



YOUTH INVESTMENT COUNCIL MEETING

Monday, March 7, 2011 - 9:00 a.m.

*Middlesex County Department of Workforce Development
550 Jersey Avenue, New Brunswick NJ
WIA Conference Room A*

Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Scott Bollwage (Chair), Davis Blevins, Charoulla Castanos-Beaton, Designee for Wanda Dillon, Harriet Findlay, Grant Stuart, Alan Haveson, Designee for Mimi Hickman-Perfetti, Denalerie Johnson-Faniel, Julio Leiva, Bruce Negri, Monika Pankiewicz, Senovia Robles, Evelyn Rosa, Todd Schaper, Joe Scott, Earl Wiggley, Rebecca Escobar, Naomi Vliet,

Staff: Jane Brady, Abner Garcia, Roberto Rivas and Stephanie Proveaux

Review and Approval of Minutes:

The minutes of the January 10th 2011 Youth Investment Council meeting were approved as presented.

Jane Brady began with complimenting and thanking Council members for their outstanding participation and work efforts and also commented on the great diversity this group has to offer. Scott Bollwage also congratulated committee members for their outstanding work and commitment and reminded everyone how fortunate Middlesex County is to have this committee, as some counties, such as Union and Camden County, did not have a Youth Investment Council for quite some time.

Update / Discussion on Summer Youth Event:

Jane Brady provided an update on the upcoming youth summer event. This event will be held on Thursday August 18th 2011, from 10 am to 1 pm at the Rutgers Visitor Center located on the Rutgers Piscataway campus. This year's event will provide a different approach in helping the youth in our community. Rather than working with panel discussion groups, this year's event will directly benefit youth as a career awareness event with companies from various industries present to showcase different career options available to today's youth. Lunch will also be provided.

The Middlesex County Sheriff's Department will provide sheriff's officers, for safety purposes, at no additional cost. Also, the Middlesex County Prosecutor's office has requested to be invited, as they conduct very successful anti-bullying programs in schools.

The goal is to have two hundred (200) youth in attendance at this event. Due to space limitations, invitations will be limited to only those youth from the four (4) Middlesex County youth programs, the two (2) youth programs operated by Middlesex County College and both the New Brunswick and Perth Amboy Youth One-Stops. It is also possible that individuals from the Youth Corp program will attend. Transportation will be provided for youth and remain available throughout the day. As discussed, staff are hoping that a wide variety of industries will participate, so all suggestions for participants are welcome, but must be secured and in place by June 18, 2011. It is also asked that all participating vendors provide giveaways to all two hundred (200) youths expected to be attend. There will also be a D.J. for entertainment.

Youth One-Stops Report/MCC Programs

Abner Garcia indicated the youth program has marked improvements this year. The Perth Amboy office now has approximately twenty five (25) to thirty participants (30) that have already been trained. As a lot of Perth Amboy client referrals had to been sent to Middlesex County College because of their status of eligibility, meaning their IEP's no longer make them eligible for a youth program, they now need to be reclassified as adults since the program only accepts out-of-school youth. The New Brunswick Youth One-Stop office, which recently opened in November, 2010, currently has six (6) clients that Roberto Rivas, the Youth Coordinator, is working with, and he continues to find ways to overcome the many barriers in recruiting new clients.

Middlesex County College is very successful at this time, and staff continue to refer new clients. There were 20 clients in the first cycle, covering the period July to December 2010, with two (2) or three (3) carryovers into this cycle. They are reaching their goal of 15 clients in work readiness. Abner stated that staff will continue to find new and creative ways to help serve their clients as they do not want any youth in need to go without services.

The GED youth program at the YMCA in Perth Amboy operated also by Middlesex Community College is also doing very well, as they provide a very structured learning environment for high school dropouts. Abner Garcia feels this program is one of the most successful programs in the county. Client's skills are increased and youth who need additional structuring can then move on to the New Brunswick Adult Learning Center's program for GED testing, while others can move on to the Community Learning Center for testing. Last year, there were twelve (12) successful students in the first cycle and five (5) that carried over into the second cycle and completed their testing. This program continues to self-feed, as it is very well known in the county. Abner stated that the goal of thirty (30) clients served will be met as of June, 2011.

Jane Brady spoke about the renewal of the contract for youth programs operated by Middlesex County College. She stated that the County's Purchasing Department determined many years ago that a contract can be renewed for a second year as long

as the original RFP was issued and obtained competitively. As of now, we are still within the first year of this contract, and therefore, can be renewed. This is contingent, of course, upon there continuing to be funding available as of July 2011. Ms. Brady added that more than likely, Washington will be making cuts in our funding. As of now in one of the proposed budgets, it does not include funding for these types of programs.

Jane Brady also made mention that progress on the Youth Career Calendars for ninth graders is moving forward. A meeting was held with youth staff to discuss their ideas of what the calendar will contain and how it will be formatted. They are aware that the calendar must be completed and ready for distribution by July 2011.

In April, there will be a tour provided of Wakefern Industries. Wakefern offered an opportunity for twenty (20) selected youths if the youth is eighteen (18) or over to take a tour of their company and possibly apply for summer positions.

Issues from Training Session:

The Federal government has decided that any person, eighteen and older, that has not signed up for selective service cannot receive any of our services. This means that any client already in a program eighteen (18) years of age or older and not registered with Selective Service, must sign up immediately. If they refuse, they will be removed from the program.

At this time, according to family income eligibility guidelines, there are no exemptions for youth offenders trying to return to society and obtain skills in order to become gainfully employed. It was indicated that Jane Brady will submit a written request for a waiver to the State in order that this population may receive the extra assistance they need.

Youth below eight (8th) grade reading and math levels must take the T.A.B.E. test which is necessary to begin the program. After three (3) months or so of working with these clients, the State requires we follow-up with the post test to determine their improvements. It is very difficult to inspire these youth. Staff has found it necessary to find creative ways to encourage this group to move forward.

Proscribo Advertising Agency will be providing advertising over a four (4) month span in the form of commercials on television monitors in various locations, such as doctor's offices, laundry mats, etc. This commercial will use only our staff; no youth will be involved in the filming. This will be a trial run, at a minimal cost of one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) in total. If successful, it will be expanded. During this trial period, there will also be access to free radio time on the local Spanish station. This possibility is still at the county level awaiting approval.

As for performance measures, due to the troubled economy, we are only failing in one youth measure, which is employment. It is hopeful that we will meet this goal by the end of June 2011. Unfortunately, the Federal Government's view is not what is happening right now, as they view what has happened in the previous eighteen (18)

months. One of the consequences, if we fail the same measure two (2) years in a row, is that the State can take control of all operations. To date, this has never happened.

Unfortunately, there are many concerns about the future funding of programs, but at this time there is no information available

The next Youth Investment Council meeting will be held on **June 2nd at 9 am** at 550 Jersey Avenue in New Brunswick.