

**TARGETED POPULATION COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
August 17, 2016**

The Targeted Population Committee Meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Co-Chair Vanessa Hoffeditz. Roll call was taken.

NAME	PRESENT (Peru)	PRESENT (Sterling)	ABSENT
Fidencio Campos		X	
Dan Fitzgerald	X		X
Carrie Folken			X
Vanessa Hoffeditz	X		
Rachelle May			X
Brandon Rumler		X	
Teresa Strum		X	
Clay Whelan			X

OTHERS PRESENT (Peru): Jo Ann Jonson, Bob Weimer (IL Department of Employment Security), Danielle VanOosten (IL Department of Employment Security), Rhonda Krueger (IL Department of Employment Security)

OTHERS PRESENT (Sterling): Pam Furlan, Josh Miller (Guest)

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Brandon Rumler motioned to approve the June 15, 2016 Meeting Minutes. Fidencio Campos seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Presentation

Fidencio introduced Josh Miller to members. Josh began his presentation by telling members that he was enrolled in a four-month job search program while serving time in a Boot Camp. He then told members that he never had a father figure around growing up so he had to learn on his own. Josh told members that he looked for work at numerous places but his record as a felon stopped him from getting hired. In 2006, Josh told members that he started working at a local Steel factory as a temporary employee. He said that he was thankful for the break that the HR Manager gave him. In 2008, he said, he was fortunate to move to Sterling Steel where he continues to work today. One issue, Josh told members, he would like to address is the fact that if an individual has a conviction they are not able to receive financial aid for college. During his incarceration, Josh said that the program showed them how to create a resume and apply to different places for help. Growing up, Josh said that the Big Brother Big Sister Program was an asset for him. Members then continued a conversation with Josh asking him questions about his struggles in looking for employment after he was released. Josh commented that he was fortunate that to find employers to give him the chance.

Josh continued his story by saying that during 4 months he resided with 90% of inner city kids. He commented that he thought he had it bad until he met them. Josh told members that these kids could not do basic math or even fill out a basic job application. He said he tutored them as much as he could. Josh told members that he genuinely cares about people and wants to help them. He said that he would enjoy working at a facility to help these people, but because he was not able to receive any tuition assistance, he was not able to continue his education.

Pam commented that she works with a CME Group in the Illinois Valley and asked them if they would be willing to hire an individual recently released from incarceration. They indicated to Pam that they might start thinking about it, but it would be depending on how long ago they were convicted, the crime itself, and what have they been doing since their release.

Members found Josh's story very compelling and asked him to share his experiences with NCI Works at their meeting in September. Josh agreed.

Rhonda Krueger informed members that she will be making a presentation at the end of the month on behalf of IL Department of Employment Security. One question, she said, she will ask is if there are employers in attendance that will consider hiring ex-offenders. She said that she is aware of some employers that will hire on a case-by-case basis. Everyone, Rhonda said, has a family member touched by a poor choice. That does not mean that they cannot turn their life around.

Rhonda also told members that there are tax credit and fidelity bonding available for employers who hire an ex offender.

Business Meeting

Identify barrier(s) for each targeted area

Vanessa informed members that the barriers were identified for the Individuals with Disabilities and Ex-Offender matrix. Moving on, members began to discuss the barriers for Veterans. Vanessa told members that she found some information on the internet regarding Veteran's Employment Challenges (Prudential) and the 2015 Veteran Economic Report (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs) that is interesting. In both reports, it discusses the difficulty of transitioning to civilian life. Vanessa said that she didn't make copies, but will email it out to everyone.

Bob Weimer, Local Veterans' Employment Representative with the IL Department of Employment Security told members that one of the biggest barrier is the disabled veterans. He stated that it could have nothing to do with their physical appearance but more about their disability rating they may receive once they leave the military. When an individual is discharged from the military with either a physical or mental issue, the Veterans Assistance (VA) gives them a basic rating of which they are compensated. As an example, Bob said that an individual could have a hearing loss, but it may not prevent that person from function on the job.

Danielle VanOosten, Veterans Outreach Specialist with the IL Department of Employment Security told members that employers are concerned with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

(PTSD).

Pam asked if the Veteran's skills they learned in the military matched up with the skills in civilian life. Bob commented that it depends on the age of the veterans. He commented that World War II Veterans are no longer in the job pool. As for the Vietnam Era Veterans, they may not have learned any new skills in the military. The Dessert Storm and Iran War Veterans are going in a different direction. Bob said they are younger and using a Veterans grant to receive a degree. Danielle commented that she has worked with Veterans who obtained a degree but they are very specific in the type of job they want. Rhonda commented that if Veterans are not willing to travel they are limiting themselves.

Pam told members (and guests) that the One Stop Partner Committee talked about having a Job Fair for Veterans but was told that Veterans as a group do not use the same network as the general population. Bob agreed by saying that the best place to find Veterans is at the VFW, American Legion, or Disabled Veterans League, etc. However, with restrictions placed on staff, Bob said, we are not able to talk with them. Pam asked how this population could be reached. Bob told members of the hiring events that were recently held and said it was a crap shoot. Danielle told members about the hiring event held in Freeport and explained that there was a lot of advertisement and it was well attended by Veterans. However, she commented that they had a lot of incentives to attend.

Danielle informed members that Veteran Services Officers (VSO) are available for Veterans who may need some type of counseling or assistance. Word of mouth is the best way to spread the word for them.

Vanessa asked if there was some type of flowchart that would be available. Danielle said that there is a flowchart and she will get one to the committee.

Bob provided members with some interesting statistics. He said that in 1945 8% of the population was in the military. Using the same process today, ½% of the population is in the military. He said, we have this tremendous service to an increasingly small population, which is why we do not see them. Members (and guests) continued the discussion between the differences between the Veteran eras. It was also noted that any barriers had to be self-identified by the Veteran.

Members thanked the IL Department of Employment Security staff for their input.

In closing, Pam said that this information will be put into the template format so that the committee can start finding commonalities and solutions for the issues identified.

Other Business

None

Public Comments

None

Adjournment

With there being no further business, Dan Fitzgerald motioned to adjourn. Motion was seconded by Brandon Rumler and carried. Meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Jo Ann Johnson