



Joint Newark & Essex County Business and Economic Development Committee

Essex County College- Training Inc.

Thursday, July 7, 2016 at 9:00 am

Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

Jasmyne Beckford, Kelli Bell-Taylor, Al Bundy, Andrae Bynum, Mitch Cahn, Apryl Caldwell, Mitra Choudhury, Evanthia Corrado, Joseph Epps, Joanne Kaiser, Tolu Lanrewaju, Angelique Morrison, Fred Murphy, Janine Schaeffer, Bhavna Tailor, Willie Tolbert, Howard Weiss, Nicole Vazquez Wise, Catherine Wilson, Anthea Williams

Meeting Called to Order: Chairperson Mitch Cahn

Mitch called the meeting to order and conducted a roundtable roll call of meeting attendees. He introduced Greg Wise of STRIVE, who presented to the committee.

Greg Wise- STRIVE National Vice President

Mr. Wise of STRIVE was invited to the meeting to provide an alternative view point on the Workforce Readiness Credential. The organization got its start at a housing project in East Harlem, NYC over 30 years ago. Its focus is on the core of the client, specifically attitude, behavior and work readiness while offering occupational skills training on a case by case basis. STRIVE uses a model that incorporates supportive services needed to address barriers that clients may face. Clients must wear business professional attire throughout their training which is conducted in a work simulated environment. During the middle of the second week, they go into the job placement phase. Mr. Wise stressed that employers are more encouraged by qualified employees than by a readiness credential. The curriculum is funded by community based organizations partnering with the government through WIOA funds, philanthropic scholarships and grants. The estimated cost is \$5000/graduate and scales up to 200 clients annually. Follow up is done for up to 2 years after program completion. Graduates are encouraged to share their transformation story and to stay engaged and connected to the program.

Committee Business

Hire Newark- National Work Readiness Credential (NWRC) Test Results- Mitch Cahn

Hire Newark was funded by St. Barnabas Medical Center to provide training and employment opportunity to sixteen individuals who did not have the proper credentials to be hired. Each individual received assistance in job readiness and placement. Fifteen participants were hired immediately and one was hired after a month's time at a different hospital. Randolph Brown reported the following:

- NWRC paid for the test and all students were given the opportunity to take it, although it wasn't mandatory.
- The testing was poorly planned (timing, computer equipment, applicant preparation, proctors, facility)
- Most clients were skeptical about taking the math component of the test which was not a predictor of job attainment
- All clients took the Situational Judgement Test which focuses on conflict resolution and accountability (8 passed)
- Not sure if the tests affected clients' ability to get hired
- Test was a worthwhile experience to be used before and after the program even if they had to pay for it.

Intern Update- Mr. Epps

Intern- Rutgers- Newark (Social Work Division) wanted a more detailed idea of the responsibilities of the intern. Although the NWDB has summer interns, someone who can work through the Fall and Spring semester would be more feasible to assist the committee in reaching its 2016 goals. This person would be responsible for collaborating information/ minutes from other committees and reporting back to the committee. He /She would complete outlined tasks listed in the committee's strategic plan. This is an interactive voluntary position through Rutgers independent study. Mr. Epps suggested that the criteria should be prepared before the next meeting so that it may be submitted to the university.

Mitch asked if any summer interns from the City of Newark were available to complete tasks, until Fall and Spring interns are secured. Nicole Vazquez-Wise advised that there was only one college intern at the NWDB office; however a few of them were working from 1008 Broad Street under Fred Murphy. Mitch advised that he would reach out to Mr. Murphy.

Sub-Committees

Career Connections- Andrae Bynum is the chairperson. Its members include Angelique and Nicole Vazquez-Wise. This committee will represent the committee in the development of the Career Connections platform. The goal of this sub-committee is to ensure that it can be used as a placement tool for employers. Angelique spoke about a job bank being established. Howard advised that the state is attempting to make the web presence more user friendly and expressed that this committee has an opportunity to provide feedback to help improve the system. Apryl added that since recommendations and criticism will be coming from the committee, it might carry more weight.

Content Library- Rebecca Shulman is the chairperson. Members include Mitra Choudhury, Barbara George Johnson and Evanthia Corrado. This committee will collaborate the programs that are offered by all stakeholders in the workforce development community. This includes incentives, placement, training and hiring.

Employer Communications- Al Bundy is the chairperson. This committee will be responsible for communicating upcoming events and initiatives to employers to strengthen employer engagement in an effort to provide more employment opportunities.

Web Market Committee- Lincoln Farquharson is the chairperson. Members include Mitch Cahn, Jasmyne Beckford and Al Bundy. This sub-committee will take the information from the content library and promote it through the web.

Work Readiness- Apryl Caldwell is the chairperson. Its members include Jerrah Crowder, Van Holland and Joe Epps. Mitch has been updating the Strategic Plan after every meeting. The two options presented were to support a program that is already established or to create a test model of the work readiness credential. If we choose the test model, we must be concerned about who will provide testing, funding, who will accept it. As a committee, we must decide how we want to move forward. Mitch added that as the chairperson, we are limited to what we can do in the committee. By using one credential, it could prove to be beneficial to training providers and employers. He suggested that we can come up with a letter to send to the board and then the state of NJ to encourage them to include a workforce credential in their system.

Updates

Mitch will upload information from our working content library. We have approval to add the content on the NWDB website. Al Bundy is working on having the content loaded to Essex County's website. NCEDC is also going to add the content to their website. In the near future, we are looking to encourage other agencies to have links to the content on their websites.

Barbara will be working on the transportation piece.

Evanthia will be working on testimonials of businesses that have had positive experience with the workforce community.

Mitra will provide the WDB target areas.

For the next committee meeting, Charles Rosen will review the program descriptions to ensure that they target employers.

The Web Marketing Sub-Committee RFQ has been drafted and Mitch will review it with Lincoln.

Mitch presented a motion to approve the minutes from the last meeting; motion was moved and approved. Mitch asked everyone to review the strategic plans for the other Joint WDB committees to ensure that we are not duplicating efforts.

This concluded the business of this Meeting Adjourned.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, October 6, 2016 at 9 a.m.