

Greater Raritan One Stop Monthly Leadership
Meeting Minutes Tuesday May 28, 2024 10:00AM

Attendance

Maria Marnell, HESC
Isabel Jimenez, NJDOL
Karen Araujo, NJDOL
Poo Lin, GROSCCs/ NJDOL
Danielle Kwan, DVRS
Jazlis Perez, DVRS
Monica Mulligan, GRCTS
Paul Grzella, GRWDB
Aminah Reeves, WFNJ
Fernandel Almonor, O-S Operator

Operator Update

- Follow up on DOL org chart inquiry; DOL is in the process of updating their org chart. They're waiting to fill a few key positions before sharing it out with partners. In the meantime, please direct all org chart questions to the WIOA Pod.
- Quarterly customer employment preference data is due Monday, July 15, 2024.
- (7) customers identified childcare as an employment preference. The breakdown was (1) ES, (0) CTS, (4) DVR and (2) WFNJ. Please follow up with these individuals and find out if they're interested in starting a homebase childcare business. Email me the number interested by Wednesday, June 5, 2024.
- Pleasant reminder, May partner report data is due Tuesday, June 4th 12pm .

Quarterly Customer Employment Preference Data Deadlines:

Monday, July 15, 2024
Tuesday, October 15, 2024
Monday, January 13, 2025
Monday, April 14, 2025
Monday, July 14, 2025

- Homeless/ Unhoused Youth Resources Panel Discussion
June 14, 2024 9:00am – 1pm
Police Training Center 11 Patrol Rd, Edison, NJ

GRWDB

General Update:

- Job Fair on June 4th has 200 attendees confirmed.
- Cannabis event 6/22 11:30am start time. The event will include a job fair, four panel discussions, an expungement clinic and informational tables.
- 10% cut in GRWFNJ funding.

Business Services Update

General Update:

- Excited for June 4th job fair. Many Middlesex County residents registered for job fair.
- Attending info session with Home Smile today. They have building maintenance positions available. Expecting 30 people. Recruitment event going well.

Career Training Services Update

Performance Update:

- We continue to receive resumes and interview candidates for the vacant Career Navigator position. We have had some prospective candidates decline interview based on the salary. We hope to be able to fill the position soon.
- We have one team member that will be going out on leave in mid-June for three weeks.
- Two One Stop Career Training Services Center team members attended the PA Workforce Development 40th Annual Conference 5/1/24 – 5/3/24 in Hershey, PA utilizing GSETA training funds and brought back good information on the conference to our team.
- All One Stop Career Training Services Center team members are registered for the GSETA conference being held at Oceans in Atlantic City in October. This conference is always a good investment of time and money, as staff can learn about new initiatives, share best practices and network with other workforce professionals from across the state and country.
- Free training attended by various One Stop Career Training Services team members since our April meeting:
 - Cognitive and Neurological Team Q&A (Job Accommodation Network)
 - Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) (via GSETA Institute)
 - Metrix New Employee Orientation

Challenges:

- Carryover: TANF sanctions have been reinstated and we are working with SCBSS, HCDSS, and HCESC in encouraging those who have been on waiver for four years to re-engage.
- 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.
- Carryover: Training Exploring is still lagging in showing schools status of approved/not approved. Not much tech assistance from NJDOL to providers – when programs are posted info is not usable.
- New: 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. We will have more information on our ability to write ITAs beyond June once we have an answer from the GRWDB.

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 April meeting:
 - 5/1/24 Multi-generational Workplace (in collaboration with SCLS)
 - Two workshops for WFNJ customers (various topics)
- Jan Goodman's upcoming workshops
 - 6/4/24 Multiple Natures (Presented at GRWDB Job Fair)
 - 6/10/24 Business Etiquette (Collaboration with Professional Services Group of Central NJ)
- Career Café dates scheduled for 2024:
 - 4/26/24 2PM – 4PM
 - 5/31/24 2PM – 4PM
 - 6/28/24 2PM – 4PM

Miscellaneous:

The Greater Raritan One Stop Career Training Services Center will be sending out an email alert today (5/28/24) about the 6/4/24 GRWDB Job Fair to all new Hunterdon and Somerset County UI claimants that filed over the last six months.

Work First New Jersey Update

General Update:

Aminah Update

- TANF program moving along. In April, started sanctioning noncompliant clients.
- Hired a new SNAP employee with 15 years Board of Social Service experience.
- Work activities are now mandatory, client's no longer receiving "free money". Using sanctions to achieve higher compliance rates.
- Sanction process has helped some noncompliant/ unresponsive clients respond after receiving notifications that benefits are at risk.

Maria Update

- 393 clients were outreached, as a result 140 virtual and 34 face-to-face appointments achieved.
- Virtual workshops working out.
- Main challenge, participants housed out of county. Access to affordable childcare is also an issue.

Department of Vocational Rehabilitation Services Update

General Update:

- New DVRS supervisor starting 6/10/24, Jazlis Perez.
- One counselor out on leave (currently expected back 7/1/24) and an open Head Clerk position.
- Still struggling to get sufficient referrals from the schools in both counties, but mostly Hunterdon.

Employment Services/One-Stop Office Update

General Update:

- New employment counselor Avril Miller started last Monday.

- Working through low staffing issues. The last 3 weeks have been short staffed.
- RESA is a time intensive process. Getting more RESA Fed funding. Considering making RESA the entry point for all ES services.
- Getting summer intern.
- Poo is going on a 5-week vacation starting June 20th. If a new manager isn't hired beforehand, Yash Bajaj and Rick Peterson will be the interim leadership.
- Manager search for Somerset office has closed. Still looking to fill position.

Learning Link

General Update:

- Customer Status: 40 Continuing Ed and 1 GED.
- Graduation is 5pm on Friday.
- 45 Chromebooks are still being provisioned, 23 will be ready for activation in 2 weeks. 22 notebooks will be Wifi enabled.

Discussion Topic: Exploring United In Care Expansion to Greater Raritan

United In Care is a grant-funded four-year pilot project initiated by the **United Way of Northern New Jersey**. Its primary goal is to increase access to quality, affordable, and flexible child care for all New Jersey families, particularly those identified as **ALICE** (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) – individuals who are living paycheck to paycheck¹.

Here are some key points about **United In Care**:

1. **Challenges Addressed:**

- **Child Care Crisis:** New Jersey was already facing a crisis in child care access and affordability before the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Underfunded Industry:** The child care industry was severely strained and underfunded.
- **Struggling Families:** Families were struggling due to limited access to affordable child care.

2. **Delivery Model:**

- **Partnership Approach:** United In Care created a delivery model that partners licensed child care centers with home-based child care providers.
- **Shared-Services Alliance:** This partnership expands capacity in communities, leverages collective expertise to improve care quality, and shares critical resources to promote the financial health of child care providers.

3. **Target Regions:**

- United In Care focuses on four shared-service alliances in Gloucester, Hudson, Morris, and Warren counties. These regions were deliberately chosen because they are known to be child care deserts, particularly for infants and toddlers, where there is little to no access to affordable, quality child care.

- o In 2019, 46% of all New Jersey residents lived in child care deserts.
- 4. **United In Care Academy:**
 - o Supports the professional development of child care providers participating in United In Care.
 - o Special focus on family child care providers.
 - o Complements existing training resources, providing information and increased access to professional development opportunities.
- 5. **Training and Support:**
 - o Offers training and coaching to create a more knowledgeable, skilled, and sustainable child care workforce.
 - o Includes topics such as **Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)** training.

For more details, you can review the [United In Care Executive Summary](#). [The project continues to evolve, addressing new challenges and tailoring solutions to meet the needs of its partners¹](#).

Benefits Summary:

1. Trains and supports clients interested in starting home base childcare businesses.
2. Supports select local childcare providers with subsidies and business expansion training/support.
3. Incentivizes select providers to enroll children from low-income families.

Next Steps:

1. Considering training/ mentorship for entrepreneurs and child care worker staff.
2. Schedule a follow up to discuss budget, funding resources, and implementation details.
3. Receive feedback/reviews from current providers in program.
4. Poll GR One-Stop customers about interest, get enrollment projections.

Discussion Outcomes:

- Investigate if Childcare Solutions has duplicate services as United In Care.
- CTS doesn't have an immediate need for childcare provider entrepreneurship training.
- Consider developing a stronger marketing campaign to generate interest in entrepreneurship in the childcare space.
- Challenges with implementing training in WFNJ:
 - o Many customers in unstable housing.
 - o Some customers have mental health challenges, which is a considerable barrier to employment.
- Consider partnering with schools with childcare provider curriculum to recruit enrollees in entrepreneurship training.

Next Meetings: Tuesday, June 25 @ 10am in 2nd Floor Conference Room (not 1st Floor) Objective: Plan Affordable Housing Brainstorm.