

WDB Community Needs Assessment, Literacy, & Disability
November 20, 2025

Present

Julie DeLaurentis, Co-Chair
Christina Arpino, GC Probation
Lorrie Covolessky, Abilities Solutions
Alicia Battaglia, Commissioner Aide
Lois Forman, Jewish Family Federation
Julia Ibragimova, Literacy NJ
Michelle Pandolfo, GC Human & Special Services
Brigette Satchell, RCSJ
Joseph Spencer, RCSJ
Rachael Bonaventure, GC Housing & Comm. Dev.
Allison Spinelli, WDB Staff

Fran Harwell, Co-Chair
Howard Bass, NJDOL
Lani Allen-Davis, MASCEC
Heather Faulkner, GC Housing Authority
Natalie Fortunato, SJ Dream Center
Christina Jackey, Acenda Integrated Health
Kimberly Quigley, St. John of God Comm. Svcs.
Stacey Smith, DVRS
Alisha Thompson, DWD
Shannon O'Brien, WDB Staff
Bridget DiGiambattista, WDB Staff

Fran opened the meeting at 8:33 am.

A motion to approve August 21, 2025 minutes was made by L. Covolessky, seconded by J. Spencer.

Status of Reports

Title II Services - Joe reported they have all programs running for GED and ESL but are waiting on GED day program for adults. Enrollment is 88 students for fall semester (goal for year is 98). Youth GED enrollment is 36 for this fiscal year. They will be working again with Rastelli Food Groups at their facility in Swedesboro to provide ESL program and will also provide staff with ServeSafe Certification course to promote growth in the workplace. For the youth program, they will be purchasing virtual reality headsets to allow all students enrolled in the program to participate and gain experience in different areas of interest for careers. The platform offers over 1,000 different jobs and will allow the students to immerse themselves in the experiences and come with a certificate. Natalie asked if ServeSafe course could be hosted at SJ Dream Ctr. Brigitte asked her to call her for further discussion.

Literacy NJ – Julia reported GED program is currently offered on-line and have a few ESL classes. In January they will offer job readiness classes for 6 sessions and they will offer a 12-week computer course. Julia reported under Title II grant, they currently have 5 students.

Project Search – Stacey reported since last meeting they have had 2 recruitment open houses, 1 for child study team professionals and 1 for parents & students. They currently have 6 students enrolled for this school year. The students must be high school students and their high school must be willing provide funding for the student to participate in Project Search. As part of recruitment process, DVRS is running a pilot program offering \$15,000 for each student towards the cost of Project Search. Christina Jackey from Acenda Integrated Health offered to collaborate with Michelle. Natalie Fortunato offered winter clothing needs from SJ Dream Center. Fran reported Bethel AME Church in Woodbury is holding Homeless Holiday Brunch on Saturday, December 6, she will forward flyer.

Agency Updates

DVRS – Stacey reported their fiscal year ended Sept. 30th, stats for their fiscal year-they opened 457 individuals; determined 431 individuals eligible for services; they implemented individualized plans for employment for 360 individuals, and successfully closed out 98 individuals.

GC Human & Special Services – Michelle reported the county will be opening a warming center for Code Blue nights (temps feel like 32 degrees or lower), and they anticipate opening by December 1st. This will be for overnight stay only. The Center will be located at Clayton Complex in Clayton on Delsea Drive. The center will be open for single individuals and families, the center will have designated areas available for each category of need. This will allow for communication to connect the

individuals/families the next business day with services available within the community. If anyone that stayed overnight is interested, there is an agency located in Glassboro that will pick them from the Clayton facility and transport them to their facility for the day where they will work with them to connect to Social Services, applications, job searching, etc.

In the interim, individuals seeking shelter must contact either Social Services or after hours contact 211 and they would receive placement in hotel/motel the county has contracts with.

Abilities Solutions – Lorrie Covolessky reported Bagelicious is open for breakfast and lunch and they are hiring for food services work supervisor. There is no waitlist for any of their services. Abilities Solutions is in year 3 of the youth internship grant, however because of the government shutdown they have not been able to process anyone.

Allison reported the WDB is going through Plan update process and all committee persons received an email survey, she asked if anyone would like to provide input into planning process to please complete the survey. The survey closes on 11/21/25.

NJDOL - Henry Bass, NJDOL/Veterans Business Services Rep introduced himself. Henry covers Burlington County down to Cape May County. He works with Judeline Marcellus, NJDOL Business Service Rep and Nelly David, NJDOL/Veterans Career Coach for Gloucester & Salem Counties. He works to find veterans for employers and would like to possibly engage with employers to hire veterans.

Old Business

Julie reported we held first listening session on Oct. 16 and many topics were discussed including challenges with transportation, affordability housing, communication include resources, etc. We are holding another listening session for Mayors & Administrators to gather their perspective of their community needs and how to best address.

A motion for adjournment was made by A. Thompson, seconded by H. Faulkner.

The next meeting will be February 19, 2026 (pending Full Board approval).

Respectfully submitted,

Bridget DiGiambattista, WDB Staff

