

**New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission  
Council on Gender Parity in Labor and Education  
Meeting Minutes  
November 3, 2011**

Rutgers University, New Brunswick  
Labor Education Center ~ Room 166

Attendees:

Christine Amalfe	Shawn McMahon
Terri Boyer	Henry Plotkin
Deborah Cutler	Virginia Treacy
Judy Formalarie	Robert Wise
Mary Gatta	Matt Unrath
Neale Godfrey	
Glenda Gracia-Rivera	
Charlotte Gray (for Marie Barry)	
Michele Horst	
Linda Houser	

Meeting started at 10:10 with a welcome and introductions. The minutes from the September 8, 2011 meeting were approved by all. Michele Horst, Executive Director, presented a brief update on the SETC.

**Dr. Linda Houser, as a consultant to the Council,** presented a PowerPoint on her research entitled *Shifting Focus: Adaptations in Employment Trends for New Jersey Men*. The presentation provided for a rich discussion regarding the data she shared as well as additional data that should be examined.

One idea was to create a Career Relevance Index is to help guide students to jobs that are in demand. This would help guide education choices to help move people to high career relevance jobs or ones that are moving upward. This can also be used for people on Unemployment Insurance. CERC may be doing this as part of their new contract.

It was suggested that a policy be created to get the “demand” information that we know to our educational institution to prepare the “supply” and this has not been done as of now.

It was also suggested that New Jersey get employers/industries to make investments in their workers, rather than just having them move out of State or out of the County to do their business.

New ideas for Dr. Houser to examine are:

- Union versus non-union employment to see if it helped retain employment.
- if an age factor (or seniority) affects employment retention (examine the “First In/First Out” Syndrome).

**Mary Gatta, of Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW)**, along with her team of Debbie Cutler-Ortiz, Matt Unrath, and Shawn McMahon gave a presentation on Basic Economic Security tables (BEST) and the Self- Sufficiency Standard.

Currently WOW works with 44 States with their index numbers. Since the 1990’s, they began the Self-Sufficiency Standard, which is a measure of what income is needed to be able to live without any other public support, such as welfare or food stamps. The New Jersey Foundation on Aging has contracted with WOW for an Elder Economic Index for people who are retired and live in this State. The BEST would go farther and examine what is needed for all adults for health, safety and basic well-being related to expenses and savings.

The BEST did not include items such as vacations, cell phones, eating out, gifts or any non-essential spending. It is not a “middle class” standard.

Policy issues would examine how the State’s public supports help one to meet the BEST goals (i.e.: health care, child care, and housing assistance).

Other uses of the information can include:

- a self-sufficiency calculator of BEST numbers
- A tool for case management and client support (budget comparison of true local costs and what support benefits are available)
- Labor Market Information and what jobs you could get and aspire to and those that are available
- career planning and career literacy
- benchmarking jobs and wages
- a projection of jobs in the future which provide BEST wages; then use this as a tool to attract or retain businesses and industries that pay BEST wages
- a path to economic security
- a tool for students, as well as online for anyone to use, possibly on NJ Next Stop and NJCAN.
- a guide for the Department of Education to use when annually certifying vocational education programs
- information on the movement of occupations and not just “above” or “below” the standard line

A discussion was held regarding purchasing this tool for New Jersey. Council members felt there was a need as the National Statistics we reviewed are not relevant to New Jersey as a

state or even regionally. Everyone agreed that the SETC should work with WOW to purchase the BEST data.

**Judy Formalarie, of the SETC,** reviewed the press release from the White House dated September 21<sup>st</sup>, which was included in the packets entitled *Fact Sheet for Release: The United States Commitment to Breaking down Barriers to Women's Economic and Political Participation*.

Ms. Formalarie also noted that the Gender Parity meetings have been established for January, March and May of 2012. Dates, times and locations will be emailed to everyone.

The meeting concluded at 12:15 PM.