

DRAFT MINUTES

Detroit Employment Solutions Corporation (DESC) Board
Disability Advisory Council Meeting
Tuesday, March 19, 2013

Time: 8:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.
Location: 707 West Milwaukee Street, 2nd Floor, Room 2A
Facilitating: Gwen McNeal, Chair

Council Members Present: Verna Brocks, Harvey Brooks, Shawn Burch, Richard Carson, Danita Echols, Jannette Howard, Gwen McNeal, Tracey Miree-Marks, Felecia Simpson, Andrea Tolle, Delora Williams

Council Members Absent: Lena Barkley, Byron Carter, Aurora Harris, Jayna Jamerson, Patricia Little, George Parris, Felecia Simpson, Ammiel Thomas, Kenyetta Walker, John Williamson

Guests: Paula Green-Smith, Urban Health Resources; Angela Hamilton/Microworks; Nonzwakazi Hill/YDC; Daedra A. McGhee/United States Department of Justice; Mike Trogan/Youth Development Commission (YDC)

Staff Present: Kristin Bailey, L'Tanya Clegg, Lester Gayden, Stephanie Nixon

The meeting of Detroit Employment Solutions Corporation Board Disability Advisory Council was called to order at 8:15 a.m. by Ms. Gwen McNeal, Chair. Chair McNeal welcomed all to the meeting and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

APPROVAL OF DRAFT AGENDA & DRAFT MINUTES OF DECEMBER 18, 2012

A motion was made by Member Richard Carson to approve the Draft Agenda of March 19, 2013 and Draft Minutes of December 18, 2012, supported by Member Verna Brocks. Motion Carried.

AGENCY UPDATES

Chair McNeal allowed members an opportunity to provide brief agency updates.

Grant Associates

Representatives from Grant Associates provided several updates. Member Harvey Brooks from Grant Associates stated that they are working with Grant Associates with updating staff presentations on how Grant Associates' staff can become more disability-friendly with customers and offer better customer service. Member Shawn Burch stated that they are continuing their efforts to partner with other agencies. Grant Associates has met with several agencies to establish referral processes and are also working on a process where inbound and outbound referrals can be tracked. Member Burch explained that Grant Associates is establishing a great relationship and is working well with Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS), their onsite partner. Grant Associates is currently researching avenues to acquire much-needed equipment. Also, it is working with council

Equal Opportunity Employer/Program
Funded by The Michigan Department of Licensing & Regulatory Affairs
Workforce Development Agency
Auxiliary Aids and Services Available Upon Request to Individuals With Disabilities

Dave Bing, Mayor

members that service the veteran community and will be meeting with them this week to strategize on how they can support each other to better assist veterans.

PTA

Member Verna Brocks explained that the PTA had a wonderful youth employment training session for parents and thanked Ms. Stephanie Nixon and Mr. Lester Gayden from DESC for their efforts and support. Member Brocks noted that the district unfortunately did not get calls out to many of the parents, so instead of having 40 parents in attendance, probably less than half that number attended. Member Brocks briefly discussed youth's disappointment with the waiting lists for Summer Youth Employment positions, stating the youth are not interested in signing a waiting list. Ms. Nixon mentioned that youth are aware that the waiting list is a part of the process but that the majority of the youth that sign the waiting list are contacted. Mr. Mike Trogan noted that 90% of youth on the waiting list last year were placed into the program.

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS)

Member Jannette Howard shared that everything is going well with MRS, although they are losing their Bureau Director at the end of the month and have not worked out the transitioning part of that yet. Staff does not know what will happen when the director leaves but are hopeful that the position will be filled relatively quickly. MRS is working on different programming, including summer programs, along with DPS. It is also collaborating well with *Michigan Works!*, noting that many of MRS customers have received opportunities through job leads. In addition, Member Howard recognized Member Shawn Burch and Grant Associates, who have been working diligently with MRS to collaborate and assist people with disabilities attain employment. This is the first time in Member Howard's fifteen years with MRS that they have been able to partner so closely.

Detroit Employment Solutions Corporation (DESC)

Ms. Kristin Bailey, Administrative Manager, stated that her involvement pertains to the management of board and committee meetings and tracking action items that come out of the meetings.

Mr. Lester Gayden, Youth Services Coordinator, explained that DESC is continuing to work with the five contractors that provide year-round services for youth and is now gearing up for the Summer Youth Employment Program.

Ms. Stephanie Nixon, Director of Contract Administration, noted three priorities: 1) Marketing; 2) To improve overall services; and 3) To improve access to the services. Ms. Nixon stated that the Council is important since it helps DESC become aware of resources that can help engage individuals with DESC's services. Ms. Nixon explained that as DESC continues to improve its services, it must ensure that anyone who wants to benefit from these services has access to them. She talked about a PTA meeting that she attended where she learned that a number of citizens were not aware of these services. Ms. Nixon also noted that Mr. Robin Johnston, Communications Manager at DESC, has asked her to assist him in compiling stories that will highlight individuals with disabilities.

Urban Health Resource/Urban Health Outreach

Ms. Paula Green-Smith mentioned that her organization is starting a program where youth will be provided with an opportunity to work with seniors and disabled persons to assist them in their homes. The program is designed to be a benefit for youth so they can receive guidance from seniors. Also, seniors will benefit from the assistance with chore services as well as the ability in general to continue residing in their homes. Ms. Green-Smith attended today's meeting to find out if there opportunities to form partnerships that might benefit the citizens of Detroit.

Jewish Vocational Services (JVS)

Member Andrea Tolle stated that JVS is offering a support group for women who are re-entering the workforce, which includes an opportunity for the women from the group to receive free Microsoft Office training. JVS has

hired some of the women who come out of the Women-to-Work program. JVS held an event at the Townsend Hotel, which hosted over 300 people (mostly women), with an event speaker who is a graduate of one of the programs. Member Tolle thanked Grant Associates for the job leads they are receiving, noting that JVS had several individuals hired from the leads. In addition, the organization is currently in the process of releasing several RFPs. Member Tolle also noted that some of the janitorial contracts are coming up for bid.

Bureau of Services for Blind Persons (BSBP)

Chair McNeal thanked everyone for their support and hard work, explaining that BSBP is moving forward as they look at system changes. Based on the charge handed to the Council by Ms. Pamela Moore, President/CEO of DESC, this body will bring forth information for a document that will provide direction to DESC pertaining to service provided to individuals with disabilities. Chair McNeal noted that it would be great to share success stories as well.

Microworks Employment and Training Services

Ms. Angela Hamilton mentioned a few highlights from Microworks. Microworks has a contract with the YES Program, which will launch at SER-Metro on March 25th. Currently, thirty-five students ages 19 – 21 will receive training through the YES Program. Thanks to Member Jannette Howard, Microworks has a strong relationship with MRS. Half of the students referred from MRS have been enrolled in the program and Ms. Hamilton is excited about this opportunity. The ultimate goal is for students to be trained at a comfortable pace with customized training for each individual. Hopefully, students will become certified and proficient in Microsoft Office and have a better opportunity to acquire employment once completed.

Tuition to Independence Program (TIP)

Member Danita Echols currently works for Wayne State University with a program called TIP. This program serves as a niche to assist foster care youth that have goals of graduating. While working with this program, Member Echols discovered that there are a lot of homeless youth within the city. Prior to working for the university, Member Echols worked with the State of Michigan for approximately seventeen years in the foster care system where she saw many youth that were seeking employment that did not possess knowledge of where to find the resources they needed.

Detroit/Wayne County Community Mental Health

Member Felecia Simpson shared a few items about Detroit/Wayne County Community Mental Health. As of October 1, 2013, Detroit/Wayne County Community Mental Health Agency will become an authority and will no longer fall under the county. Instead, it will be a separate entity, although it will continue to be a part of Community Mental Health. Also, it is in the process of an Application for Participation which will showcase the organization's future plans. The organization would like to continue to partner with others in the community and enhance as well as increase services for persons with disabilities.

United Cerebral Palsy Association (UCPA)

Member Delora Williams wanted to make all aware of the resources and services that are provided by UCPA: Person-Centered Advocacy; Quick Ramps for Kids; Training and Workshops; Research and Treatment Information; Public Policy; Assistive Technology and Funding; Customized Employment and Training; Social Security Benefits Planning; UCP Support Group; Richard L. Beer Memorial Resource Library; Local/National Resources; Volunteer Opportunities; Representative Payee Services; and Support Coordination Services through CLS Oakland.

Youth Employment Services (YES) Program

Mr. Mike Trogan stated that RFPs were recently released for youth providers. YES's current goals are the following: 1) Making sure that the youth they are working with who have disabilities are able to transition if they have to go to different service providers; 2) Making sure that providers are familiar with the youth they will

receive, which will enable employers to work better with the youth; and 3) Gearing up for the summer, which includes contacting work sites and setting up meetings with various agencies. YES is also looking at more year-round programs.

Ms. Nonzwakazi Hill shared that YES recently held a Career Expo which had a nice turnout of youth with disabilities. The agency now has a Youth Advisory Council where the youth have a voice and can tell the program about their interests. One young man on the council is hard of hearing and his ideas will not only help him but other youth as well. YES is currently working to provide more resources for their youth with disabilities, especially those that are transitioning out of school. Ms. Hill noted that there are options for youth in school, but once they are out of school, their options are limited.

Connections for Deaf Citizens (CDC)

Member Tracey Miree-Marks, Director of CDC, explained that her agency's primary goal is campaigning for full accessibility for persons with disabilities, primarily focusing on youth that are deaf and hard of hearing. CDC also services individuals of all ages. One of the organization's major challenges is providing hope to its customers.

Renaissance Consulting Group

Member Richard Carson is continuing to work on veteran and youth programs. He also reminded everyone about the television show he is hosting and producing for the City of Detroit, "Non-Profit Spotlight," which airs on channel 22. Any non-profits that are interested in appearing on the show are welcome to contact him. Member Carson would like to air some program success stories and invites DESC to appear on the show. Also, Renaissance Consulting Group is currently in the process of renovating several properties and will ensure that some of those facilities will be made adaptable to persons with disabilities. The group will also house veterans that are returning, some of whom may also have disabilities.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Chair McNeal mentioned that at the last meeting, Ms. Moore asked this council for a document that would advise DESC on the areas where DESC is performing well and areas where DESC needs improvement regarding assisting persons with disabilities. Council members offered the following feedback:

Some positives are:

- Sending job leads to all interested partners
- Tracking participants
- Awareness that persons with disabilities need services
- The fact that the Education and Youth Advisory Council will now have youth on the council
- DESC now has a marketing/communications staff member
- Most services offered are now on the main level which helps individuals with mobility issues
- The Mobile Unit is great (but it needs updated technology to make it more barrier-free)
- DESC joined members from different agencies to participate on this council

Some negatives are:

- Issues with purchasing adaptable equipment
- Video relays need to be re-installed
- No secret shopping
- Need to ensure that persons with disabilities are able to connect with one another
- Need to optimize social media
- Marketing staff at DESC must ensure that customers, including persons with disabilities, have opportunities to learn about services that are available

- Lack of a visual such as a map or flow chart that shows individuals where to go and for what service

Chair McNeal will take all suggestions provided today as well as notes given to her by members and compile into a document for Ms. Moore.

The next meeting of the Disability Advisory Council is scheduled for Tuesday, June 11, 2013.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 10:05 a.m.

Submitted by: L'Tanya Clegg