

## MINUTES

Detroit Workforce Development (DWDB) Board  
Disability Advisory Council Meeting  
Tuesday, June 16, 2015

Time: 8:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.  
Location: Detroit Employment Solutions Corporation, 440 E. Congress, Conference Room 3R,  
Detroit, Michigan 48226  
Facilitating: Gwen McNeal, Chair

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Council Members Present: Gwen McNeal, Jon Waller, Steve Mellos, Barbara LeRoy, Joe Evans,  
Yvette Harris, Bill Ross (via telephone) and Lena Barkley (via telephone)  
Council Members Absent: Steve Eglund, Janet Howard, Byron Carter, Jayna Jamerson, Patricia Little, George  
Parris, Felecia Simpson, Ammiel Thomas, Kenyetta Walker, John Williamson,  
Angelique Kelly, Tiffany Cracchiolo, Delora Williams, Anne Duncan, Richard  
Carson and Venus Heard  
Guests: Cynthia Burdi, Carla Dean, Jennifer Hays, E. Phelps Nichols, Michael Rollins, John  
Samborski, Michelle Murphy, Nonzwakazi Hill, Glenda Magarrell, Wanda  
Travis, Benne Baker and Justin Kimpson  
Staff Present: Stephanie Nixon, Lester Gayden, Joycelyn Malcolmcarr, Kristin Bailey,  
Kellee Miller, Robin Johnston, Carolyn Miller, Renee Wilson and Lynn Bell

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### **Proceedings**

The Detroit Workforce Development Board's Disability Advisory Council meeting was called to order by Chair Gwen McNeal at 8:33 a.m. The draft agenda for Tuesday, June 16, 2015 and the draft minutes for March 17, 2015 were reviewed and approved by the council.

### **Assess-Plan-Place "Missing Link"**

Chair McNeal introduced Ms. Jennifer Hays, Mr. E. Phelps Nichols and Mr. Michael Rollins from American Learning, LLC. Mr. Nichols distributed handouts and gave a presentation on the Waypoint System. The Waypoint is a comprehensive assessment and resources system that can assist people with disabilities identify suitable career/job options and transition into a successful and rewarding life. The Waypoint system was developed in 1974 and the program was put together with various components that have been used over the years.

After the presentation, Mr. Nichols closed by stating the power of Waypoint's GPS-like system can really help to open up the world and the possibilities as well as expand options to people with disabilities. The main objective is to assist people with disabilities achieve the highest levels of education, employment and life experiences to the extent that they are capable. The software is a one-time purchase that can be downloaded from a flash drive. The one-time purchase also includes automatic updates as well as lifetime technical support.

### **Placing Persons with Development Disabilities and Mental Impairments**

Chair McNeal introduced Ms. Carla Dean, Director of Macomb-Oakland Regional Center Inc. (MORC) Vocational Services. Ms. Dean explained that MORC serves Macomb, Oakland, and Wayne Counties. They are a core provider for individuals with developmental disabilities. MORC services are contracted through CMH's in the tri-county area. She went on to say that the individuals that MORC support all have developmental disabilities and 40 percent of them require 24-hour support. Also, many of them have a diagnosis of mental illness as well as developmental illness. Ms. Dean discussed how MORC provides a full array of services. They have support coordinators that work with individuals with a person-centered plan. Through this planning process, MORC helps to support them through all areas of their lives such as employment, resident, medical services, as well as community-based volunteer activities.

Ms. Dean expressed that MORC's employment services provides service through strong community contracting with a number of vocational agencies in the community. These agencies offer support for individuals depending on their abilities and their level of support needs. MORC also offers support to individuals to help them attain that level

of employment or give people support if they are not able to work independently in the community.

Ms. Dean introduced Ms. Cynthia Burdi, Employment Developer at MORC Vocation Services. Ms. Burdi explained that she works with individuals who are looking for paid independent employment in the community. She bridges the gap between the social worker that goes into the community looking for employment opportunities for individuals to business owners that inquire as to why they should hire a certain individual. Finding that combination where the employers is fulfilled and the client is placed is the ultimate goal with competitive employment. Ms. Burdi gave a presentation and distributed an outline on Successful Job Placement Strategies for People with Developmental Disabilities.

### **What and Who Do We Need Locally to Improve Our Outcomes?**

Chair McNeal introduced Mr. Joe Evans, Director of Strategic Initiatives at The Guidance Center. Mr. Evans discussed how the Detroit Medical Health Authority has created a collaborative of eleven (11) community-based organizations (Employer Engagement and Recruitment Committee) that provide evidence-based supportive employment. The Employer Engagement and Recruitment Committee is comprised of community service providers. The vision of this committee is that there will be one collective partnership of community providers that work together to meet the mutual needs of both the people they serve and the engaged employers with the hope of becoming a labor market intermediary. This alliance would include a seamless system, an aligned approach, a common marketing strategy, a business advisory committee, and a shared database.

Mr. Evans stated that the committee has received funding from the Mental Health board to host an advisory board recruitment event where employers and key stakeholder will be invited in early September to see if they would like to engage in a stakeholders committee that would support this initiative. He explained that there are eighteen (18) employers that are set to be invited and would like Michigan Works and various schools to be a part of this event. Mr. Evans also noted that the committee is working on a common database called TAP that is utilized nationally. This database supports resumes and allows individuals to be placed regardless of the organization. He noted that employers are paying to access this information and be a part of this system and are looking for individuals with disabilities to fill various positions. Mr. Evans closed by stating that this engagement initiative could be something big, becoming a place where everyone can connect and provide services for everyone in the mental health system.

### **Agency Updates**

Ms. Wanda Travis with the Disability Network of Wayne County discussed that she has been working with MRS and preparing for the rollout of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. She has also been working with physically, mentally, and cognitive-impaired individuals with getting them prepared for the supportive and competitive employment. Ms. Travis added the organization also has been assisting individuals with affordable housing so that as they live in the community they can live independently and not be in crisis.

Ms. Barbara LeRoy, Director of the Developmental Disabilities Instituted (DDI) for Wayne State University, shared that she is working on the ODEPT Initiative, trying to align employment first and deviated wage issues as well as transition for youth at the state level. She is also working on finishing sampling of compliance providers with the CMS rule on home and community-based waivers.

Ms. Phelps explained that one of her goals has been working with Ms. Nonzwakazi Hill on developing and tying individuals with disabilities with DESC's Year-Round Youth Program. She also mentioned that the placements have more than doubled this year.

Ms. Nonzwakazi Hill with SER Metro thanked Ms. Phelps for assisting her in obtaining employment for a youth with disabilities in their program. She went on to share that currently there are forty-seven (47) young people with disabilities from the Drew Transition Center that will be entering into work placements. Some of the placement are with the Horticulture Program, Makenzie, TJ Maxx as well as other retailers. Ms. Hill expressed that they hope to continue to assist young people not only with summer work experiences, but also with long-term employment as well.

Mr. Gayden shared some information on JAG (Jobs for America's Graduates) a state-based program dedicated to preventing dropouts among young people who are most at risk. Mr. Gayden explained that this is the first year in both Cody and Osborn High Schools and they are looking to expand. He expressed that this fall the goal is to work with more students offering the services that are available as well as including them in the Year-Round Youth program in the upcoming year. He added that he is also continuing to partner with organizations like MRS and DHHS in assisting

individuals with disabilities in the JAG program.

Mr. Steve Mellos with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) shared information regarding a recent Supreme Court decision involving a young woman wearing a hijab. He also discussed that locally, the first transgender case in the United States is going to court. The case addresses a transgender working at a funeral home and announced that he was transitioning and was fired.

**Action Items**

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) workshop and training on hiring and employing individuals with disabilities for the Business Services Department.

**Good and Welfare**

The Guidance Center-Employer Engagement and Recruitment Committee will be hosting a recruitment event in September.

**Adjournment**

With no further business to come before the Disability Advisory Council, the meeting was adjourned at 10:43 a.m.

Submitted by: Lynn Bell