

# Greater Raritan Leadership Meeting Minutes

## June 2025

Date: June 24, 2025

---

### 1. Attendance:

- |                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| • Danielle Kwan         | DVRS Manager                                       |
| • Jazlis Perez          | DVRS Supervisor                                    |
| • Karen Araujo          | NJDOL Business Service Representative              |
| • Barbara Stockton      | DVRS-PPDS Business Outreach                        |
| • Monica Mulligan       | Director, One Stop Career Training Services Center |
| • Lia Stone (Evangelia) | Vocational Counselor Commission for Blind          |
| • Ed Kawalec            | Driver/ Aid, Commission for Blind                  |
| • Maria Marnell         | WFNJ/ HCESC  |
| • Jeanne Cassano        | Contract Compliance + Engagement Specialist GRWDB  |
| • Alexis Williams       | Program Coordinator, Middle Earth                  |

### 2. Recruitment Event (June 26, 2025):

- **Details:** Retail, Hospitality, and Food Services Recruitment Event, 10 AM to 12 PM.
- **Employers Attending:** Marion Photos, Restaurant and Hospitality Association (attending as a partner).
- **Positions Available:** Around 20 openings.
- **Interview Process:** Two companies interviewing with five candidates scheduled.
- **Promotion:** Members encouraged to promote event to clients and share resources.
- **Logistics:** Guidelines provided for resource table setup; volunteers acknowledged.

### 3. Business Etiquette Workshop:

- **Attendance:** 276 registered, 105 attendees.
- **Highlights:** Strong interest in business etiquette; Jan's engaging presentations well-received.
- **Future Sessions:** Workshop scheduled for July 2, 2025. Members urged to promote.

### 4. Co-Enrollment Matrix Review:

- **Purpose:** Identifies key partners and co-enrollment options.
- **Partner Feedback:** Suggestions for updates include adding SNAP, unemployment services, and adjustments to program descriptions.
- **Next Steps:** Incorporate feedback, add hyperlinks to partner websites. Target completion: July 2025.

## 5. Workforce New Jersey Motivational Intern Update:

- **Overview:** Initiative supports difficult-to-place clients via motivational interviewing.
- **Progress:** Collaboration with Rutgers University for intern recruitment; interviews expected early July.

## 6. Employment Pipeline Update:

- **Status:** Active partnership with Princeton University.
- **Employer Expansion:** Plans to add employers aligned with client preferences.
- **Candidate Screening:** Emphasis on ensuring candidates meet job qualifications before submission.

## 7. MOU Review Meeting (July 22, 2025):

- **Mandatory:** Attendance requested for all partners. Representatives should be able to articulate organizational interests.
- **Preparation:** Review current MOU, submit suggestions before the meeting.

---

## 8. Partner Updates:

### Greater Raritan Workforce Development Board:

- **Veteran Initiatives:** Planning a Veterans Resource and Job Fair for the fall.
- **Youth Engagement:** Organizing career events post-high school. Summer youth program with 91 participants underway.
- **Staffing:** Interviewing for a new facilitator role in the manufacturing certification program.

### Business Services:

- **Recruitment Events:** Focus on employer engagement for upcoming events.
- **Employer Outreach:** Strengthening connections with businesses for participant placements.

### On-The-Job (OJT) Update

- FY25 funding has concluded, and all approved contracts have been entered into the system, with ongoing management until each one concludes. Anticipation is high for being awarded funding for FY26. Until notification of this award, all OJT writers will remain in a holding pattern as contracts cannot be backdated. However, marketing and information sharing on the program will continue until the next round of funding is awarded. The entire team has written over 108 contracts for the fiscal year, marking an increase from last year's numbers, though pre-pandemic totals have not yet been reached. In April, a transfer was made to Ocean County, with continued coverage of the OJT program for employers in Greater Raritan.
- Employer Outreach focuses on strengthening connections with businesses for participant placements.

- **My contracts for FY25:**

Hunterdon: 4

Somerset: 1

Ocean: 16

## Career Training Services:

### General Update and Successes

- Served 2,509 new customers between 7/1/24 – 5/31/25.
- Sent out information on services and events to 5,046 new UI filers between 7/1/24 – 5/31/25.
- Presented 41 free job seeker workshops to 1,283 residents between 7/1/25 and 5/31/25.
- Partnered with Franklin Food Bank: tabled on 6/11/25 and will be tabling there 7/28/25 and 8/25/25.
- Partnered with Hillsborough Food Bank: tabling in July and then monthly.
- Presenting at the Senior Center in Bridgewater on 9/22/25 (collab with SC Office on Aging)
- 105 job seekers attended the Business Etiquette workshop on 6/18/25 (collaboration with GRWDB for recruitment event)
- Jeff Alboum has given notice and his last day is 6/27/25/ He is taking a similar job in Bergen County with a more competitive salary. We hope to have the position posted this week
- 6/27/25 will be our last Career Café, which we have been running for about three years. Instead, we will do one a year Open Houses at both of our locations. We also have the addition monthly tabling at Franklin and Hillsborough food banks.
- Team members attended the following trainings in the last month:

6/9/25 Narcan Training (SC Human Services)

6/18/25 Time Management (GSETA)

### Challenges:

- Carryover: Increase in WFNJ referrals has led to an increase in workload for One Stop Career Training Services Center teams members.
- New: Waiting to find out more about impacts to services that will result as a reduction in SNAP after 1st quarter
- New: Waiting to find out about impacts of proposed Medicaid “to-work” mandates on the One Stop system.

### Supports Requested:

- None

### Upcoming Events:

- 6/27/25 Career Café
- 7/2/25 Business Etiquette for Job Seekers (partnership with Jewish Family Services)

## Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR):

- **Staffing:** Hiring additional counselors to support growing caseloads.
- **Project SEARCH:** Launching program at Johnson Hospital for youth with disabilities.

## New Jersey Commission of the Blind and Visually Impaired:

- **Services Offered:** Vocational rehabilitation, independent living skills, and job placement for visually impaired individuals.
- **Outreach:** Encouraging referrals for clients needing specialized support.

## Work First New Jersey:

- **Workshops:** Hosting business etiquette sessions, transportation workshops, and SNAP benefit discussions.
- **Outreach:** Using text and email campaigns to engage clients.
- **TANF Initiatives:** Supporting clients with transportation, childcare, and job readiness.

## Middle Earth & Hunterdon Polytech:

- **Youth Programs:** Running summer youth engagement programs, focusing on skill development.
- **Community Involvement:** Coordinating activities to maintain youth engagement during summer.

## Adult Literacy:

- **Program Updates:** Expanding literacy programs; plans for future workshops in the fall.

---

## 9. Miscellaneous Items:

- **TANF Program Updates:** Ongoing support for transportation, job placement, and educational services.
- **Upcoming Relocations:** Discussion of office space changes and impact on service delivery.

## 10. Adjournment:

- Meeting concluded with reminders to sign the attendance sheet and submit feedback via email.

**Next Meeting:** July 22, 2025 (Focus on MOU review and new partner integration).