

**ABILITIES COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2023 (ZOOM)**

ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE INFORMATION AND ATTENDANCE								
Name	Organization	Trustee Member	11-May-23	13-Jul-23	10-Aug-23	14-Sep-23	12-Oct-23	
Alloway, Veronica	American Water				X			
Askie-Rosario, Andrea	CC Commission for the Blind		X	X				
Cirii, Frank	Camden County One-Stop	✓			X		X	
Coleman, Ardella	Cooper University Healthcare		X					
Deitz, Jeffery	Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services	✓						
Donato, Carl, Chair	Wawa	✓	X	X	X		X	
Forman, Lois	Jewish Family & Children's Service			X	X	X	X	
Freire, Edison	JEVS Human Services			X				
Fugee, Antoinette	Cooper University Healthcare			X				X
Galvin, Tim	Cooper University Healthcare							
Lucas, Angela	JEVS HireAbility							
Marks, Karen	Jewish Family & Children Service of Southern NJ							
McClintock, Monica	Rowan University		X	X	X	X	X	
Metzger, Frances	Cooper University Healthcare							
Page-Soncraut, Jeanne	NJDOL - Business Rep.						X	X
Perez, Irene	NJDVRS					X	X	
Quinones, Cris	Wawa		X					
Scott, Jessica	The Arc of Camden County		X	X				X
Spinelli, Allison	Gloucester County		X	X				
Storm, Jeanne	American Water				X			X
Weinberg, Oriol	Jewish Family & Children's Service			X	X			
Henderson, Bridget	WDB Staff							
Levitt, Alex	WDB Staff		X	X	X	X	X	X
Swartz, Jeffrey S.	WDB Staff		X	X		X	X	
Vaughn, Debra	WDB Staff		X	X	X	X	X	X
Williams, Leslie	WDB Staff							

WELCOME

Carl Donato, Committee Chair, greeted the attendees. The meeting was called to order at 8:35 am.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Carl asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the September 14, 2023 meeting. Motion was made by Lois Forman, seconded by Irene Perez. With a majority vote to the affirmative, the motion carried and the minutes for meeting held on September 14, 2023 were approved.

DISCUSSION

- Carl raised the subject of appointing a Vice Chair. Jeff commented that a Vice Chair should be selected for the committee to fill in when the Chair is not available. To be appointed to the position by the Committee Chair, a candidate should be from the private sector. The Vice Chair should attend an Executive Committee in the Chair's absence or at least attend one Executive Committee meeting during the year.
- Among the ideas and activities that Carl and others proposed for 2024:
 - February – Host an educational meeting dedicated to new recruits interested in joining the Abilities Committee.
 - March – Hold a Zoom meeting to educate employers on the benefits of hiring people with abilities.
 - Lois suggested generating new additions to our contact list by contacting employers who are on the Federal Contract Compliance list because they are businesses that are missing targets

in terms of recruitment and hiring of people with disabilities. Irene Perez responded that the DVR receives the list and that invitations to informational events could be sent to the OFCCP (Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs), which could forward the information to the employers.

- April is Autism Awareness Month.
- May – Monica suggested participating in Tri-State HRMA’s event on the first Thursday in May at the Westin in Mt. Laurel.
- June – Host an in-person employer event (subject/location TBD).
- July is Disability Pride Month and the anniversary of the “Americans with Disabilities Act.”
- October – Irene Perez suggested a targeted hiring event for people with disabilities. Another suggestion was made to partner on events already planned by others. Jeanne Storm noted that American Water is hosting a hiring event for “able” people and veterans.
- Frequency of Meetings – A recess in July or August will be considered.
 - Monica proposed an in-person meeting in July to re-cap the year’s activities and to have a recess in August.
 - A suggestion was made to plan 1 or 2 in-person meetings.
- Content – It was proposed to invite guest speakers or team members to teach us all something new (5 to 15 minutes) during a meeting.
 - Invite employers to attend a meeting and share their direction and strategies for hiring the disabled.
- How do we generate more active participation/membership in the committee?
 - Referrals from our networks.
 - Inclusion of parents of clients we serve in the committee meetings.
- How do we partner with other WDB Committee’s Events?

Camden County One-Stop Career Center

Frank Cirii, Local Area Director

- GED Testing accommodations are available to people with disabilities. When a selection is made on GED.com requesting an accommodation for testing, additional information on how to submit an accommodations request will be provided. Each request is considered on a case-by-case basis and typically takes 30 days to process submission of the required forms.
- There has been an uptick in customer flow at the One-Stop. Check-in at the front desk has been going smoothly. There are more referrals coming from the Board of Social Services. Enrollments in G-Jobs and the number of people who remain are slowly increasing each month.
- People are noticeably wearing masks at the facility. There have been a few incidences of staff testing positive for Covid, but no cause for alarm.
- Lois inquired about assistance for people with various visas. Frank responded that citizenship is required for services through the One-Stop.
 - Jeanne Page-Soncrant commented that it is her understanding that a visa is acceptable for employment consideration, but the parameters for the “right to work” for refugees with visa is currently under consideration by the DOL.

JFCS

Lois Forman, Job Board Coordinator

- A Disability Inclusion Resource Fair will be held on October 19th.
- JFCS is working to provide resources and support for Israel.
- There is a growing need to assist refugees with visas and people looking for employment opportunities.
 - Frank shared information regarding National Labor Exchange (NLx) (<https://usnlx.com/>) which represents a unique, public-private partnership between Direct Employers (DE) and the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA). The NLx is a resource for employers and state workforce agencies to connect workers with job openings, which connects state and federal

agencies, nonprofit and Veteran organizations, as well as disability and diversity partners to assist employers with recruitment goals.

- Jeanne Storm inquired about manually posting American Water’s employment opportunities on the JFCS job board. Lois offered to provide information and assist with job postings.

American Water

Jeanne Storm

- Jeanne is fine-tuning the American Water’s strategy with a goal to successfully hire and train veterans and “able” people. The company has established an EBRG (Employee Business Resource Group) team.
- Veronica Kinsella, Vice Chair of American Water’s Employment Committee under the EBRG, will be working with Irene Perez (DVR) and Andrea Askie-Rosario (Commission for the Blind) to give presentations at American Water.

Tri-State HRMA

Monica McClintock

- Tri-State HRMA’s next dinner meeting will be held on November 2nd at the Westin/Mt. Laurel.
 - The topic for discussion will be “Psychological Safety – More Than a Buzz Word,” presented by: Adrianna Gabriel-Miller.
 - Other activities and events can be found at www.tristatehr.org.

DVRS

Irene Perez

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month. The NJDOL/DVR provided grants for 5 organizations to support NDEAM events. For Camden County, Waters & Sims Supported Employment Services received their funding late, so they will be supporting an event hosted by Burlington County for food. Flyers have been circulated around the city.

Wawa

Carl Donato

Wawa has established its Collective Abilities Network. It is recruiting leadership for a network that includes:

- Associates with physical disabilities
- Neurodiverse: Associates with Learning or Developmental Disabilities (i.e., Autism, ADHD)
- Supported Employment
- Caregivers and Allies

Someone from Wawa will attend the next meeting to discuss the company’s strategies for supported employment.

Workforce Development Board

Jeffrey Swartz, Executive Director

- The GSETA Conference will be next week on October 18th-19th.

ADJOURNMENT

Carl asked for a motion to adjourn. Motion was made by Monica McClintock and seconded by Lois Forman. The motion was carried with a majority vote to the affirmative and the meeting was adjourned at 9:40 am.

NEXT MEETING

The next Abilities Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 9, 2023 at 8:30 am. The meeting will be conducted via Zoom.

Submitted by,

Debra Vaughn, Administrative Assistant to the Executive Director