



CITY OF DURHAM | NORTH CAROLINA

DATE: August 6, 2015
TO: Thomas J. Bonfield, City Manager
THROUGH: Keith Chadwell, Deputy City Manager
FROM: Kevin Dick, Director
SUBJECT: Poverty Reduction Initiative: Jobs Taskforce Interim Report

Executive Summary

In response to the Mayor's Poverty Reduction Initiative (PRI) that focuses on Census Tract 10.01, a number of Taskforces were created to look at different aspects of reducing poverty, supporting services, and building wealth in this low-wealth area of Durham. City Council Representatives, County Commissioners, and others co-chair the taskforces. This Agenda Item is an interim report from the Jobs Taskforce.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Durham City Council receive this interim report from the Mayor's Poverty Reduction Initiative Jobs Taskforce.

Background

The Jobs Taskforce has been meeting for more than a year. Guided by input from taskforce members and meeting participants, feedback from the PRI Community Listening Sessions, and the PRI survey results, issues involving six major barriers to employment in the 10.01 Census Tract were identified. These six areas are as follows: 1) Transportation, 2) Childcare, 3) Criminal Background, 4) Communication, 5) Young Adult Engagement, and 6) the Holton Career and Resource Center and Incentives.

Issues/Analysis

More than thirty strategies were identified to target each of the identified barriers to employment. Additional strategies were identified in the Jobs Taskforce Action Plan that are not included in the 38 adopted strategies.

Described below are the current focus areas of each taskforce subcommittee.

Priority: Transportation

Taskforce members are working with County Transportation, Go Triangle, and Go Durham to create a coordinated one-stop shop hotline for information about transportation routes to employment, transportation options, and available resources for transportation to job searches and employment. Taskforce members are also working to develop and implement a communication plan for the Transportation Hotline, which will include a poster and hand-outs publicizing the hotline number and available transportation resources.

Priority: Childcare

Taskforce members are working with Childcare Services and East Durham Children's Initiative (EDCI) to identify existing childcare providers available in the 10.01 Census Tract. An outreach and communication plan will be developed to make this information available to citizens.

Priority: Criminal Background

Taskforce members are working with CJRC, the Southern Coalition for Social Justice (SCSJ), and other groups to create a marketing campaign to support hiring of those with criminal records, creating PSAs with positive employment stories and employer experiences and working to coordinate efforts of all organizations working with former offenders. Taskforce members are also working to expand City and County programs that hire those with a criminal record on a temporary or full time basis and also highlight the success of this program.

Priority: Communication

Taskforce members are exploring how to develop a coordinated communication plan involving the local business community, the faith community, and community leaders to inform, promote, and publicize employment and training opportunities available to residents in the 10.01 Census Tract. This plan will coordinate with volunteers, CHWs (Community Health Workers), or any community partner providing door-to-door information in the census tract.

Priority: Young Adult Engagement

Through the DWORC program operated by Project Build, several young adults in the census tract area are receiving pre-employment training. Through the Durham YouthWork Program, fifteen young adults in the PRI area are also receiving work experiences. Efforts are ongoing to increase these opportunities as well as to connect youth and young adults to training programs, jobs, and internships available through the NCWorks Career Centers and the Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD).

Priority: Holton and Incentives

A fully-equipped, full-time computer lab has been made available to residents at the Holton Career and Resource Center. The Durham Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) is staffing the Computer Lab. DPR staff have worked with the Workforce Division of OEWD to train staff and community members to be navigators in order to help residents enroll in the NCWorks system; and an instruction manual is now available for public use. A bulletin board has been installed to publicize NCWorks Hot Jobs Listings and information. Coordinated meetings between Durham Public Schools (DPS), DPR, and Duke Health System have taken place to improve communication and customer service. A door-to-door outreach strategy is being implemented by DPR to inform residents about classes and resources available at Holton.

Fees have been lowered to reduce economic barriers to classes. DPR and OEWD are also working with PAC 1 to support programming in the computer lab, use of the NC Works system, and dissemination and community outreach regarding available jobs, job trainings, job screenings, and available resources at Holton. An Incentives Action Plan will be part of the City and County Joint Economic Development Plan process.

The Jobs Taskforce subcommittees continue to meet monthly and work toward implementation of the 38 strategies identified in our action plan. We have already seen significant progress in the area of the Holton Career and Resource Center. Many of these strategies involve partnering with other taskforces and better coordination with existing entities and resources in our community; and we look toward to continued progress in this realm.

Financial Impact

N/A