



**Camden County
Workforce Development Board**
Supporting the Development and Retention of a World Class Workforce

Gregg T. DeBaere, Chair
Jeffrey S. Swartz, Executive Director

LITERACY COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
DECEMBER, 06 2016

ATTENDANCE

MEMBERS		10-May	7-Jun	12-Jul	2-Aug	12-Sep	4-Oct	1-Nov	6-Dec
Brahl, Ken CHAIR	Ravitz Family Shoprites	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Abrams, Barbara	Jewish Family & Children Service of Southern NJ	X	X			X		X	X
Beach, Patti	Camden County One-Stop					X	X	X	X
Dann, Carol	Camden County College	X			X		X		X
Kalitan, Marlyn	Kalitan Consulting	X	X		X		X	X	X
Knopf, Dick	Marketing Professional Services	X	X	X	X	X		X	
Young, Jennifer	Verizon						X		X
Weaver, Thomas	Mayor, Clementon Borough								X
Goodman, Steve	Volunteers of America, Del Valley								X
Welder, Laura	JEVS							X	X
Walton, Marcie	VOA-Face Forward								X
Powell, Michelle	Camden County College								X
Pryor, Regina	DOL-Employment and Training			X		X	X		X
Swartz, Jeffrey S., Exec. Director	WDB	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Stubblefield, Lelia	WDB	X	X						
Varallo, Kathleen	WDB		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Williams, Leslie J	WDB					X			
Naroden, Eric	WDB Intern		X		X	X			

WELCOME

Ken Brahl called the meeting to order, welcomed attendees and asked for roundtable introductions. Ken welcomed guests and new members, Thomas Weaver, Mayor Clementon, Steve Goodman, Volunteers of America, Michelle Powell, Camden County College Adult Basic Skills and Laura Welder, Jewish Education and Vocational Services, Philadelphia.

• LITERACY NEEDS ASSESSMENT UPDATE (LNA)

Ken presented and reviewed the Literacy Needs Assessment, in its current draft format, with attendees. Ken said, Carol Dann, Director, Camden County College Adult Basic Skills, who leads Consortium for Literacy Services, wanted a current assessment that could be used for certain grants. Ken said that once the research began, he realized it was not a Camden City problem, it was a problem throughout the County. English, as a Second Language (ESL), was a large contributing factor in the County. The committee enlisted Eric Naroden, Master's Candidate, Rutgers University, Camden, to create the drafts of the Literacy Needs Assessment as well as the indicator maps shown within the document. He also organized Camden County public census data for the LNA. Ken said the maps titled Camden County Literacy Index are a combination of four key indicators. These indicators are High School graduation rates, percentages of households speaking languages other than English at home, poverty rates and percentage of residents without a High School Diploma or GED. The assessment assigns points, using census data, for every indicator as it relates to each municipality. This is

based on the state average of 88%. The sum of those scores indicates when a community is falling below the state average and which communities would be considered “Bordering” or “Notable.”

The finalized assessment will be presented to local elected officials in hopes that the Camden County Workforce Development Board can work with them to create Literacy Programs that better serve their communities. Ken thanked members of the Literacy Committee who met regularly with Eric to guide the process of putting together the LNA. He said the committee looked to Burlington County for use of their LNA as a guide. Ken said he presented the current draft at the WDB Quarterly on September 28th, 2016 for general comments and questions by the board. Mayor Thomas Weaver attended that meeting. He is here today to join with us to help further the goals of the LNA to establish literacy services his local area. Ken said the finalized version would be published on the WDB website and utilized by the committee for community outreach.

Marlyn Kalitan said she sent some changes to Ken and suggested reducing the font size, line spacing or making the changes necessary to shorten the LNA and that there was no need for it to be 19 pages long.

Carol Dann presented a LNA draft to the committee that included her comments and changes.

Carol and Marlyn reviewed changes they made within the document. Ken suggested they take some time after the meeting to consolidate their changes and give them to the WDB staff to revise and re-send to the committee.

Ken asked Mayor Weaver that since Clementon borders on the Lindenwold area, which showed an indication of needing literacy services, if he agreed with this finding. Mayor Weaver concurred with the findings of the LNA. He said that he often sees residents walking to the bus and train stations. While these routes are accessible to the literacy programs held at the Camden County College, he felt that there might be better participation if the programs took place at a convenient location that would be in walking distance to their homes. He said his community includes a Bangladesh, Ecuadorian and Mexican population. They tend to be intimidated by big buildings. Camden County College is a big complex. The Clementon library in his community is underutilized by the township. He said he looked into the hours and areas in the building where literacy services could be offered. The library is right in the center of town. He said he would certainly reach out to the surrounding towns such as Lindenwold to let them know these programs are local and available.

Jeff said the Literacy committee struggled with the thought of how a local elected official would respond to presenting them with information that there may be an issue of literacy in their community. The LNA would have to be presented with a positive approach. He said that having the Mayor’s input was encouraging. Jeff said the goal of the LNA was to identify areas where we could move resources. This will provide an opportunity to deploy resources where we can serve beyond the limits of inner city Camden and establish Literacy Services around the county.

Mayor Weaver said that he has already reached out to the school board to get their support for helping to bring awareness by way of the student to their parents who may be in need of Literacy Services. Ken asked Regina Pryor for some input as to possible funding resources that could be provided as result of the new Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act. (WIOA) Regina said that the focus is that the State has learned that

unemployed individuals who are looking for work may be more comfortable utilizing services at the library or place of worship over going to a One-Stop. The Libraries have WIFI capability which is still an issue at some Career One-Stops. The library has been a big part of this WIOA legislation. There is a team at the Department of Labor that is working with just the libraries on funding and programs. This team is another whole division who work to implement funding and programs in the libraries. She said she has become aware that there is a big effort by the WIOA legislation to leverage the local libraries as mini career centers or partners with the One-Stops. She said she would look into the contacts at the state that might assist in this local area of Camden County. She will find out who the contacts are, how the funding works, and what programs are available for the library

Carol Dann said she is aware of the Literacy Volunteers of Camden County (LVCC) that work with local libraries to offer literacy services. Literacy Volunteers of Camden County (LVCC) provides free one-on-one and small group tutoring in Reading, Math and English to Camden County adults at the lowest literacy levels. Tutoring is learner-centered and goal-oriented, geared toward the needs of each individual student. The LVCC are located at 203 Laurel Road, Voorhees, NJ 08043 (856) 772-1636.

Steve Goodman, Volunteers of America asked how efforts in boosting literacy skills would translate in to putting individuals to work.

- RETAIL MANAGEMENT COURSE UPDATE

Ken brought up the next agenda item, the Retail Management Course, as an answer to Steve's question. Ken said his company Ravitz Family Markets generally hires individuals with basic skills. These are entry level positions where an individual usually works their way up in the company. He said that out of Eleven Hundred (1,100) employees there are One Hundred Thirty (130) who are considered management positions in the company. One Hundred Ten (110) of those positions are filled with employees that have worked their way up in the company system. Most of these positions are full time 48 hour positions. Ken said he has been working on a program that educates these individuals with some college training. He said that while in-store training produces good employees, we lose something by not having an outside influence that college would bring. Having an influx of new ideas from a college experience might help to enhance innovative ideas within his company.

The Western Grocers Association partnered with community colleges to create a one year Retail Management Certification program. The core programs are Management, Marketing, Human Resources and Financial Management or Accounting classes. This program is currently based in the western part of the country with over 30 colleges participating. The Super Market Trade Association and the Food Marketing Institute is helping to bring this program nationwide. Ken said Shoprite has been focusing on bringing this course to local colleges. He met with Camden County College. The college is in favor of instituting this retail management course into their curriculum. Ravitz Family Markets is paying for eight employees to take the certificate class. The students have responded favorably and are dedicated to completing the program.

Ken called on Carol Dann to inform the committee about a Retail Customer Service Course which is a separate certification class. Carol said that she and WDB Executive Director, Jeffrey Swartz visited the Jersey Gardens

mall in Elizabeth, NJ several years ago. There was a classroom in the mall dedicated to teaching this Customer Service Course. Upon taking this course, an individual could go on to be employed by one of the retailers in the mall. Jeff assisted in working with the National Retail Federation to incorporate this course into the Camden County College Adult Basic Skills program. The course is now imbedded into the curriculum at CCC. She said it is not an easy course and includes a two hour computerized examination before completion. Once completed, students receive a nationally recognized certificate. The certificate is opening up doors for these students, some of whom have not yet received a High School Diploma. Many do continue to work on their basic skills while completing this certification program. Ken said he will look to hire individuals who have completed this course knowing it is a challenging course that teaches students quality customer services skills. Carol said the course is very interactive and includes role play and good situational or incident related discussions relating to customer service. She said the college has worked many years to further develop the course and become a testing site for it. Ken said there is a WIOA focus on credentialing. Having a National Retail Federation Certificate for Customer Service will make a big difference for a job-seeker. Steve Goodman asked if there is an eligibility requirement for the course. Carol said there are some reading and math skills that must be attained in order to handle this rigorous course.

Questions were raised by members of the committee about ways of getting programs, such as this, set up to help previously incarcerated individuals. Regina suggested hosting a program at the local library that would focus on opportunities for job-seekers with these kinds of barriers to employment. Jennifer asked if there was a program that discusses conflict resolution. Carol said there are many individuals currently being served by the Adult Basic Skills Consortium. Carol introduced Michelle Powell, Camden County College Adult Basic Skills as the college's very first Job Developer. She said Michelle will be working with employers around the County that may not be aware of opportunities to hire individuals who have received certification as a result of completing these programs. Michelle said she is currently meeting with the students to assess their needs and goals. She will begin meeting with employers once she gains insights from the students. She is encouraging students to recognize their marketable skills and continue their education even after they may have gained employment. Regina said that new WIOA laws require GED completion. She said it used to be that an individual could complete CDL training with as little as a sixth grade education and go on to be a truck driver. If that person got into a situation where they could no longer drive, they would be handicapped further by not having a High School Equivalency. WIOA law now mandates that state education systems address basic skill deficiencies.

Ken said that the focus of the next meeting will be to set goals for the coming year and review the final LNA that will include any further edits made by Carol Dann and Marlyn Kalitan.

NEXT MEETING

The next Literacy Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 3rd, at 8:30am at the CCWDB office. There will be a joint meeting with the Abilities Committee on Tuesday, February 7th, at 8:30am.

Submitted by,

Kathleen Varallo

Administrative Assistant, Camden County Workforce Development Board