

New Jersey State Employment & Training Commission
Disability Issues Committee
The Leadership Council for DiscoverAbility NJ
Meeting Minutes
April 5, 2011

Welcome/Opening Discussion

The meeting commenced at 10:35 with a welcome and introductions from the Chair, Nicky Gacos.

DiscoverAbility- Paula Barber

Funding has been finalized on the 2010 extension but some activities may need to be limited. TecAccess has finished a 508 compliance and no major issues were found; some smaller issues were corrected. TransCen is completing an analysis on provider attitudes.

The Leadership Academy is working to produce workshops for providers. The National Organization on Disability (NOD) has reached out to private colleges and their career services organizations and in April will meet with the colleges' Human Resources departments. They are eager to learn more about promising practices for their students with disabilities.

There has also been an outreach to community colleges as almost half of all students with disabilities who start their post-secondary education at a community college. They will meet on April 15, 2011. They are seeking other funding for to continue this effort.

The Department of Human Services will have four internships with Rutgers University students. The students can elect to get credit for their internship. The Heldrich Center met with Rutgers to discuss the university's policy and practice regarding accessibility for students with disabilities and opportunities for employment of individuals with disabilities. They will also examine the policy and practice of other colleges.

The Voorhees Transportation Center at Rutgers is still continuing their transportation study.

The New Jersey Chamber of Commerce is continuing their work with the Business Leadership Network for the Disability Diversity Supplier Program. They are currently working on 16 applicants, which is the highest number applying in any state.

Social Media Update: A handout was given with all the current statistics:

81 members of the Peer Learning and Leadership Network (PLLN)

42 Facebook Fans

13 LinkedIn Members

300 Followers on Twitter

Information was given on how to join these groups. Judy Formalarie commented that only 3 committee members were members of the PLLN and she encouraged everyone to sign up as there is a lot of valuable information disseminated.

As March was Employer Engagement month, there were 2 Webinars given with a total of 54 participants. Upcoming events in April, May and June were highlighted, including in-person training on becoming an employment network on April 15th at the DHS offices in Trenton.

DVRS Updates- Brian Burns

Disability Employment Initiative (DEI)

Brian gave an overview of the Federal grant which has a youth focus (14-24) including youth with disabilities and youth veterans. Three of the four pilots have already become Employment Networks with the fourth in the application process. As part of the program, they have partnered with the New Jersey State Chamber of Commerce to use their program *Learn/Do/Earn*. The Chamber is modifying the program slightly for youth with disabilities. DEI is interested in hiring two regional employees as Disability Resource Coordinators but the state hiring freeze is in effect and hindering that effort. Brian asked the committee for any ideas around that hurdle. Brian noted that Employment Networks needs to learn about all other partners and utilize them rather than all EN's working in silos. Bob Haugh volunteered to help with getting school districts involved. A concern was raised over cashing in a ticket too soon before the client has everything they need. Brian is working to get all information out.

Service J Status

Status J began in 2007 as a part of the DVRS case management system which designates when a client is ready to become employed and all VR services are completed. Not everyone is moved into this status, but if it was used, reports can be generated. Currently, only 65% of the field offices are using it but Brian Burns would like to make its use mandatory. He is offering local offices training on the system. As the case management tool still does not share data with OSOS, Brian working on a data exchange so local offices can generate the reports they need. Status J is important as it can provide a list of real time applicants.

Public Forums

In 2011, there have already been two public forums held in Trenton and South Jersey which were well attended. There are two more scheduled: April 7, at the Arc of Middlesex at 10:00 and April 8, at the library in Blairstown at 1:30. There have been lots of good comments on funding, communication, and transportation issues.

Department of Education- Dare to Dream- Bob Haugh

Dare to Dream is a Student Leadership Conference that is hosted by the Special Education Division in the Department of Education. This year, they will host six events with up to 500 attendees at one place. The focus is on topics such as self awareness, post secondary planning,

peer leadership, and advocacy. DVR counselors facilitate breakout sessions, as well as the Office for Civil Rights. SPAN and the Family Support Center of New Jersey are also involved in supporting the conference. Bob showed a 12 minute video from one of the conferences. He stated that there is a link is on U-tube of the DVD. The events are funded by the Department of Education and open to any age student, as well as their families. Bob handed out a brochure with information on all the upcoming events. He encouraged all the committee members to attend one of the sessions.

Employer Subcommittee- Anthony Camuso

Anthony gave a brief overview of Bridges to Business, a subgrantee of DiscoverAbility which started in January of 2011 to engage employers. Currently, Sedexo, ADP and Aetna are working with Anthony. They have provided 25 job orders which are approximately 1/3 for entry level workers and 2/3 for mid to high level occupations. They are having difficulty with referrals for the mid to high level openings. However, there has been one hire and several interviews.

Anthony discussed an idea regarding the creation of an Employer Sub Committee with the purpose of identifying employers who would be interested in hiring people with disabilities. We may also get them to speak to the Disability Issues Committee as well as using those contacts to educate employers on the many services that are available to them. After a lively discussion of ideas, it was suggested that instead of a new subcommittee being formed, we should work through committees already in existence through businesses or providers. It was also suggested to look at company websites to see what types of jobs are being recruited, especially those jobs that are open frequently. It will be easier to fill jobs that are consistently in a pipeline than single job openings.

ADAAA- Judy Formalarie

Judy provided handouts on the new Americans with Disability Act Amendment Act, which we approved on March 25, 2011. She asked everyone to review them as we will have a speaker from the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission speak with us at our June meeting. As the regulations go into effect in May, new issues may arise that the speaker can address.

Announcements- Judy Formalarie

Judy urged all members to become a participant in the DiscoverAbility blog so that they get all the information that is disseminated directly from there. This will eliminate the SETC having to forward information to the entire committee, thus sending it 2 or 3 times to some members who do get it from DiscoverAbility or DHS. All information and sign ups can be found at www.discoverabilitynj.org.

A press release was given to all on a proclamation by the President on World Autism Awareness Day for 2011 (April 2nd) and a statement by the US Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Sebelius on National Autism Awareness Month (April).

A handout was given to all with registration information on a conference to be held on May 20th, 2011 at the New Jersey Law Center in New Brunswick entitled *It's Your Right to Know: Protecting the Rights of People who are Blind or Visually Impaired*. This all day free event is sponsored by the Department of Human Services and The Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

Judy also presented information on a report released in March 2011 by The Commonwealth Fund entitled *The Essential Health Benefits Provision of the Affordable Care Act: Implications for People with Disabilities*. Full copies of this report can be downloaded from their site as well as DiscoverAbilityNJ.org.

Minutes from the committee meeting on February 3, 2011 were reviewed and approved by all.

Other Announcements

Nicky Gacos

Nicky gave information on an event at the Daytona racetrack where through the use of assistive technology, a blind driver was able to drive a car. We will provide more information on this to the committee.

He also stated that former New York Governor David Patterson has been named to the National Federal for the Blind.

Nicky gave information on new opportunities for people with disabilities through the Subway corporation, which is currently the world's largest franchise operation. He stated that they have won a 30 year contract as the provider of services for rest stops along Route 95. He said all new facilities are being built which will become more like destinations with shops and places to visit. The company is seeking Veterans to work, operate and own the franchises. They have a program where they will waive the \$15,000 franchise fee for Veterans. He said they have been very proactive with veterans and people with disabilities.

Harriet Findlay

Harriet reminded everyone of JFK's Career Options Day on April 14, 2011. Everyone is invited and she encouraged everyone to disseminate the information to their customers.

Shawn McInerney

Shawn stated that McDonalds looking to have a National Hiring Day for 50 thousand workers. He will send information to Judy will send out to the committee.

Claudette O'gilvie

Claudette talked about the many federal job openings and how anyone can apply including the differences of applying for federal verses private sector jobs. She stated that applicants must be qualified for the job, but that disabilities or any other barrier do not need to be disclosed when applying. People who do apply under Schedule A are eligible for any job that is open for a US citizen. She will send information to Judy to forward to all.

There is a national website that people with disabilities interested in federal employment can register themselves at resume@benderconsult.com. This site is used by hiring authorities and renewed every two weeks. She noted that many of the jobs are not really for entry level people but they seek more technical and mid/high skilled applicants. Applicants may register every two weeks to be included on the new listing. She also said that the Bender Family of Companies may also have other opportunities that applicants, providers, and job coaches should investigate.

Claudette also mentioned that it is possible to have agencies work under Federal contracts. She believes that many service providers are overlooking this opportunity and should investigate becoming a contractor.

The website www.usajobs.gov is also a valuable site to find and apply for any federal job opening.

The meeting concluded at 12:10 with a reminder of our next meeting on June 2nd at the Arc of Middlesex in the Training Room.

Attendees:

Paula Barber
Brian Burns
Anthony Camuso
Harriet Findlay
Judy Formalarie
Nicky Gacos
Eileen Gallo
Joe Gazzara
Bob Haugh
Toni Hindsman

Jody Levinson
Lillie Lowe Reid
Shawn McInerney
Claudette O'gilvie
Nils Richardson
Clara Rivera-Pacheco
Edward Srocznoski