

New Jersey State Employment & Training Commission
Disability Issues Committee
The Leadership Council for DiscoverAbility NJ

Meeting Minutes

August 2, 2011

10:30- 12:30

Welcome/Opening Discussion

The meeting opened with a welcome by the chair, Nicky Gacos. Introductions were done and afterwards Nicky informed the committee of the sudden death of our colleague, Harriet Findlay and asked for a moment of silence as a remembrance. Judy Formalarie noted that the career center at JFK, where Harriet was the director, has renamed itself in her honor. Donations can be made to the center in her memory.

The minutes from the June 2, 2011 meeting were reviewed and approved by all.

Discoverability Grant Update- Paula Barber

Ms. Barber stated that the MIG extension has been finalized; the Heldrich Center has taken over all of the projects and will add a concentration on sustainability.

- TransCen has completed its survey and will have that out soon.
- Rutgers Disability Employment Leadership Academy is ready to go and handouts were given to all explaining the program and application process.
- Anthony Camuso talked about the June 7, 2011 conference, which was very successful. He will be looking at working with colleges to set up internships with employers as NOD is having problems finding high skilled employees. This discussion will continue on with an event for employers and post-secondary leaders on November 4, 2011.
- Mr. Camuso said Moasic has agreed to be the main partner for the Bridges to Business program.
- DHS Internship program is moving forward. There have been four positions established for the fall of 2011. Eleven students have applied so far. This program will be sustainable with students from Rutgers.
- The Voorhees Transportation group is starting a new study.
- Programs with the State Chamber (Disability at Work, DSDP) continue to grow.
- The Heldrich Center is working with the Boggs Center on a federal grant application to be able to continue some programs, especially transitioning youth to post-secondary.
- Michele Martin said the Peer Learning and Leadership Network (PLLN) has more webinars planned. Information is included in the meeting packets.
- The PLLN also has planned free regional in-person trainings on the use of social media tools to help you and your customers connect to employment opportunities. There will be one for the North on September 6th, 2011 at the Verona Community Center from 12:30 to 4:00 and one for the Central region on September 21st at the Greater Raritan One Stop

Career Center from 8:30 to 12 Noon. They are working on scheduling one for the Southern region.

- PLLN is continuing to work on sustainability and seeking way to continue once the funding is finished.

Bethany LaLonde- Disability Rights New Jersey

Ms. LaLonde presented a PowerPoint presentation regarding her agency, their mission, and their activities. As they are currently holding focus groups to evaluate DRNJ, she was looking for feedback from this committee to help them formulate their work for the next three years.

- She stated that DRNJ currently has 9 programs and staff of 30 people.
- Lillie Lowe Reid, who is on this committee, works for DRNJ as advocate for employment.
- DRNJ is the State's protection and advocacy agency and since the 1970's has worked on protecting clients against abuse and neglect.
- DRNJ has 9 main goals; the committee gave several recommendations:
 - May need to get "back to basics" and do strategic planning with their board and help them do an analysis.
 - Should they limit their goals to do the best they can in several areas, rather than stretch themselves too thin?
 - Can they use their "education" priority to sustain PLLN?
 - Could they collaborate with the Boggs Center as the Center just applied for a new grant?

The committee also saw some areas of need:

- Need more information on self-employment for clients.
- Need more outreach directly to clients.
- Need more concrete examples of what they can do so people understand them better.
- Need a more statewide strategy so that not everyone is doing everything.
- Need to examine the core competencies of DRNJ.

The committee also stressed that all agencies need to realize that funding is drying up, especially Federal and State Government funds and grants. The committee asked if DRNJ could help New Jersey become an Employment First state, along with the push being made by DVRS and the Boggs Center. The committee noted a huge strength that DRNJ has that not many other organizations have in that they have lawyers on staff.

Bob Haugh- DOE, Post School Outcome Study

The Post School Outcome Study is a Federal requirement to follow Special Education high school students once they have graduated. In New Jersey:

- There is a sampling of 3,000 graduates.

- School districts do the outreach and seem to be happy to do it.
- Information and results are put on the DOE website.
- The information is used to help districts with technical assistance.
- The DOE is getting powerful data that shows students without work experience and referrals end up not engaged after graduation. In the last study, this was 16% of students.
- Will get new data at the end of September and will work off current data as the baseline, hoping to improve.
- Unfortunately, work or school related work experiences cannot be mandated even though it produces such positive results.

The committee held a discussion on the numbers of students with Learning Disabilities and the philosophy regarding helping them more as they have a greater chance of success.

Mr. Haugh also has a concern with Developmentally Disabled students that schools many times graduate them at age 18 (even though they can remain in school until age 21), but the student cannot get DD services until they are age 21. We discussed the idea that schools should keep students in school until age 21 as a mandate.

It was suggested that these ideas be presented to the State Board of Education.

Brian Burns- DEI Update

The Disability Employment Initiative began the summer by creating summer day programs to host the New Jersey State Chamber of Commerce Lean/Do/Earn program. Unfortunately, there were some recruitment problems in two of the four areas. However, the programs were very successful in Cumberland/Salem and Bergen. It is hoped that Burlington and Passaic counties can run the program during November when school is closed for the teacher's convention. A USDOL oversight team came to New Jersey and saw the programs in action. They were so impressed that they will be publicized as a "Best Practice" nationwide for DEI.

Mr. Burns talked with Federal contacts about using DEI to help sustain the efforts of DiscoverAbility. He was told that it could be done but it must target the four areas in the DEI program. Mr. Burns will talk to the management team of DiscoverAbility to move this forward. He is also reaching out and has a meeting with the Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC) and seeking to have one with Veterans' groups.

Judy Formalarie –Committee Updates

Ms. Formalarie went over things in the meeting packet including:

- June 2011 National *FINDS*, a report of the Arc, which examines family and individual needs for disability supports among those with an intellectual and/or developmental disability. The full report and executive summary can be found at www.thearc.org/page.aspx?pid=3212.
- McKinsey Report which described the current economic situation and the very real problems in creating enough new jobs. It can be found at www.mckinsey.com/mgi/publications/us_jobs/index.asp.

- White House Press Release on the 21st anniversary of the American with Disability Act.
- Access to Advancement which promotes women with disabilities to enter STEM careers (www.womeninscience.org);
- Outspoken Library Kiosk at Bernardsville Public Library provided by the State Library Talking Book and Braille Center (TBBC). There are currently over 18,000 downloadable audiobooks and 42 magazines available. Users can receive a free digital player. For more information, see <http://njsltbbc.org>.
- Data Note # 32 for 2011- the Annual Report on job seekers with disabilities using US Department of Labor Wagner Peyser funded programs for the years 2002-2009. StateData.info is a publication of the Administration on Developmental Disabilities, US Department of Health and Human Services.
- New easy access LWD Website- www.Jobs4Jersey.com.

Announcements/Information Sharing

Ms. Formalarie encouraged everyone to sign up for DiscoverAbility.org to get notices of trainings, job openings, news, and answers to their disability questions. She also said that all PowerPoint presentations from today will be emailed to everyone.

Jan Goodman encouraged anyone to attend the Central Jersey social media training on September 21st. It is free and open to all; you do not need to be from the Central Region to attend. Michele Martin will be the presenter.

The Department of Human Services, the NJ Commission for the Blind, the State Library Talking Book and Braille Center and the Trenton Thunder celebrated an Awareness Night on Friday, July 29, 2011 to promote full community inclusion and the awareness of achievements of people who are blind or visually impaired. Nicky Gacos was given an award for individual achievements in the business community and for significant contribution towards employment of people who are blind or visually impaired. Also receiving an award was Ed Lucas, who has spent many years as a blind sportscaster and sports reporter.

There was a request that a new contact list be created and sent to all. The SETC will have this done.

The meeting was concluded at 12:45. The next meeting of this committee will be held on October 6th, 2011 at the Arc of Middlesex.