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## Workforce Disabilities Committee Meeting Minutes February 8, 2017 Community Quest

### **Attendance:**

Nina Stolzenberg    Kathy Quish    Michael Barnes    Tina Baez    Mike Margraf    Pat Jones  
Laura Natale       Kurt Ohlson       Elizabeth Denham

### **Staff:**

Alicia Oatman

The meeting was called to order at 9:33am by Elizabeth Denham. Upon reading the State and Regional plan, there were a few bullet points that needed to be discussed:

1. The committee recommends that funding for an Employment Services Mentor (formally Disability Navigator) be implemented as a standard funded position that is not reliant on grant funding. The key role of this position is to be a link that connects individuals to the appropriate service.
2. To enhance information sharing to individuals with disabilities seeking to become employed, information of any and all state programs, and distributing the resource booklet.
3. There should be a link on the WDB Website providing direction to individuals with disabilities.
4. In response to WIOA, enhance the outreach, awareness and availability of employment services to in-school youth with disabilities between the ages of 14-21.

Kathy Quish inquired about her agencies ties to WDB; Elizabeth Denham explained that her agency Atlantic County IGS is a referral source this why having a Disability Navigator is a key factor to our consumers success; this will also avoid consumers being directed to DVRS unwarranted and or unfounded. According to Alicia Oatman, unless consumers disclose their disability we are not in compliance should we ask the consumer according to the laws. If the candidate has self-identified as a person with a disability you can ask what type of reasonable accommodation he or she might need on-the-job. Always remember to remind the candidate that their personal information will be kept confidential. The most important thing to know when interacting with people with disabilities is that they are people. And just like all people, they are very different, including being different in how they are with disability issues. The most recent Disability Navigator Gary Scarpa has not retired however he will continue to attend committee meeting as time permits. This leaves us with no navigator at present. Kathy Quish suggested that staff begin to refer consumers to the navigator.

There seems to be a lot of consumers that does not know about the services at the One Stop and I have asked Alicia Oatman to bring a few here today. This would be a great tool to use as well when we are referring consumers for services. Kurt Ohlson reports that his agency CODI is working with Pleasantville High School in efforts to get special needs students to work within the Janitorial Program. The difficulty is that WIOA will not allow a job coach to assist. We have submitted letters to get the allowance for this as well as long term follow up but to no avail. Pat

Jones explained that the change is in the Federal language. Candace Titanski explained that with regards to comments made about CODI's janitorial program, I want to clarify that these are considered to be set-aside jobs. Set-aside jobs are not considered to be competitive integrative employment. Set-aside jobs require a certain amount of disabled and non-disabled workers as per requirements of these federally subsidized contracts/positions. DVRS has never (even before WIOA) been allowed to provide supported employment (job coaching, long-term follow along services) for these jobs. Supports were provided on the job by supervisors or non-disabled individuals. These positions are meant to provide the opportunity to obtain skills while working and earning money. Ideally, when a worker has obtained skills and is ready to work with less intensive supervision, then he/she could be referred to DVRS and seek competitive employment.

What has changed under WIOA is DVRS not being able to close cases for individuals who work at set-aside jobs as successful rehabilitations/closures. Again, these positions are not considered to be competitive integrated employment. It's important to determine where the consumer's check comes from. With set-aside jobs, ultimately the federal government is funding these positions. This issue is acknowledged however according to Alice Honeycutt from the State Dept., it's very perplexing to all involved. As per Lauren Natale Atlantic Care Behavioral Health can provide such services. Elizabeth Denham interjected that a link be placed on the Learn Train Work website as well. There will be a large emphasis on youth. The October event is scheduled for 10/5/17 being held at the AC Country Club; with that said we need to nomination out by 8/1/17 to be returned by 8/21/17. The committee should vote by 8/24/17 and the flyer will be distributed by 9/1/17. Kurt Ohlson reported that Access NJ contract is going great. Currently 21 locations in Atlantic County are being cleaned as well as 3 Housing Authorities. We have 40 plus employees for this contract.

Meeting adjourned 10:50am

