

Apprenticeship & Industry Development

February 25, 2025

Teams Participants

Greg Davis, Chair
Nick Bidinger, Local Union 322
Brett Guetens, DWD
Jenn Macchione, St. John of God Comm. Srvs.
Judeline Marcellus, NJLWD
Karen Rodriguez, NJLWD
Amanda Terpstra, Business
Lucy Campbell, Inspira Health
JaNea Wilson, NJLWD
Shannon O'Brien, WDB Staff
Bridget DiGiambattista, WDB Staff

Tom Bianco, GC Economic Development
Melissa Eckstein, Gateway Regional High School
Pavi Lakshminarayan, NJLWD
Allen Magid, RCSJ
Anthony Marino, Business
Michelle Shirey, WDB Director
Alisha Thompson, DWD
Lani Allen Davis, MidAtlantic States Career & Edu. Ctr.
Alice Smith, WDB Staff
Allison Spinelli, WDB Staff

Welcome & Introduction

Greg introduced himself and explained his involvement in the Workforce Development Board and his passion for promoting apprenticeship careers to help students and young adults understand their options and pathways. Greg highlighted the importance of making students aware of apprenticeship pathways, noting that many students end up with significant debt from four-year degrees while apprenticeship programs offer a debt-free alternative with good earning potential.

Revised Mission Statement

Greg shared the revised mission statement, which emphasizes raising awareness of apprenticeship careers, engaging with industry, and creating meaningful pathways for the workforce. The statement also highlights the committee's dedication to collaborating with the community and employers to identify relevant programs and provide essential services to enhance the Community's economic success through skilled careers.

Greg mentioned that Alice, Michelle, Danny, Tom, and others worked together to rework the old mission statement and tweak it slightly to better align with the committee's goals.

A motion to approve the revised mission statement was made by N. Bidinger, seconded by A. Thompson.

Meetings Dates for 2025

Upcoming meeting dates: May 27 will be in-person, September 23 will be in-person, and December 16 will be in-person.

Philosophy Discussion

Greg identified two main challenges in promoting apprenticeships: the lack of awareness about the value of apprenticeships and the lack of knowledge about how to pursue them. He emphasized the need to address both aspects to effectively promote apprenticeship careers.

Target Groups: Greg categorized individuals into four groups based on their awareness and understanding of apprenticeships: those with no value and no knowledge, those who see the value but don't know the pathway, those who know the pathway but don't see the value, and those who are already interested. He stressed the importance of targeting the first two groups in the committee's efforts. Greg explained that the committee's goals and action plans should reflect the philosophy of promoting the value of apprenticeships and providing clear pathways to pursue them. He asked the committee members to keep this philosophy in mind as they discuss the goals and action plans. Melissa and Pavi highlighted additional hurdles, such as students' reluctance to take new experiences and the perception of apprenticeships as dirty jobs. Melissa emphasized the need for additional support to help students venture into apprenticeships. JaNea and Anthony emphasized the importance of engaging employers and addressing their needs to create more apprenticeship opportunities.

Goals & Objectives

Greg presented the committee's preliminary goals and action plans, which include creating marketing materials, hosting information sessions, coordinating tours of local employers who have successfully implement apprenticeship programs, and identifying effective outreach resources.

Melissa and Pavi stressed the importance of engaging high school students early in their education to promote apprenticeships before they commit to other career paths. Michelle stated the committee must be cognoscente of the different pathways for different learners and as a One Stop Career Ctr. and WDB we have a lot of varying clients, i.e. adults, dislocated, unemployed, students, and individuals coming off social assistance. We have to maintain different strategies for each of these pathways that are a bit more than traditional high school student.

Pavi suggested exploring incentives for employers to create apprenticeship programs. Melissa proposed creating short marketing videos featuring successful apprenticeships to encourage more businesses to participate.

Proposed Q1 & Q2

Greg indicated his vision would be to have the marketing items that list programs and get a start on what are the one pagers for each discipline look like done by June 30. Michelle stated these are good goals and we're just consolidating and putting in one place so we know where to direct people. We should start with information we currently have and ask committee members who has any kind of program or is aware of programs that could be resources for out students and customers at the One Stop. Anthony asked what are the end outcomes we are trying to influence. Michelle responded we have common measures that are measured on different metrics from the State of New Jersey and they are broader than specifically apprenticeship, but apprenticeship would be a positive outcome. Michelle suggested this committee not to expect a certain outcome by a specific date, we are here as a support system for the community, for workforce, for the employers to provide information.

Pavi suggested have incentives for employers who create apprenticeship programs. Michelle stated there has to be a local policy around it, but we should get a foundation established first.

Melissa suggested having an employer create a brief video on an apprentice and how their experience / success was. Michelle said we can look into working with RCSJ/Marketing and Shannon will look into.

A motion for adjournment was made by P. Lakshminarayan, seconded by A. Smith.

The next meeting will be May 27, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

Bridget A. DiGiambattista, WDB Staff