

Greater Raritan One Stop Monthly Leadership Meeting

Minutes

Tuesday June 25, 2024
10:00AM

Attendance

Danielle Kwan, Manager DVRS
Aminah Reeves, WFNJ – Supervisor
Maria Marnell, HCESC
Rick Peterson, Greater Raritan Employment Services/ OSCC
Monica Mulligan, Director Greater Raritan Career Training Services Center
Paul Grzella, Director Workforce Development Board
Jeanne Cassano, GRWDB
Fernandel Almonor, Greater Raritan One-Stop Operator

Operator Update

2024 Remaining Data Report Submission Deadlines

July 9, 2024 12pm
August 6, 2024 12pm
September 3, 2024 12pm
October 9, 2024 12pm
November 5, 2024 12pm
December 3, 2024 12pm

General Update

WFNJ Employment Pipeline (5) candidates identified and submitted by Maria. CTS will provide the case management to address immediate employment barriers. Monica agreed to follow up on case management outcomes by August 1st. After the identified barriers have been addressed, identifying and outreaching appropriate employers will begin. The outreach team will comprise of GRWDB, Somerset Economic Development and BS.

The Middlesex/ Greater Raritan Displaced Youth Panel Discussion Event that Operator facilitated was successful.

GRWDB

General Update

The June 22 Cannabis Town Hall and Job Fair at RVCC was a successful event. We had more than 200 community members in attendance – some were looking for jobs and some were looking for information – this included government officials from neighboring counties looking to understand how this sector is working locally and around the state. We had very good feedback from attendees as they left about the event and the four panels with excellent subject-matter experts. While we had 51 people sign up for the expungement clinic, only 10 showed up. While this was a little disappointing, the event generated positive feedback.

Paul asked Maria to send over information about the WFNJ Employment Pipeline candidate needing expungement services. Paul will then help connect client to expungement services.

We need better employment outcomes to meet state expectations. We need to show the state we're improving this fiscal year to retrieve what was lost in recent budget cuts.

Another 45 Chromebooks are going out in July. The TANF Initiative will also address some transportation needs. We're getting one driver and one bus.

Cutting TANF award by 3% and SNAP by 4%. The Board of Social Services cut by 10%. Both youth contracts cut from 80 to 68. Trying not to cut youth outreach.

The GRWDB is not able to provide the funding to support the Career Navigator vacancy.

No longer funding current Chromebook Wi-Fi. Transferring everyone to new Wi-Fi connections for new Chromebooks funded by TANF Initiative.

Operations/ Programming Budget is just about done, still working on it.

The state stated 2% should be set aside for training, we decided to but aside 1.2% instead. The rest is going to programming.

Business Services Update

Not in attendance.

Career Training Services Update

Performance Update

We have paused interviews for the vacant Career Navigator position, as the GRWDB has informed us that the draft budget for the new program year that begins 7/1/24 does not include the vacant position. This will impact the provision of services that were communicated to the GRWDB and will be discussed further with Paul once the draft budget is received.

We have one team member that started a three-week leave on 6/24/24 leaving us with one Youth Career Navigator and three adult Career Navigators to serve two counties and staff two offices.

One Stop Career Training Services staff have been diligently working on closing out the PY22 year, which ends on 6/30/24.

All One Stop Career Training Services Center team members are registered for free virtual training through NJDOL offered by ITSC three dates in July (July 2nd, July 16th and July 30th) that will explore ways to use data to strengthen the provision of services.

Challenges

Carryover: AOSOS continues to have many technical issues that complicate things – NJDOL had indicated we should only be utilizing the new version but recently indicated the new version continues to have technical issues and we may need to use the old version as well. Using AOSOS continues to be a cumbersome task.

Update: One Stop Career Training Services Center sent a formal request to the GRWDB on Friday, 5/24/24 requesting that PY23 ITA funds allocated in the current budget be authorized for continued use so that we can continue to write ITAs for jobseekers while waiting for a new budget for PY24 program year to be put in place. This request was approved and will be formalized through Commissioner resolution on 6/25/24.

New: The Career Navigator vacancy has created an overload of work for the existing staff. While we used to be able to accommodate up to 20 in weekly training grant orientation, that has now been capped at 10 to give the staff the time they need to effectively schedule and work with both new and existing customers. In addition to the vacancy, we have one person out on leave for three weeks and staff with summer vacations scheduled. We are currently scheduling folks for the July 19th orientation. There does not seem to be relief in sight, as customer numbers are rising, while funding for staffing is decreasing.

New: Middlesex County has been referring its customers to our local area for training, as they have depleted their ITA funding. This started a few weeks ago and after discussions with Poo Lin (ES), Rick Peterson (ES), and Hilda Alonzo (Middlesex County), the number of calls and emails to our office have decreased. Those that are still reaching out are referred back to Middlesex County to request being put on the waiting list for PY23 funds. Middlesex County is also providing them with info on SkillUp Middlesex so that they can attend free, on-line training while they wait. We seemed to have been able to somewhat stem the tide of calls to our office.

New: Increase in WFNJ referrals due to sanctions being put back into place. This has led to an increase in workload for One Stop Career Training Services Center staff.

Supports Requested

Carryover: There seems to be many changes in personnel and duties at NJDOL (Trenton). It would be helpful if we had an org chart that listed names, positions and reporting structure for NJDOL to have clarity on assigned areas.

Upcoming Events

Jan Goodman conducted the following workshops since our May meeting:

- o 6/4/24 Multiple Natures (at the GRWDB job fair)
- o 6/10/24 Business Etiquette (in collaboration with PSGCNJ)
- o Two workshops for WFNJ customers (various topics)

The last Career Café date scheduled for the spring/summer 2024:

6/28/24

2PM – 4PM

Work First New Jersey Update

Initially (5) customers self-selected for the employment pipeline pilot, 2 need to be replaced due to noncompliance. (2) additional candidates signed up to replace the (2) noncompliant. The (5) candidates need to follow through. Sometimes follow through is a significant challenge for WFNJ population. Clients must be self-motivated and buy in to be successful. Also important to focus on gainful employment opportunities.

Clients must complete WFNJ training to be eligible for the pipeline pilot.

SNAP clients are higher functioning (than TANF) so might be better candidates for pipeline pilot. If a SNAP client is not interested in completing WFNJ training (noncompliant) and want job placement assistance immediately, they can be sent to ES.

Somerset seeing some TANF cases being closed and transferred to Hunterdon County Social Services.

Hired a Social Worker to work with SNAP. The new worker is currently on 3-week vacation.

Down one clerk. The former clerk was promoted in January. Currently interviewing to fill the position.

Year to date Somerset has 150 compliant clients and 26 in Hunterdon. Expecting a significant increase in enrollment due to reinstated sanctions.

Department of Vocational Rehabilitation Services Update

Interested in eventually expanding the pipeline pilot to DVR clients.

A new supervisor is being trained; it's going well.

One counselor on leave.

Taking on an intern from Rutgers.

Getting good referrals.

Considering bringing on another counselor.

Employment Services/One-Stop Office Update

Poo Lin on vacation until late July. Rick Peterson is supervising in his absence.

Currently understaffed, looking to fill positions.

In the process of training 2 new staff. A new hire had a 2-week vacation plan that started at time of hire. "Basically overwhelmed". Staff is considerably stretched until staffing issues can be resolved. This is causing a delay in scheduling intakes.

Statewide the number of people being laid off is overwhelming, the economy is not in good shape.

Learning Link

Year to date 30 continuing and 47 new customers.

Exhausted allocated funding.

Next Meetings: Tuesday, July 23 @ 10am in 2nd Floor Conference Room (not 1st Floor)