

COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT / LITERACY / DISABILITY

October 19, 2023

Zoom Participants

Tom Bianco, Co-Chair

Stephanie Buscher, Div. Social Services

Lorrie Covolessky, Abilities Solutions

Christine Arpino, GC Probation

Stanley Hershey, DWD

Lois Forman, Jewish Family Federation

Jenn Macchione, St. John of God Community Svcs.

Adam Morina, RCSJ

Nicole Quinn, Literacy NJ

Michelle Shirey, WDB

Joe Spencer, RCSJ

Shannon O'Brien, WDB Staff

Kasmire Blazie, NJLWD

Amy Charlesworth, RCJS

Julie DeLaurentis, Business

Joe Ferrari, DWD

Danielle Fithian, Goodwill Industries

Fran Harwell, FBO

Jennifer Mauro, Goodwill Industries

Michelle Pandolfo, GC Human & Disability Svcs.

Jaime Ramanauskas, People in Transition

Stacey Smith, DVRS

Les Vail, WDB Chair

Bridget DiGiambattista, WDB Staff

Adult Learning & Learning Links

Title II Services

Joe S. reported RCSJ was recently awarded the Out of School Youth grant for individuals ages 16-24. Since July 1, 2023 the currently have 145 adult education students enrolled (152 goal) for title II program services, with a mix of high school equivalency and ESL students. They have had significant increase of ESL students, with 58 students beginning in October. The TANF & Workforce Learning Link program has 9 clients, 10 for total year with a goal of 38.

WLL Counselor Activities

Kasmire B. reported from August 1 – October 18 they had 7 clients for WLL, 1 exited with computer literacy skills, currently have 6 attending and have 2 new clients.

Literacy NJ

Nicole Q. reported they have 33 active students; they currently have 9 classes going on. They have pre-hsc reading & writing class and will be offering citizenship prep classes this winter.

Transportation

Tom reported Pureland East West Shuttle ridership was 2,441, however there was a decrease in ridership for the internal shuttle.

Ex-Offenders – ReEntry

NJ Courts – Christine A. reported the Re-Entry Job Fair held on 9/15 was successful, 1 client secured employment at the event and some clients are still waiting on call backs from employers they submitted applications to. They are working close with Rutgers University, who received their jobs grant and hope for good results in terms of employment. They are working to get their clients federally bonded through NJDOL. She said they have found manufacturing employers the easiest to work with in hiring individuals. She said there is a barrier with Amazon and they think it is with 3rd party and hope to meet with Amazon regarding this issue. She reported the judiciary recently provided them with bus passes which will they will give to clients to ensure transportation to interviews and if they get hired, they can provided the client with bus pass for 1st week of employment. Christine asked for brochures on Pureland Shuttle for their clients, Tom stated he would get her the brochures.

Agency Updates

DVRS – Stacey S. reported their fiscal year ended 9/30/23 and they rehabbed 1,824 individuals. October is National Disability Employment Awareness month and as a local office they will honoring a client with the Bob Knab inspirational award on 10/23/23. They recently completed over 45 511 interviews with St.

John of God. Their office is working with two separate Project Searches. One is with Yale School/Jefferson Health. The other is with Gloucester County Economic Development/Jefferson Health which has 7 students enrolled.

Abilities Solutions – Lorrie reported they are 1 of 3 vendors approved by DVRS for a paid internship grant for youth ages 14-21 with disabilities who are still in school and they are looking for enrollment. This is a 150 hour paid internship, and they also provide instruction on self-advocacy, work place readiness, job exploration counseling and receive stipend for participating in the counseling. There is no waitlist for their services.

People in Transition – Jaime Ramanauskas introduced herself as new Director for People in Transition at RCSJ.

Michelle S. stated we will be discussing 2024 WDB committee meeting schedule and will have conversation about holding meetings in-person.

A motion for adjournment was made by L. Vail, seconded by J. DeLaurentis.

Respectfully submitted,

Bridget A. DiGiambattista, WDB Staff