



***Joint Newark & Essex County
Welfare to Work Committee Meeting***

Tuesday, February 3, 2015
50 S. Clinton Street, East Orange, NJ
Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

Yvette Abdullah, Aleksandra Adamczyk, Kelli Bell Taylor, Joseph Epps, Danny Gonzalez Bosques, Abibat Hall, Davetta Lane, Beth Mirda, Julius Montford, Miriam Rodriguez, Janine Schaeffer, Carla Tention, Howard Weiss

Welcome:

Danny Denise Gonzalez Bosques (Newark Housing Authority)

Mrs. Bosques brought greetings to meeting attendees. She asked for all to introduce themselves and the agency in which they represent. The main topic discussed at this meeting was Tabe testing in relation to TANF clients.

Testing for Tabe, ESL and the High School Proficiency Test are all connected. Anyone who receives TANF benefits must take the Tabe test, register and participate in an activity. Because tests can now be taken online, it makes it a bit easier to track how well clients are scoring. Often times, they require a refresher class because their scores are not high enough for them to enroll directly into a training program. Because there are very few agencies that provide remediation and/ or basic skills training, the challenge becomes getting clients to pass the test. The reality is that people who do not at least have a high school diploma will have clear challenges obtaining employment and/or training. One of the proposed remedies by a committee member was to ask that employers be more lenient to this particular population. Places like PSE&G and NJ Transit get state and federal funding which mandates that they follow certain guidelines as it pertains to hiring practices. Unfortunately, this is not the case with all employers.

For ESL & TANF clients, everything is tied to dollars and cents. The committee must somehow try to come up with a way to track clients. There are some clients who are moving on, but we can't necessarily pinpoint where they are once they receive services. Although, the Tabe Test isn't the greatest indication of where a client is intellectually, it is the universal barometer used to determine if they are ready for training or employment.

The details of the Joint WIB Retreat were discussed. Attendees were advised that they would be receiving official invites soon. The committee agreed to meet in March, even though there would be a break out session during the retreat. Meeting adjourned.