

**TARGETED POPULATION COMMITTEE
ZOOM MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, February 17, 2021**

Name	Present	Absent	Name	Present	Absent
Dan Fitzgerald		X	Vanessa Hoffeditz	X	
Kris Noble	X		Joel Torbeck	X	
Dan Payette	X				

Others Present: Lissa Olson, Mark, Randy Freeman, Carrie Folken, Jo Ann Johnson

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Dan Payette motioned to approved the August 19, 2020 Meeting Minutes. Motion was seconded by Kris Noble. Roll call vote was taken:

Name	Yes	No	Name	Yes	No
Dan Fitzgerald		X	Vanessa Hoffeditz	X	
Kris Noble	X		Joel Torbeck	X	
Dan Payette	X		Randy Freeman	X	
Mark Krupke	X		Lissa Olson	X	

Motion carried.

Business Meeting

Vanessa began the meeting by asking members what they would like to see the committee/workgroup accomplish this year. Reviewing the committee outline, she told members that the purpose for the Targeted Population Committee is to address hiring needs of Individuals with Disabilities, Veterans, Ex-Offenders and other populations facing special challenges to obtaining employment. The goals of the committee, Vanessa said is:

1. Identify issues that present barriers to employment for each targeted population.
2. Coordinate and collaborate with appropriate other stakeholders to develop and implement strategies to address the challenges. (including the core and required partners)
3. Set eligibility, service and budget priorities
4. Solicit input and cooperation from the business community to develop work-based learning and/or employment opportunities.
5. Develop and implement best practices and promising strategies that will create successful career pathways.
6. Provide information and assist with operational and other issues relating to the provision of services to individuals with disabilities, including issues relating to compliance with WIOA Section 188, if applicable, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

In discussion the tasks of the committee, Carrie pointed out that the membership of the group has changed throughout the years. She noted that she, Vanessa and Dan Fitzgerald were on the original committee, so the new members may not be aware of the goals of the committee. Carrie asked members to consider if these needs still need to be addressed by the committee/workgroup.

Members then held a discussion regarding the population groups of Veterans, Individuals with Disabilities and Ex-Offenders. It was noted that the Department of Corrections has programs for

individuals with a criminal background as they are already in the system. What this committee was charged with is to work the ex-offenders who are not in the "system". Carrie commented that these individuals need guidance to get them to their appointments and assistance with job search activities. As for the individuals with Disabilities, Kris pointed out that in her previous employment in working with the individuals with criminal convictions was that 70% of them were unemployed but had several barriers such as court dates, transportation and attitudes toward work. Kris noted that employers are willing to take a risk of some of these individuals, but they do not follow through.

Kris shared information about the virtual job fair recently held by Walmart. She noted that there were 27 attendees and 3 actually followed through with the process. Kris also pointed out that during the last census, the population of Whiteside County was reduced by 1,500. She is curious if these individuals left the area for other jobs or are they unemployed. She said that she is still trying to figure out the data. Kris shared with member the Manufacturing Round Table that she hosts on the last Tuesday of each month. She told members that this event brings together educators and members of the manufacturing industry to share information.

Vanessa continued by reminding members of the process the Targeted Population Committee went through in terms of listing challenges and obstacles as well as the commonalities of the targeted populations. She told members that NCI Works hired Thomas P. Miller Associations 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 veteran. She told members that the goal was to identify why employers do or do not hire individuals from the targeted population as well as understanding how they market themselves. Vanessa asked Jo Ann to send out the results of the study so that all members could see the information and perhaps address it at the next meeting. Some members expressed their concern and frustration over the results of the study by saying that they were not pleased with the way the study was done. However, they did agree that it was a resource to start with.

Carrie commented that reviewing the study that was done for the Targeted Populations Committee is a great place to start. She also pointed out that when we look at post-COVID times how can we streamline the process to get the employee needs and individuals linked up. Carrie also stated that there is always a gap of what I needed and what is available. She asked if there were certain barriers that we can overcome to help as a system. Carrie noted that it is important to look at the system as a whole and not duplicate services as a system.

Members then discussed some of the industries that in the past may not have hired individuals with a criminal background but has since changed their policies.

In regards to the veteran population, members asked if there were statistics as to how many were unemployed and underemployed. Lissa commented that she did not have that information with her, but would find out the information. Members also discussed the data for those individuals on probation as well as those individuals with disabilities. Mark commented that most of the referrals to the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation are done by the schools and sometimes the medical community. He said that COVID has dramatically reduced their in person visits for all of their clients. Mark told members that many of their clients were affected by the reduction in force with the service industries. He said that some have reached out to secure other jobs, but not all.

Vanessa asked Jo Ann to send a copy of the Hiring Assessment Report to all members. She asked members to take a look at the report and provide some feedback at the next meeting. Vanessa said since we have some new members it would be a great opportunity to review this document to see if any areas were overlooked and get a fresh start in serving this population.

Members then discussed underlying issues with those of the targeted populations and commented that it is difficult to connect with many of them in to respective offices. Lissa commented that although veteran services are free to the individual forever, they are reluctant to come in as there is a pride issue and they do not want the help. Kris noted that from the employer point of view, employers are willing to hire veterans because they have the soft skills that they are looking for. Carrie pointed out this the issues being discussed are nationwide and not just within Local Workforce Area #4. She said that if we can figure out the underlying issues we may be able to reach the individuals.

Moving on to the next item on the Agenda, “what services do all the partners have that would benefit this group of individuals – compile in a brochure so we don’t duplicate services”. Carrie said that it may a benefit to the customers if they were aware what services are available by each of the agencies. She stated that her thought was to put all of this information into some type of brochure that can be given to the general public so that they are aware of where to go for services and assistance. Members agreed this would be beneficial and offered to get their individual information to Jo Ann. Carrie said that she would contact the probation offices in the 8-county area to gather the information. Lissa said that she would get the information for the Veteran’s and Jack and Vanessa would gather information for those agencies that work with individuals with disabilities.

In regards to the item on the Agenda: “Spotlight the targeted population on the One Stop website (an individual and Business)” was briefly discussed. Carrie informed members that the One Stop System does have a website where spotlights and successes can be posted.

Other Business

It was agreed that the next meeting would be on April 21, 2021 at 2:00 p.m. via Zoom.

Public Comments

None

Adjournment

With there being no further business Joel Torbeck motioned to adjourn. Motion was seconded by Day Payette and carried. Meeting adjourned at 3:23 p.m.

Jo Ann Johnson