

**TARGETED POPULATION COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
Wednesday, May 15, 2019**

The Targeted Population Committee was called to order at 2:34 p.m. by Co-Chair Carrie Folken.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Present – IVCC</b>	<b>Present – Sterling</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Fidencio Campos			<b>X</b>
Dan Fitzgerald	<b>X</b>		
Carrie Folken	<b>X</b>		
Vanessa Hoffeditz	<b>X</b>		
Dan Payette		<b>X</b>	
Kris Noble		<b>X</b>	

**OTHERS PRESENT (Sterling):** Pam Furlan, Bruce Larson

**OTHERS PRESENT (IVCC):** Kris Subler (Thomas P. Miller & Associates), Jo Ann Johnson

**OTHERS PARTICIPANT (Telephone):** Danielle VanOosten

Conference Call Summary

Carrie informed members that a copy of the February 20, 2019 Conference Call Summary was included with the meeting materials.

Targeted Population Hiring Assessment Final Report

Kris Subler with Thomas P. Miller and Associates provided an overview of the Targeted Population Hiring Assessment Report. Kris reminded members that his firm was hired to conduct an assessment of the hiring patterns of targeted individuals in the eight-county region that have a disability, are returning from incarceration, and/or are a veterans. He told members that the goal of the assessment was to identify why employers do or do not hire individuals from the targeted population as well as understanding how individuals can market themselves, despite their status, to become employed in the local area. Kris told members that 82 employers responded to the survey primarily from LaSalle, Bureau and Whiteside Counties. The respondents, Kris said, came from the Healthcare, Government and Manufacturing industries. Reviewing the survey findings, Kris told members that:

- 54% of survey respondents did not having hiring initiatives that targeted individuals with a disability, individuals with a criminal record or veterans
- When considering hiring, most employers reported they were:
  - Not at all likely to hire individuals with a criminal record (33%)
  - Neutral about hiring individuals with a disability (40%)
  - Very likely to hire veterans (64%)
- When considering hiring compared to other candidates, most employers reported they were:
  - Less likely to hire individuals with a criminal record (58%)
  - Equally as likely about hiring individuals with a disability (81%)
  - Equally as likely to hire veterans (70%)

Dan Fitzgerald asked if the employers were surveyed or interviewed. Kris stated that the 82 employer respondents were surveyed. However, Kris did say that he and a colleague did visit with 14 employers earlier this year to validate some of the data collected through the survey process. Kris told members

that employers that were visited include manufacturing, government, retail and tourism. During the interviews, Kris said that employers commented that the individuals with disabilities, those returning from incarceration and veterans are the hardest group of workers and are valuable employees. Kris noted that a few employers worked with Self Help to employ individuals with disabilities with great success. He said that the individuals with disabilities show up for work every day on time with a good attitude and do great work. Vanessa asked if Kris interviewed any employers that hired individuals with disabilities without the assistance of a sheltered workshop. Kris stated that he did not.

Continuing with the job seeker portion of the survey, Kris informed members that he visited with individuals who were going to be released within the next few weeks from the LaSalle County Jail. He said that most of them planned to go to temporary agencies to get a job when they were released. Kris told members that none of the individuals he talked with knew about the Illinois Job Center or NCI Works. Their goal, Kris said is to get a job quickly. One concern of these individuals, Kris noted, is that they lack housing and transportation. Some of the individuals, Kris said, are not from the area and because of the type of crime they were convicted for, they may not have any means to leave the area. Kris said that he was informed that IL Department of Employment Security visits with individuals at the LaSalle County Jail once a month to assist them with job search efforts.

In discussion how job seekers and employers can connect, Kris recommended to leverage the Partners and make sure that employers understand how to access these job seekers and also how the job seekers can connect with local employers who are looking to hire. Kris said that it is important for employers to understand how to access job seekers and how job seekers can connect with employers.

Kris then presented some recommendations regarding marketing the programs to employers. He suggested to promote the talent pool and focus on the soft skills that the targeted populations possess. He said to promote and educate the employers on the local workforce development system. Finally, he suggested that sharing success stories from companies hiring individuals from the targeted population would speak volume. Members agreed that individuals with a disability category is a bit more challenging since some are linked to programs in the schools or through a sheltered workshop. Dan commented that many states have outlawed Sheltered Workshops so to invest in that strategy would not be the best solution. He said that all populations are challenging, not just those with disabilities.

Members then talked briefly about "ban the box" law for asking an individual about their criminal history. Kris noted that most employers were aware of this and do not ask any questions about the individuals criminal background. Dan stated that some individuals self-report the information to the employer although they are counseled not to. Carrie stated that most employers conduct a background check on potential employees. Vanessa noted that Tri-Counties Opportunities Council has a list of companies that will hire ex-offenders. The list, she said is nationwide, but there are some local companies listed. Pam stated that we received that list during some joint partner training.

Kris Noble shared some experiences she had in working with individuals of the targeted population while she was working with LSSI (Lutheran Social Services of Illinois). Adding to the discussion, members talked about the legalization of marijuana in Illinois and the affect it could have on the workforce. Pam informed members of a bakery in Oregon that hires individuals with physical disabilities and is very successful. She said that Bruce Larson is going to get the details and suggested it may be a good "best practice" to look into.

Continuing with highlights of the report, Kris Subler said he asked employers if they would be interested in a regional wide expungement fair to help ease the application process. All 14 employers responded

favorably to such an event. Vanessa commented that they (Tri-County Opportunities Council) have staff that assist individuals with expungement information. Kris said that he listed an Expungement Fair as a recommendation and will share some best practices with members. Kris Nobel stated that with some individuals it's not necessarily the criminal record, but a life choice. She said that employers are cautious about job seekers lifestyle choices.

Pam told members that it is incumbent on partners to focus on one or two of their star customers (across all populations) and put together a narrative outlining their achievements and promote their successes. Carrie suggested it would be great if both the employer and customer would be included in the narrative to show the connection.

Vanessa shared with information about the HollyRob Foundation and how they coordinated a hiring event for individuals with disabilities.

In closing, Kris S told members that as employers and job seekers from the targeted populations strive to increase marketing efforts of themselves to one another, NCI Works has a major role to process. He said that NCI Works should be the lead champion to help coordinate the development and implementation of the marketing plans. He referred members to the flow chart that was included in the report that shows how NCI Works should drive the effort to ensure its achieved outcomes. Members agreed that this information is for all individuals of the targeted population and continued discussion about programs offered for veterans.

Lastly, Pam suggested that members review the data that was provided and then revisit the Barriers Commonality Chart that was designed a few years ago and see what steps can be taken next to eliminate the barriers.

Pam suggested that a speaker be invited to provide employer education on hiring individuals of the targeted population at the NCI Works Employers Conference that will be held in the fall. She also noted that the breakout session could focus on the initiatives being taken by NCI Works on this project. Carrie suggested to use podcasts to focus on educating employers and job seekers. Pam agreed noting that a Small Business Discussion will be held at the next NCI Works and some of these topics may be addressed.

After discussing the final Assessment Report, Dan Fitzgerald motioned to recommend to NCI Works to accept the report as presented. Motion was seconded by Carrie Folken and carried.

### Next Steps

Pam thanked Kris for the work that was done on this project and informed members that he would be calling in to the NCI Works meeting to provide a brief summary for all members.

In summary, Pam provided members with some next steps to continue to move this project forward. She said that we will review the Barriers Commonality chart and review and recommendations and how to formalize plans. She said that she was hoping to get a grant from DCEO to help with some of these projects, but they will not be releasing any funding opportunities until June or July. Pam asked Danielle and Joel Torbeck to develop a curriculum that can be used for all workshops by all partners. Pam said that by all partners utilizing the same curriculum would reinforce the message to both employers and job seekers.

Bruce invited members to attend a training session in July presented by Department of Rehabilitation Services. Once the training session is confirmed, he said he would share the information with all members.

Public Comments

None

Adjournment

With there being no further business, Dan Payette motioned to adjourn. Motion was seconded by Vanessa Hoffeditz and carried. Meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

Jo Ann Johnson