are a result of our collective inputs and we as service providers must give qualitative and quantitative inputs.

The County of Essex has a year round, 4 week out of school program. This Youth Program Orientation acts as a filtration system for other programs. During this orientation, students gain assistance with goal setting; they obtain job skills and work readiness training; the program provides help with acquiring a GED; the program offers remediation course for basic skills deficiencies. Once these matters have all been addressed and the process is completed, the County pays up to \$4500 per student to enroll in a trade school.

One of the committee members raised a question as to whether it makes sense to do more outsourcing. Mrs. Caldwell relayed that they try to keep as much as possible in house to maintain the authenticity of the programs. Since there are major changes with WIOA regulations, the County can't depend on RFP outsourcing to successfully service all the needs because the details of the regulations have yet to be specified. Targeting and servicing the out of school population will not be easy.

Apryl Caldwell thanked the meeting attendees for their participation and input. She advised that these meetings provide us with an opportunity to learn what each of us brings to the table and informs us of the programs that are out there for our youth. She urges everyone to continue to share information and resources. Motion is presented to close the meeting; motion seconded. Meeting is adjourned.