



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

Thursday, April 10, 2019
50 S. Clinton Street, 5th Floor Conference Room
2:30 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

Mary Alexander, Oswaldo Arango, Marsha Armstrong, Dr. Yolanda Allen, Jasmyne Beckford, Amina Bey, Apryl Caldwell, Wendy Cubano, Qonisha Dasent, Deshahn Lawrence, Caryl Lucas, Julius Montford, Samuel Okparaeké, Patricia Robertson, Pamela Ross, David Sharp, Larry Sermon, Chike Uzoka

Welcome and Opening Remarks:

Apryl Caldwell (Manager, W.I.O.A Services Essex County One-Stop/ECWDB Co-Chair) and Jasmyne Beckford (Special Project Coordinator Newark Workforce Development Board (NWDB)/ NWDB Co-Chair) Apryl Caldwell and Jasmyne Beckford thanked everyone for being present. After the meeting attendees introduced themselves, a motion was presented to approve the minutes from the last meeting. The meeting minutes were approved.

Committee Business

Apryl Caldwell introduced Assistant Director Dr. Yolanda Allen from the Office of Youth Programs New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development. Dr. Allen expressed her excitement about making her first visit in her new role to both Newark and Essex Youth Departments. Dr. Allen and her team were excited to see the work coming out of both offices and wanted to know what it was as a committee that represents both Newark and Essex; how she and her team could assist in helping the youth programs be more successful.

Apryl expressed that as a committee we are interested in knowing; what changes to expect out of Trenton? What is the role of the YIC from the State perspective? Are there any special youth projects coming from the State?

Dr. Allen stated based on her visits at the local offices that both locals areas are doing what the State would expect them to do. That she has spoken with the Federal Department of Labor about WIOA and

the needs of New Jersey. She was informed that in order to push for any changes the local areas must provide statistical evidence for why the benchmarks may be reviewed for changes at the federal level.

Amina Bey (Executive Director, Newark workforce Development Board) stated the need for more social services assistance via either financial support to hire an on site social worker, or connections with more State agencies to assist with providing mental health services for our youth. The barriers that the youth in Newark are affected by do not allow for the local areas to achieve successful benchmarks. As basic needs, mental, and literacy are major barriers to retention in employment or training.

Dr.Allen referred everyone to leverage DVR resources. The committee stated that DVR provides limited access to the status of youth referred to their office on a large scale. Stating that the partnership would need more opened communication through the system of AOSOS.

Marsha Armstrong (Newark Youth Program Manager) stated that her office has trouble getting youth that come through the Newark Your Office through training programs because they have so many different barriers that are not accounted for in Workforce Innovation Opportunity WIOA benchmarks. Barriers beyond soft skills; which is allowed via WIOA.

Samuel Okparaeke (Director office of Small Business Development & Affirmative Action/ Executive Director Essex County Workforce Development Board) Youth Program have a hard time gaining access to the schools' systems to provide youth in the county with the resources that are available through WIOA.

Julius S. Montford (Deputy Director, Essex County Division of Training and Employment) stated that the schools within Essex County provide the drop out list way past the start of the fiscal year under WIOA making it hard for the local office to gain access to the youth as they are no longer at the schools and make contact almost impossible.

Marsha Armstrong spoke about leveraging access to the local schools as a way to get the Youth One-Stop resources into the school system beyond the NJ Department of Education granting direct access.

Dr. Allen and her team thanked the Newark and Essex County Workforce Development Boards for inviting her and her team for a visit. She informed the committee to include Oswaldo on correspondence as he will be the local area contact person. She is excited to work with us to help create programming and initiatives to support the youth of New Jersey.

YIC Closet

Co-Chairperson Apryl Caldwell took the YIC Committee attendees to see the YIC Closet and discussed how the closet is supporting the needs of youth that require work appropriate clothing for interviews and work.

Resource Sharing/Programs

Chike Uzoka informed the committee about initiatives taking place at the Newark Museum including poetry reading and music.

Marsha Armstrong informed the committee of the Newark Youth Summer internship program actively allowing students from high school, out of school, and college to be employed for the summer throughout the City of Newark. The Newark Youth office anticipates over 3,000 youth and young adults to participate this year.

Apryl Caldwell stated that Essex County Summer Youth program is currently accepting youth for summer employment opportunities as well. That the parents of these youth can currently receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families; as well as individuals living in impoverished zip codes per the NJ poverty guidelines.

Adjournment