

One Stop Partners Meeting  
Meeting Minutes – Zoom Meeting  
April 25, 2022

Those in attendance:

Colleen Casali – Native American Community Services (NACS)  
Luke Kantor – Iroquois Job Corps (IJC)  
Don Jablonski – Niagara County Employment & Training (NCET)  
Monica LaPoyda – Niagara County Community College (NCCC)  
Brian Michel – Niagara County Community College (NCCC)  
Bonnie Rice – Niagara County Workforce Development Board (WDB)  
Susanne Shears – Niagara Community Action Program (NiaCAP)  
Patricia Stovall - PathStone  
Michele Taylor – New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL)

Don Jablonski welcomed the Partners to the meeting.

Don Jablonski shared updates at NCET. Don shared that more people in more areas have been served this year than has been served since he started as Director. Staff and partners have worked in a collaborative manner to deliver services that are needed. With COVID, the surges are creeping up and it is anticipated that summer will bring new challenges and chances for collaboration. Don updated the Partners of current program statistics. From July 1, 2022 to present 55 people were hired using WIOA funded On-the-Job Training and several more are in process to start training. There is a possibility that OJT training funds could run out. Don stated that that is a great accomplishment to assist so many Niagara County residents and connect them to work. 82 participants received WIOA scholarships from training in demand occupations and 95 youth have enrolled in the WIOA Youth program. Don shared that painting of the One-Stop Center has now completed. New flooring will be placed this fall and configuration changes are being considered to assist with the flow of traffic. Three outdoor career fairs (Oppenheim Park, Lockport and North Tonawanda) are also planned for this year and a possible indoor career fair for October. The NYSGVP grant currently has 17 youth employed at five companies, several more youth are in queue. Word has been received that NYS will be extending the GVP grant to March 2023. Don expects to have 50 youth in permanent job positions prior to the expiration of the grant. TANF Summer Youth will be starting in a few weeks, applications have been accepted and there are approximately 200 applicants. Don shared that the WDB Inclusion Committee will be holding a free training with Microsoft Staff to teach attendees about accessibility tools that are built into Microsoft products. Spots are available (training is April 27<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 am) and attendance is open to businesses, agencies and partners. Anyone interested should contact Don or Marilyn Patterson.

Don opened the floor for Partners to share updates.

Colleen Casali commented on Don's update. She reminded him and the Partners of the funding available for any participants who are Native American. Individuals can enroll with NACS to receive help with funding and further services for training. She added that NACS is doing a webinar April 26<sup>th</sup> with Niagara County Youth Clubhouse and the youth's parents, to review the application for summer youth so they can correctly fill out the application and review documents needed. Colleen shared that NACS is working on their four-year strategic plan which is due May 6<sup>th</sup>. Currently, NACS is working with 25 clients. The majority are through education but several are in need of employment services and supportive services as well. Colleen explained the eligibility process for clients and the need to assist them in enrollment status of a Federal recognized State or Nation list. Colleen offered the ability to do a

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training with any Partners staff in order to assist all with better information regarding eligibility, enrollment and other requirements.

Bonnie Rice shared that Susan Shears from NiaCAP was on the call but unable to speak due to audio issues. She shared with the Partners that should want to learn more about NiaCAP's services they can visit [www.niagaracommunityactionprogram.org](http://www.niagaracommunityactionprogram.org).

Patricia Stovall of PathStone shared that they have funds available to assist those who have done farm work or whose parents have done farm work in the last 12 to 24 months. She explained PathStone's youth program is for 14-24 year olds. If the youth's parent did qualifying farm work and are undocumented, PathStone can help to qualify them for the programs. She added that PathStone has moved to a new office in the Bewley Building on Main St in Lockport. PathStone has new staff who are doing outreach as things are picking up. PathStone currently has grants from Rework America and Rural Risk to assist people who don't qualify as farmworkers.

Michele Taylor of NYS DOL shared that a new supervisor, Jessica Starva, has been hired for the Lockport office. Jessica worked with DOL as an employment counselor for several years. Jen Jackson will continue to be the supervisor in Niagara Falls. Michele shared that DOL continues to host virtual job fair events but will slowly be hosting some in person as well. On April 20<sup>th</sup> a virtual job fair was held with 48 businesses; 579 people attended, which is higher than the last fair's attendance. 54% of attendees were collecting unemployment. 46% were not collecting unemployment at the time, but were curious of the event. 61% were college graduates, 44% of them had a bachelors or master's degree. She shared that the events are going well, they are planned for each month. An in-person job fair will be held June 9<sup>th</sup>, which is the first in two years, at Northland Training Center.

Brian Michel of NCCC shared that his office has been doing a lot of grant writing. SUNY put out a grant for cannabis workforce development which is an awkward but exciting position for the College. The College's concern is community education and educating those who wish to learn about it. Brian has been working on a cannabis workforce development grant, as a consortium, with Erie County, Jamestown, and Genesee Community Colleges. Brian shared that NCCC's Veteran's Memorial Park continues to take shape as two more grants reach toward goals to begin construction. Brian shared that a marketing database has been finished. The College purchased a contact list for companies and organizations with 10 or more employees throughout Western New York. The amount of contacts from each company was limited to no more than 4, starting with CEO down to HR. After gaining information, data has been pared down and organized. Brian shared that this is something that will be shared with Don and Bonnie, but also other partners who would like to collaborate. Brian also shared that his office has an open position for a part-time program coordinator in the Workforce Development Office. He feels it would be great from someone in graduate school or someone who is looking to ease into retirement. Please share Brian's information with anyone interested in applying. Don encouraged Brian to send the information to the Business Services Team to get the job opening listed on the Hot Jobs section in the One-Stop Career Center.

Luke Kantor of Iroquois Job Corps shared that new students are coming in consistently, every two weeks, to start the program. Luke shared the information for Vinnie Trippi of the Cassadaga Job Corps so that moving forward he can also be included in partner meetings as he has staff who visited the Trott

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building. Luke shared that Medical trades are completing soon. Job Corp has CNA's and CMA's who will be looking to find jobs, some have already found jobs, and some will be going into the LPN program. New classes will be starting soon including construction trades. Job Corp is signed up to attend upcoming fairs and festivals and looking forward to doing so. Luke shared that Job Corps is also looking for staff for residential living and will send Don the information to post on the Hot Jobs wall.

Colleen Casali asked Brian Michel about the grant for cannabis. She shared that Syracuse University has some programs going already and it may be beneficial to reach out to them. They have classes for growing marijuana, business aspects and medical which are 6-month programs with a certificate of completion at the end. Brian thanked Colleen for the information and shared that NCCC has a program already and is a leader in the field of cannabis education, which could help or hurt with the submission. Brian explained that NCCC has courses regarding growing, processing and production, and sales and legality. Brian explained that NCCC lacks a medical application. Erie County Community College does have a medical cannabis program but Erie doesn't currently have the ability to support the program within workforce development. Erie does have access to a population that is highly desirable for outreach. Brian thanked Colleen for the information and will be reaching out to Syracuse University.

Don Jablonski thanked the Partners for their time and shared that come July 1<sup>st</sup> a new OSSO will be contracted by the WDB. He will still be Director of NCET but will no longer fill the OSSO position as tasks and opportunities need his attention within the department. With no further announcements being brought forward, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Don Jablonski, Director Employment and Training