



**Joint Essex County & Newark WDB
Disability Committee/ Workforce Investment Board**

50 South Clinton Street, 4th Floor
East Orange, NJ 07018

Minutes : December 11th, 2017

Beckford, Jasmyne	NWDB	Fiore, Lisa	Goodwill Ind.
Blanco, Nela	DVRS	Okonkwo, Solo	NJ DVR
Campbell, Tanana	Newark Work	Porter, Stephany	Newark Works
Chimbay, Ida	NWDB	Schaeffer, Janine	EC WDB
Davis, Elizabeth	DVR	Shulman, Rebecca	Goodwill
LaCon, Lisa	BMI	Weiss, Howard	ECWDB
Lane, Davetta	NWDB	Wilson, Kathe	ENABLE

Rebecca greeted everyone and since there were some new people at this meeting introductions were made.

Minutes from last meeting in September were approved.

Announcements:

Jasmyne stated that the City of Newark is doing “My Brother’s Keeper” job initiative for young people and utilizing the services while getting them ready for the application process. The event is scheduled for February 27th, 2018. Just Newark residents, and the majority are walk-ins. They are trying to establish a criteria for folks getting an interview that day and it will be at the Prudential Center.

Project Search Presentation

Project Search has been rolled out in different counties and Solo Okonkwo is here to present it. Project Search’s primary objective is to secure competitive employment for people with disabilities. It is driven by a collaboration between a hospital or business, local school district, vocational rehabilitation, community rehabilitation partner, long term support agency and social security administration.

“The high school transition program is a one year internship program for students with disabilities, in their last year of high school. It is targeted for students whose goal is competitive employment. The program takes place in a healthcare, government or business setting where total immersion in the workplace facilitates the teaching and learning process as well as the acquisition of employability and marketable work skills. Students participate in three (3) internships to explore a variety of career paths. The students work with a team that includes their family, a special education teacher and Rehabilitation Services Administration to create an employment goal and support the student during their important transition from school to work.”

They’re doing the RFP for Hudson County soon.

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All of the interns must be travel trained (to be able to get from their house to the internship). In some cases a family member takes them but there have been issues with the transportation before. In another case there was an agreement with Uber. Howard asked who was paying for that and Solo responded that the school district.

Bergen County has two programs that have started one is Hackensack Meridian Health. The license for this program for the first year is \$15,000-\$16,000. Solo stated that if Essex County is serious about doing a Project Search then they would need to get Alice Honeycutt involved. It takes a couple of years of planning to get all the pieces in place before the program can start.

Targeted Communities Technical Assistance Center (TCTAC)

This is a project that comes out of the Rehabilitation Services Division. There are several around the country and the one in our area is headed up by George Washington University. Lisa LeCon from Blessed Ministries Inc. stated that they are a nonprofit workforce development agency that works with adults with disabilities, the re-entry population and DFD family development. She is really excited about this project because they are trying to recruit for certain projects. So the focus is Newark and Trenton for people with mental health issues and substance abuse issues. The data shows that these two areas have been underserved. They would like the Disability Issues Committee to identify and engage VR eligible economically disadvantaged individuals, who could benefit from rehab services. Expand partnerships with local community development agencies. So basically the goal is for this committee to think of ways to increase referrals and increase the outcomes for those two populations. It is volunteer and would link up with the advisory committee and include more people at the table including Integrity House, Family Connections etc. and come up with some strategic ways to identify where these people are, identify how to do outreach to them and implement comprehensive services to increase VR participation.

There was a vote taken to agree to participate in the TCTAC. The final vote is three (3) in favor and two (2) opposing.

Rebecca stated that basically it would add an agenda item to our already scheduled meetings. They would like to set up a training meeting with lunch. The date for training was agreed to be February 7th with a location to be determined.

Finally she asked if we can think of anyone else who should be at the table.

Rebecca asked everyone to consider Project Search, Jasmyne stated that they have a similar program at Newark Beth Israel that doesn't have additional costs involved. Howard added that this program is for ten (10) kids and it is a lot of investment for such a small program.

There was a discussion around the overlap of discussions of various WDB subcommittees and how we should make an effort to do some joint meetings to address certain issues that are relevant to more than one group.

The schedule for 2018 is as follows: Feb. 20th, April 17th, June 12th, Aug. 21st, Oct. 16th, Dec. 18th. For the next meeting it will be at JVS in East Orange but there is the option to move future meetings around.

Next Meeting is scheduled for February 20th, 2018 at 2pm at JVS

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