



## ***Joint Newark & Essex County Business and Economic Development Committee***

Essex County College- Training Inc.

Thursday, April 6, 2017 at 9:00 am

### **Meeting Minutes**

#### **Attendees:**

Eva Anochi, Kelli Bell-Taylor, Jasmyne Beckford, Addy Bonet, Al Bundy, Mitch Cahn, Apryl Caldwell, Mitra Choudhury, Evanthia Corrado, Elizabeth Davis, Joseph Epps, Vann Holland, Jonathan Kobza, Emily Manz, Ronda Merritt, Angelique Morrison, Morris Murray, Amanze Okere, Sandra Rogers on behalf John Perry, Tashaya Porter, Jerry Prevete, Janine Schaeffer, Joseph Tettah, Raymond Vaccari, Anthea Williams, Tanya Wright

#### **Meeting Called to Order: Chairperson Mitch Cahn**

Mitch called the meeting to order. A roundtable roll call was conducted to introduce all meeting attendees. Mitch advised that there would be presentations on the Employer Resource Guide and Career Connections.

#### **Employer Resource Guide- Emily Mann of Newark Farms**

Emily stated that she is working with Newark Farms to go through programs in the resource guide to seek state and federal funding. She gave a brief history of Newark Farms, which is a social enterprise committed to workforce development and environmental stewardship. Its key area of work is the reestablishment of the historically iconic Newark cider and Harrison apple that made it famous. Its core workforce consists of the re-entry population. The valued skills for this company include conflict resolution, orcharding, grafting, gardening and crop maintenance.

The training programs were helpful and she advised that the online guide is user friendly, but it does take a significant amount of time to navigate.

The On the Job Training (OJT) Grant is a state program that reimburses the employer for 50% of the wages for 20 days up to 6 months of work. The minimum salary needs to be \$10/hour or more and must be full-time. The grant is geared for training and hiring people on public assistance. The Department of Labor (DOL) can issue one OJT contract per four employees. The employer must send the full name and last four digits of the new employee's social security

number to the DOL to be looked up in the system. The turnaround time is roughly about five days. If approved, the DOL will draft an OJT Contract with the employer. The contract will specify reimbursed hours and identify the company's preferred method of reimbursement. The company will also send timesheets to the DOL. Funds will be reimbursed to the company electronically to the bank on file with NJ Start or by check payable to the employer.

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) benefits employers who hire a target group of employees and may be eligible to reduce their federal income tax liability by as much as \$9,600 per employee hired. Employees must work at least 120 hours during the first year of employment in order to qualify to claim the tax credit with the IRS. There is no limit on the number of individuals an employer can hire in order to qualify to claim the tax credit. To qualify, the employer must submit an IRS Form 8850, ETA Form 9061/ 9062 and documentation of target group eligibility, if available, to the NJDOL using the WOTC portal. The SWA will issue a final determination for each WOTC application. When a certification is received, the employers can claim the tax credit with the IRS. Generally, an employer elects to take credit by filing IRS Form 5884 Work Opportunity Credit.

The Opportunity Partnership Grants is a state competitive grant for training providers. The provider may receive up to \$6,000 per trainee and up to \$300,000 to run a program. Training programs may also run multiple programs simultaneously.

The Skills Partnership Grant is a state competitive grant for New Jersey employers. It provides up to 50% cost reimbursement to train current and future skill requirements of available high skilled/ high wage jobs in New Jersey. Grant funds are intended to "seed" organizational training and are intended for annual training or training that would otherwise be conducted without grant assistance. There are workshops available in Trenton and at the Talent Network Development Centers for this grant.

Emily stated that she spent a lot of time researching the grants, however she made more progress and got more information by making phone calls. She recommended that the process would be easier if more of the process was outlined in the Employer Resource Guide.

Apryl suggested having the contacts in the Talent Networks in the Employer Resource Guide.

### **Career Connections- Tashaya Porter and Ronda Merritt**

The DOL has put the site together for both jobseekers and employers. The benefits to employers include assistance with hiring incentives, provide information on finding qualified candidates, how to book recruitments, where to post job fairs, assist regarding the hiring process, OJT and training grants information, Talent Networks and Talent Development Center information and resource information for employers may be found on the website.

The basis of the website is broken into two parts; a jobseeker section and an employer section. The One-Stop locations, the address, hours of operation and contact information for business representatives can also be found on the website. There is also the option to contact the business representative in your area for one-on-one assistance.

### Website Highlights

- Users can schedule appointments with their business representative via email or telephone.
- Veteran business representatives are available.
- OJT, WOTC, and all federal and state hiring incentives offered
- Seven Talent Networks including contacts for each industry
- Access to OnRAMP, the state's job search tool that is utilized for jobseekers and employers

There are five people that filter through the jobs to ensure that the jobs are reputable before they are published. There is a follow-up every 30 days. Jobs have to be approved by the state in which the federal employer identification number which has a one day turnover process. An email address is at the bottom of that page that may be used to address any difficulties with this part of the process. An analytics tool lets the agency know how many people use a website and they welcome feedback on a link at the bottom of the page. Many improvements were made before the site was published through constructive feedback.

The information from the employees comes from those registered through the onramp site. Jobseekers filter through job descriptions or keywords and they are given the option to apply for positions. Employees can sift through qualified resumes, minus the candidate's name and contact information. There is an option where employers can schedule an interview and the candidate will be notified by email.

Resumes may be uploaded through Word or PDF.

It was suggested for employers to contact business representative to put in work orders for the employers to increase the pool of candidates that they receive. The business representatives serve as a liaison by doing pre-screening.

Success is measured through feedback and analytics. The agency is currently working on creating one password for all the state programs.

Employers may post job fairs and there is a recruitment calendar on the career connections website. The site is constantly updating and improving.

A motion was moved and approved for the minutes from the previous meeting with edits.

## **Upcoming Events/ Resources**

Angelique Morrison- L& M Development is working with the NWDB to do outreach events at two projects in Newark, 540 Broad Street and Georgia King Village. They are seeking to hire Newark residents and the company has been struggling to identify Newark based suppliers and vendors in the construction field. Please provide any applicable references.

Essex County Job Fair will take place on May 25<sup>th</sup> at Essex County College.

Mr. Epps urged everyone to spread the word to employers to comply with the I-9 so that they will not be fined \$6500.

There was no further business with the committee. Mitch thanked everyone for their participation and called motion for adjournment. Motion was seconded and adjourned.

**The next committee meeting is scheduled for June 1, 2017.**