



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

50 South Clinton Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
East Orange, NJ 07018

**Minutes : December 18, 2018**

<b>Bleckman, Sandra</b>	<b>RHT TN</b>	<b>Sakhu, Qadriyyah</b>	<b>PHPIN</b>
<b>Bundy, Melody</b>	<b>NJTIPC Rutgers</b>	<b>Schweitzer, Marie</b>	<b>DVR Business Outreach</b>
<b>Campbell, Towanna</b>	<b>Newark Works</b>	<b>Shulman, Rebecca</b>	<b>JVS</b>
<b>Katz, Elaine</b>	<b>Kessler Fdn.</b>	<b>Slater, Robert</b>	<b>Jespy Office</b>
<b>Makely, Greg</b>	<b>FRN</b>	<b>Walsh, John</b>	<b>Project E3</b>
<b>McGuire- Kuletz, M.</b>	<b>GW University</b>	<b>Wilson, Kathi</b>	<b>ENABLE</b>
<b>Porter, Stephany</b>	<b>Newark Works</b>	<b>Weiss, Howard</b>	<b>ECWDB</b>

**Introductions were made and minutes from last meeting were approved.**

**TCTAC Update**

Maureen McGuire-Kuletz from George Washington University came to give an update on the TCTAC for the committee. The Targeted Community Project started about two (2) years ago and discussed working in two (2) communities in New Jersey. The Targeted Communities Program is a federally funded project to work with targeted communities looking at the intersection of disability and poverty. They work with the state vocational rehabilitation agency partners and the idea is to look at nontraditional partners. The other requirement is the community must be an empowerment zone with a high level of unemployment and a high level of poverty for them to be involved. The two areas that were selected were Newark and Trenton. They were using an approach called community based participatory research (CPR). David Free is the Acting Director, who has stated that at present he does not have the resources to take on any projects right now. Rebecca stated that the initial buy in was with the prior administration Director. So she stated with the change, they cannot move forward but they wanted to come and talk about next steps and lessons learned with our committee. New Jersey is not the only state that has changed direction. Rebecca stated that in her opinion the end product was not clear and having referrals was worrisome for them with the current staffing levels at the time. There has since been more staff added to the local DVR offices.

This grant was funded by the Department of Education Rehabilitation Services. Maureen stated that it is a five (5) year program and the grant is up in September 2020. They can do targeted technical assistance, like the Bridges out of Poverty training which seemed to be very well received. Rebecca stated that the plan was to do the next step in the training which directly connected disability and poverty. She stated that they can still come in and provide that training.

*Putting Essex County First*

ESSEX COUNTY IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

In conclusion George Washington University can offer targeted assistance in the form of further training. She stated that she was very impressed the way this group responded initially. But they cannot offer “intensive” support without the buy in from the State of NJ.

Rebecca stated that nationwide in order to get funding through WIOA for the VR program the states have to come up with a match just over twenty percent (20%) and it is often challenging with the state’s budgets to do that.

Maureen stated that she envisioned also being able to help behind the scenes making connections with different agencies and maybe help facilitate and share successful models. They also offer communities to practice across the country on specific topics that you are welcome to join (one hour webinars). It is an opportunity to network with different people across the county that could be doing things differently. There was discussion about doing the training May/June.

### **Meeting Dates**

There was discussion regarding the proposed meeting dates for 2019: 3/6, 4/16, 6/11, 8/20, 10/15, 12/17. Meeting times are 2pm at JVS in East Orange. Rebecca stated that she needs to check with co-chair Elizabeth McLilly, who is on vacation.

### **American Dream Mall**

Sandra Bleckman stated that the American Dream Mall is not concerned with getting seventeen thousand employees. They are more concerned with getting everything together so right now they are hiring management positions. They feel like they have done this before and it shouldn’t be a problem. The Commissioner of Labor has met with them. She also stated that they were able to get a waiver regarding the blue laws and will be able to be open on Sunday.

### **Employer Recognition Event**

There was a discussion around the Employer Recognition Event that occurred in October. It was seen as the best yet because the County Executive was very pleased with the event. The Ombudsman was very good. The question Rebecca put out there was do we want to do it again for 2019? In discussion with Elaine Katz, there is an opportunity to get more funding but we would need to request it early. Overall we were a little under the limit we set for registration. Rebecca asked if the county is able to help with funding again in 2019. We need to find out the capacity for that particular room. It was decided that for 2019 they will work on a budget for one hundred (100) people to attend.

Sandra suggested we start looking for employers to nominate much earlier because we always struggle to get three (3) at the end. Also discussed was sending out the letters to employers looking for donations for the event. Rebecca stated that Prudential did not want to be recognized.

**Next Meeting is scheduled for March 6, 2019 at 2:00pm at JVS**

---

*Putting Essex County First*

ESSEX COUNTY IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER