

COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT, LITERACY & DISABILITY

May 15, 2025

Participants

Tom Bianco, Chair	Christina Arpino, GC Probation
Alicia Battaglia, Commissioner Office	Stephanie Buscher, GC Div. Social Services
Lorrie Covolesky, Abilities Solutions	Julie Delaurentis, Business
Lani Allen-Davis, MidAtlantic States Career & Edu.	Natalie Fortunato, South Jersey Dream Center
Jenn Macchione, St. John of God Commun. Svrs.	Michelle Pandolfo, GC Human & Special Svrs.
Nicole Quinn, Literacy NJ	Theresa Rohlfing, Ctr. for Independent Living
Brigette Satchell, RCSJ	Michelle Shirey, WDB Director
Stacey Smith, DVRS	Joe Spencer, RCSJ
Alisha Thompson, DWD	Christina Velazquez, GC Economic Development
Shannon O'Brien, WDB Staff	Alice Smith, WDB Staff
Allison Spinelli, WDB Staff	Bridget DiGiambattista, WDB Staff

Tom opened meeting at 8:30am.

A motion to approve February 20, 2025 minutes was made by A. Smith, seconded by J. Spencer.

Status of Reports

Title II Services – Joe S. reported they had a total of 311 ESL students enrolled, 253 of those students will count towards program year since they followed through with attending. They have a successful post test rate of 65% and looking to improve as they close out the fiscal year. They recently started working with Rastelli Food Group in Swedesboro and are providing with ESL classes for their employees, additionally working with B. Satchell and CTE to provide ServSafe training for their staff upon completion of ESL classes. They have found this to be a successful model. He is working with S. O'Brien on marketing materials to be shared with various businesses in the community offering to partner with them to provide ESL classes for their employees as well as certificate training programs.

Literacy NJ – Nicole Q. reported they will end their year 83 students participating, with a 73% post assessment rate. They will offer this summer conversational classes as well as ESL classes.

Transportation – Tom B. reported the Pureland Shuttle showed a slight decrease in riders since last report in February. They did receive additional funding from the State.

Project Search – Alice S. reported graduation will be June 12 at Jefferson Health. Interviews for the upcoming school year were recently held. S. Smith reported from the interviews, they have selected 5 individuals but are still looking for a couple more individuals as they need a certain amount for the project to run. Stacey reported a current intern has been offered a job with Jefferson Health following graduation.

DVRS – Stacey S. reported they are in process of conducting annual 511 interviews with Abilities Solutions. They will have interviewed over 150 individuals and anticipate being complete next week. They will be holding a job fair on June 18, 10am-1pm at the Holiday Inn, Swedesboro, NJ sponsored by Avenues for Independent Living.

Abilities Solutions – Lorrie C. reported they underwent Carf survey in February and they did achieve their 3-year accreditation. They are still accepting applications for the Pre-ETS youth internship program, which is for in-school youth ages 14-21, offering 150-hour paid internship at \$18 per hour, including work readiness training. They are doing this grant in partnership with DVRS and are currently taking referrals. They have received over 60 referrals to date however, only allowed to serve 80 per year. She stated they must be enrolled with DVRS.

WDB – Michelle S. reported we have 5 competitive contracting opportunities open and the procurement agent is the GC Improvement Authority. This is part of requirement from WIOA and State guidance. If anyone has questions, please contact GCIA.

RCSJ - Brigitte S. reported they will be offering Certified Production Technician training program at no cost beginning June 9, 2025. They have 8 open slots remaining and will hold an information session on May 28. Save the date for the Justice Impacted Career & Resource Fair scheduled for September 12 at RCSJ.

GC Probation – Christine A. reported they are planning for 4th annual Justice Impacted Career & Resource Fair. She thanked CTE / team for assisting, thanked OS partners in helping clients get federally bonded, resources and assistance to re-enter the workforce. The jobs program continues to grow but there is still a need for businesses.

CDBG – Christine V. reported received allocation letter and will be releasing RFP for public services for low to moderate income households and will have \$200,000 available, typically fund 8 organizations. The application is online and is easy to complete. One of the eligible activities is employment training which includes assistance to increase self-sufficiency, literacy, independent living skills, resume writing, job coaching, mental health services, services for abuse and neglected children, child care services. She will share the link for the RFP once available.

Tom B. reported the Golden Opportunities Job Fair was held April 10 at the GC Library/Mullica Hill branch and was very successful.

Alice S. reported The Arc Gloucester is hosting a parent meeting for those with children they believe have a disability. The meeting will be May 21 at Camp Fun N Sun in Williamstown.

Shannon O'B. stated if anyone has information for the WDB June newsletter, please forward to her.

Michelle S. reported we are preparing for the Disability Employment Job Fair & Resource Event scheduled for July 17, 9am-12pm at RCSJ.

Natalie F. reported the South Jersey Dream Center has baby items available and children's clothing up to size 8 as well as groceries and to visit southjerseydreamcenter.org and look for orange button on home page showing 'need help.'

A motion for adjournment was made by S. O'Brien, seconded by B. Satchell

The next meeting will be held August 21, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

Bridget A. DiGiambattista, WDB Staff