

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

Meeting Minutes

April 4, 2012

10:30- 12:30

Welcome/Opening Discussion

The meeting opened with a welcome by Judy Formalarie at 10:35. Introductions were made by all members. Minutes from the last meeting were approved as written.

Federal Contract Compliance Issues – Sheldon Isaacs

Sheldon Isaacs discussed the Office of Federal Contract Compliance outreach activities. The office is held within the US Department of Labor and acts as the civil rights arm of DOL. All federal contractors must implement equal employment opportunity for women, minorities, people with disabilities, veterans, and wounded veterans. Contractors are required to make a good faith effort to evaluate their workforce for protected classes within each job group and compare this with availability in the area (from Census information). If there is a disparity in representation and availability the contractor is required to set a goal to increase the individuals in protected classes that are targeted within the recruitment pool and to make a good faith effort to meet that goal.

Businesses can only ask about disability between the job offer and the first day of work and must provide any reasonable accommodations a person needs. The contractor needs to develop a plan for women and minorities, one plan for people with disabilities, and another for veterans. These plans must provide for an auditing and reporting system and state that the contractor will recruit, hire, train, and promote all persons in all job titles. This policy must include information on how to file a complaint. This policy must be discussed throughout employee orientation and management training programs. The application process and all training and other opportunities must be accessible. Contractors are also required to establish outreach and recruitment efforts, which may include relationships with federal, state, municipal, community-based, or faith-based organizations.

Ticket to Work Updates – Savannah Barnett

Savannah Barnett discussed the Ticket Success project, which provides free technical assistance to Workforce Investment Boards and One-Stop Careers Centers who are Ticket to Work Employment Networks. Everyone between the ages of 18 – 64 who is on Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is eligible for the Ticket to Work program and has attached funding for employment services. The agencies that provide these services and receive funding through this program are called “Employment Networks.”

This program is funded by the Employment and Training Administration and the Social Security Administration and serves over thirty local areas. Ticket Success provides hand-on technical assistance to these sites in the areas of infrastructure, recruitment of marketing, financial projections, and service provision. There was a discussion about employment networks in New Jersey.

Announcements/Information Sharing

DDD Program Changes for Children

In the Governor's budget, there is restructuring of the way DDD serves children. These children will be moved to the Department of Children and Families for services, beginning as soon as July 1.

OSCC Tutorial

Michele Martin will be doing a quick 5 minute presentation for the DiscoverAbility website to clarify what WIBs and One-Stops are and the services they offer. Other tutorials can follow depending on interest.

DiscoverAbility NJ

DiscoverAbility NJ will be hosting 4 "connecting coffees" per region (12 total). These will be informal networking and professional development event for staff members. There will also be "world café" events to discuss "things that matter" in small groups. It is the hope that relationships will develop and grow from these encounters so that when DiscoverAbility ends in December relationships will continue. Anyone with ideas for topics of conversation, locations, or a willingness to help, please call Michele Martin.

JVS/JEVS

JVS and JEVS are working with veterans with disabilities through a Kessler Foundation grant. They are accepting individuals who have served during the Global War on Terror and have physical disabilities who live in either New Jersey or Pennsylvania.

Veterans Affairs

The VA in East Orange is planning a town hall meeting in September for veterans. They would like service providers to come and discuss what services they have available for veterans.

Boggs Center

A newsletter about the College of Direct Support was handed out. The Boggs Center presented on this at the APSE conference.

Federal Budget

There is a handout in the packets about the 2013 federal budget proposal. There is information about the DEI program and a Social Security Administration Work Incentives Simplification Pilot.

Grant Application

DDD reported that New Jersey was not accepted for the protégé grant that they applied for, but they believe there was a lot of interest and that another round of grants may be coming out again soon. They will apply for the new grant when it is released.

Resignation

It was announced that our long-time colleague, Jody Levinson, has retired from Johnson & Johnson and will no longer be part of this committee. Everyone wishes her a long, healthy, and happy retirement.

Disability Survey

A copy of a March 2012 press release from the Tennessee *Knoxville News Sentinel* showed survey results from 800 employers and business owners to the question: “What is your greatest fear about hiring individuals with disabilities?” The results showed that there are still common workplace misconceptions. Twenty-six percent cited the biggest obstacle as special accommodations that would have to be made in the workplace. Others included job skills and productivity, litigation, safety and inappropriate behavior and perceptions. However, sixteen percent had no fear and would or have already hired someone with a disability.

Affordable Housing

It was reported that as housing is such an issue for people with disabilities, there currently is a lot of unspent HUD funding for affordable that is set to expire in July. Most of the funds reside within counties and many are seeking ways to quickly expend those funds. For more information, call your local counties. The balance of Municipal Housing Trust Funds by town and the amount at risk of reverting to the state is also available at:

http://www.nj.gov/dca/services/lps/hss/transinfo/reports/ahtf_2008_unspent.pdf.

Dare to Dream

Bob Hough from the Department of Education reminded everyone that the Dare to Dream programs are starting May 1st at Mercer County College, followed by another on May 4th at Raritan Valley Community College. There will be several others, as well. He invited everyone to attend.

Attendees:

Savannah Barnett	Bob Haugh	Cynthia Mapp	Ed Sroczynski
Shellyann Dacres	Toni Hindsman	Michele Martin	Susan Van Hook
Anthony Ferrera	Jennifer Joyce	Claudette O’gilvie	Guest Speakers:
Judy Formalarie	Sandy LaCorte	Jennifer Quigley	Elisa Colle, USDOL
Joe Gazzara	Kirk Lew	Clara Rivera-Pacheco	Sheldon Isaacs, USDOL
Jan Goodman	Sharon Lutz	Rebecca Shulman	Kevin Kollgaard, USDOL

Save the Dates

Remaining meeting dates for 2012

June 7	October 4
August 3	December 5