

**New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission
Council on Gender Parity in Labor and Education**

Meeting Minutes

October 5, 2009

Labor Education Center, Rutgers University

New Brunswick, New Jersey

10:30-12:00

Attendees: Christine Amalfe, Terri Boyer, Suzanne Eng, Duane Floyd, Judy Formalarie, Mary Gatta, Grace Hamilton, Dianne Hartshorn, Andrea Karsian, Janice Kovach, Angela Marshall, Heather McKay, Dianne Mills McKay, Henry Plotkin, Yustina Saleh, Sondra Sen, Deirdre Webster-Cobb, and Robert Wise

Chair Dianne Mills McKay opened the meeting with a welcome to all, including invited guests: Deirdre Webster-Cobb and Duane Floyd from the Division of Contract Compliance and EEO in Public Contracts, Department of Treasury; and Angela Marshall, Senior Parole Officer with the New Jersey Parole Board. The Council was asked to review the draft minutes from the July 23rd retreat. The July minutes were approved and will be posted online.

Governor Corzine's Executive Order #151:

Deirdre Webster-Cobb and Duane Floyd from the Department of Treasury updated the Council on Executive Order (EO) #151 and anticipated impacts. Ms. Webster-Cobb explained that, under the EO, all construction projects funded by American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds must contribute one-half of every one percent of costs in excess of one million dollars to training for minorities and women. Though there are some exceptions, this applies to the majority of public contracts that utilize ARRA and state funds.

Training monies now go to the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (LWD) for the NJ Builds program. In brief, LWD is responsible for implementation of the training provision of the EO, while Treasury is responsible for oversight. LWD submits quarterly reports documenting the effectiveness of its training programs.

Christine Amalfe asked whether consideration had been given to requiring that a portion of ARRA funds be committed to hiring minority and woman-owned businesses for projects, rather than committed solely to training. Although this EO refers specifically to a commitment of training funds, procedures are now in place to streamline the process for certification as a minority or woman-owned business. The Division of Minority and Women Business Development within the Treasury Department is charged specifically with overseeing contracts with minority and woman-owned businesses. Within this department, Sandy Davis is responsible for publicizing what minority and women-owned businesses are required to do in order to be awarded training funds, and Nina Moseley oversees the process of certifying minority and women-owned businesses.

Yustina Saleh noted that the EO also requires that all jobs funded by Recovery Act dollars be posted on the state job registry. This is a new requirement and prevents contractors from hiring for ARRA-funded projects quietly and “from within.” Deirdre Webster-Cobb noted that contractors must demonstrate “good faith efforts” to hire women and minorities. They are required to obtain assurances from unions that they will refer qualified female and minority workers. Ms. Webster-Cobb noted that it is important to understand that the EO adds to and does not replace previous requirements in these areas. The Treasury Department has increased enforcement efforts, as well as fines and penalties for non-compliance.

Ms. Webster-Cobb and Mr. Floyd noted that the “burden of proof” for compliance with the EO and previous regulations lies with the agency that funded the contract and that public agencies can be fined. Andrea Karsian questioned whether marketing of the NJ Build program has been effective. Do women know that these opportunities exist and are being given added funding? Ms. Webster-Cobb affirmed that this is a concern and that there is a possibility of directing leftover NJ Builds funds to marketing for the program. Recently, Ana Montero of LWD has assumed responsibility for overseeing NJ Builds and related contracts and is implementing positive changes in noted areas of concern.

Female Offender Reentry Group Effort (FORGE):

Angela Marshall, Senior Parole Officer for the New Jersey Parole Board, brought to the Council’s attention concerns in the area of reentry for incarcerated women and women on parole and probation. At present, there are 1,076 women under parole in New Jersey, 929 in the Edna Mahan Correctional Facility, and approximately 240 women residing in halfway houses in the state. Ms. Marshall noted that positive efforts are underway in a couple of arenas, including a collaboration with Janice Kovach and the Urban Women’s Program of the Division on Women, Department of Community Affairs (DCA), and implementation of a distance learning program at the Edna Mahan Correctional Facility in collaboration with the Center for Women and Work.

FORGE is working towards implementing a model that brings together a variety of supportive systems at one site, with several such sites across the state. Reentering women can then access these sites to obtain a range of services in an efficient, coordinated, and integrated manner. The program has had success, for example, with helping women obtain college credits.

Ms. Marshall noted that adult women need more realistic training opportunities even while incarcerated and on parole or probation. She noted that training offered at Edna Mahan is in areas that are historically “female” (e.g. cosmetology) and that training for non-traditional careers is not offered.

Dianne Mills McKay noted that women younger than 18 are mandated to receive training and education support. Under Title IX, programs for males and females should be equal. However, programs in boys’ correctional facilities tend consistently to be more readily

available and at higher levels than those in girls' facilities. While boys also have few opportunities for training in non-traditional careers, their training in traditional occupational skills tends to be higher-skilled and linked to higher wages.

The Council discussed the option of developing a project out of NJ Builds that would work in conjunction with, and perhaps even on the site of, the Edna Mahan Correctional Facility. The building and restoration needs of the facility itself could provide ample opportunity for work experience in building trades. Hunterdon County Polytech Career Academy runs a similar program in a facility for 18-24 year old incarcerated young men. This could provide a model.

The Council will continue discussions with Ms. Marshall and FORGE.

Update on Center for Women and Work (CWW)/School of Management and Labor Relations (SMLR) Women in the Workforce System:

Mary Gatta from the Center for Women and Work announced an upcoming forum funded by the U.S. Department of Labor Women's Bureau through Grace Protos. The forum will be held on Saturday, November 7th, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Rutgers extension at Brookdale Community College in Freehold and will target women looking for resources to assist them during the economic recovery.

Dr. Gatta also provided an update on her SMLR-funded research on women in the workforce system. She noted that she has completed three focus groups with women in the workforce system, as well as one with case managers, and is planning to add focus groups with men based on One-Stop Career Center case managers' experiences with an increasing number of men seeking One-Stop services over the past year.

Division on Women, Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Green Training Grant:

Janice Kovach updated the Council on a DCA grant used to research and develop needed skills and training for available "green jobs." This innovative effort is intended to benefit women through initiatives such as the Department's Displaced Homemakers' program.

Proposed GPC Research Project: *Current Status of Women in NJ Workforce during Economic Recovery:*

Linda Houser provided an overview of a proposed GPC research project on the status of women in New Jersey during economic recovery. Christine Amalfe raised concerns about the breadth of this undertaking and suggested that the project more closely follow research undertaken by Mary Gatta and the Council eight years ago identifying five key employment sectors and examining these in detail. There was general agreement that this represents a useful and efficient strategy for the coming year. Henry Plotkin, Yustina Saleh, and Terri Boyer also recommended specific data sources and strategies to pursue. The Council will receive a written update at the December meeting.

Update on Legal Talent at the Crossroads:

Judy Formalarie of the State Employment and Training Commission (SETC) distributed *Legal Talent at the Crossroads: A Blueprint for Action*. The blueprint complements the full report on women in the legal profession authored by the Center for Women and Work. It presents a clear list of best practice recommendations for law firms concerned with retaining top legal talent.

Dr. Terri Boyer updated the Council on activities related to the release of the full report, including an extended article about the research to appear in *Diversity Executive*, a publication that reaches executives including, but not limited to, lawyers. Christine Amalfe and Terri Boyer have also spoken together about the report at Gibbons PC.

NJ Women in Science and Technology Summit:

Dianne Mills McKay announced that the fourth annual Science and Technology Summit will be held on May 21st, 2010, at Mercer County College. Suzanne Eng will be gathering subcommittee members over the next two months. All Council members are invited to join the planning subcommittee and should contact Ms. Eng if interested.

Additional Business:

Henry Plotkin suggested that the Council compose and submit a transition report to be delivered to the Governor's office, regardless of who wins the upcoming November Gubernatorial election. Establishing the significance of the Council – what it does, what it is achieving, and why it matters – is an important step during such a significant period of transition in state government.

Next meeting of the Council is scheduled for Thursday, December 3rd, from 10:30 to 12:00 at the Labor Education Center, Room 115.