

**TARGETED POPULATION COMMITTEE
ZOOM MEETING MINUTES
April 21, 2021**

The Targeted Population Committee meeting was called to order at 2:00 by Acting Chair Joel Torbeck. It was noted that Vanessa had an emergency and would be unable to participate in the Zoom Meeting.

Roll call was taken.

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 Gastmann, Randy Freeman, Matt Spring, Patrick Sweeney, Michele Velez, Carrie Folken, Jo Ann Johnson

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Dan Fitzgerald motioned to approve the February 17, 2021 Meeting Minutes. Motion was seconded by Joel Torbeck. 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	Lissa Olson	X	
Mark Gastmann	X		Randy Freeman	X	
Matt Sprong	X		Patrick Sweeney	X	
Michele Velez	X				

Motion carried.

Business Meeting

Committee Members reports from information gathered from the Probation Departments and Veterans Administrations

Joel asked members to report on the information that was gathered from the Probation Departments and Veterans Administration. Carrie noted that Vanessa obtained information on Individuals with Disabilities that she will send to all members.

Carrie told members that she contacted the probation offices and asked them what exactly they felt their clientele was missing or what they actually needed to assist them. She asked what kind of barriers they have facing them that we could assist them with. Carrie said that the responses she received indicated that the barriers their clients face are not just employment related. They have other barriers to work out first before employment can enter into the picture. For those that

may be job ready, some of the barriers they have include how to fill out on line job applications especially if they do not have computer access. Most have smart phones, but it is difficult to complete a job application on a small device. Another indicated that this population is afraid to do follow up calls to employer because of the fear of being rejected.

Patrick concurred with the information that Carrie shared. He said that they are working intensely with these clients and they have a lot of hurdles to get over and employment is on the back burner. He said first of all they need to get themselves clean and sober, find residence and transportation. Once they get those in order they need to learn to re-socialize.

Kris comments that when she worked with LSSI (intensive outpatient center) they found that transportation was the biggest obstacle to finding employment. She said managing their schedules was most important. Kris noted that 80% were not working because of a multitude of reasons, not to mention lack of job skills and trying to keep clean.

Discussion was held regarding the case load of the probation staff. Patrick noted that it varies depending on the services needed, but realistically a caseload can include 20 – 35 clients.

Looking at the committee/workgroup, Carrie asked members what services would benefit these clients in terms for breaking down the barriers. Patrick responded that in addition to interviewing skills and resume building a mentoring program would be helpful. It was suggested that individuals who have completed the Redeploy Program provide testimonials to clients. Patrick said that hearing the information from their peers could be beneficial.

Mark Gastmann commented that when an individual comes out of prison/jail they need to learn how to plan, especially if they have been in for a while.

Matt Sprong stated that he reached out to Mark Krueger (former member) about some ideas and asked Mark Gastmann to give him a call.

Kris informed members that Sauk Valley Area Chamber of Commerce reached out to a handful of businesses to ask them to share information about careers and work readiness skills used in the workplace via a video recording that will be distributed to interested high schools. She said that a similar set up could be done for probation departments.

Michele reminded members that Voc Rehab is available to assist clients with mental health issues. She said that their staff can assist with job coaching, interviewing skills, resume writing, mentoring and assistance with life skills. She encouraged members to refer clients to them if needed.

Patrick informed members that he was working on a Redeploy Application and putting together Request for Proposals to build on services that they (LaSalle County Probation) already provide.

Lissa shared the information she received on Veterans. She said that getting local veterans statistics is difficult as the only information that can be obtained is at the national level. At the national level, the veteran unemployment rate for March was 4.6 and 5.2 in February. Lissa said

that a lot of time unemployed veterans have the same barriers and they don't have the resources or know who to reach out to. Making adjustment to civilian life is a big adjustment for most. Lissa informed members that plans are in the works to establish a center for veterans to go and conduct their job search. Lissa told members about the upcoming Veterans Expo that they are hosting on May 23 at Rotary Park in LaSalle. She said that there will be financial institutions, food trucks, employers, etc. there to help veterans with any services they may need. Lissa said that it is open to the public from 10:00 -2:00 and encourage members to attend.

Randy informed members that the Teamsters Union is looking for workers. A brief discussion was held regarding the State of Illinois' testing and hiring process.

Dan noted that employment opportunities right now are pretty abundant. He said that there is a need for care giving and if any member had anyone to refer to Horizon House to do so as they are in need.

Kris stated that people in Illinois are leaving the rural communities to relocate to states that do not have near the taxations or COVID restrictions.

In summary, Carrie asked if there was anything that NCI Works and the Targeted Population Committee/Workgroup to not only educate the job seeker of the availability of the occupations but the employers on what the job seekers need. If so, how do we do it?

Randy noted that maybe people are holding back applying with the Marijuana laws since most employers are still zero tolerance.

Randy suggested Job Fairs as a possibility, but noted that lack of transportation may be an issue if held at a central location. Dan stated that reliable transportation is the corner stone for employment for many individuals. The availability of local transportation is a problem. Lissa commented that NCAT has increased their routes and are looking at expanding more if the need is there. Lissa commented that for some, the lack of transportation is an excuse.

Continuing the discussion on Job Fairs, Carrie pointed out that in-person events have been well attended. She said that Virtual Job Fairs are not ideal although they have been done during the crisis. Carrie said that drive through Job Fairs have also been held during the pandemic. After discussion, it was agreed to hold off planning any Job Fairs until COVID has passed.

In closing, Carrie said that we can start now the probationary clients by getting success stories from those clients that completed the Redeploy program. She invited Lissa to share any positive testimonies she has for the veteran population and Dan for the individuals with disabilities population. Carrie said that we need to begin promoting the positive in everything as a start to move forward.

Hiring Assessment Report Discussion

Carrie told members that the Hiring Assessment Report was sent to all members under separate cover for information purposes.

Membership Update

Joel informed members that BEST conducted Job Search workshops for 3 clients in the Adult Redeploy program. He said that the partnership between BEST and LaSalle County Probation is going well.

Patrick informed members that the Adult Redeploy currently includes of Drug Court, Medical and Intensive Probation programs. He told members that he is looking to release Request for Proposal to other agencies that may be able to supplement with current providers. Patrick said that Adult Redeploy is looking for keep the money in the local communities.

Patrick also noted that he invited Susan Dodd, Adult Probation Supervisor, to participate with the Targeted Population Committee/Workgroup.

Other Business

None

Public Comments

None

Adjournment

With there being no further business, Lissa Olson motioned to adjourn. Motion was seconded by Patrick Sweeney and carried. Meeting adjourned at 3:06 p.m.

Jo Ann Johnson