



## Workforce Investment Board

Wednesday, May 8, 2024, 9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

### **Board Members Present:**

Debbie Lieberman, Chris Williams, Rick Wegmann, Marvene Mitchell Cook, Cassie Barlow, Linda Ashworth, Kathleen Cleary, Jennifer Duwel, Jamie Gee, Tawana Jones, Amy Lei, Diane Walsh, Erik Collins, Mike Wilson, Nick Weldy, Lisa Rindler for Sarah Hackenbracht, Marilyn Hickland, for Carl Kennebrew

**Guests Present:** David Cox, Karla Creel, Jacqueline Williams, Susan Warren, Micheal Stern, , Michael Stern, Stephanie Keinath, and Kathleen Davenport

Call to Order, Welcome, Announcements and Review and Approval of the Minutes: Chair Rick Wegmann

Approval of Minutes: Motion to approve by Linda Ashworth, Second by Diane Walsh. Minutes approved without discussion.

**Purpose of WIB:** The Montgomery County Workforce Investment Board purpose is to drive strategic alliances that advance the region's workforce initiatives and ultimately the region's economic vitality.

**Role and Function:** The role of WIB is to manage the strategic direction of workforce development activities through the investment in people, fulfilling employer needs, and improving the quality of life in Montgomery County.

### **Presentations**

#### **Presenter: Mr. Eric Wellinghoff, President, Nehemiah Manufacturing**

Nehemiah is a leading employer, employing over 252 staff members. As one of the largest returning citizens employers in the region, our mission focuses on providing opportunities for individuals with criminal records, addressing systemic issues in employment and incarceration.

#### **Key Statistics:**

- **National Context:** In the U.S., 1 in 6 people have a felony record. Specifically, 1 in 30 white men and 1 in 3 African American men have been incarcerated.
- **Local Impact:** Hamilton County sees approximately 2,500 individuals returning from jail each year.

#### **Company Profile:**

- **Industry Presence:** Nehemiah operates as the third-largest trademark company for Procter & Gamble globally, with \$150 million in sales.

- **Type:** For-profit company.

#### **Services and Support:**

- **Human Resources:** Our HR team includes two social workers who provide comprehensive wrap-around services to support successful employment and life stability.
- **Kiosk Program:** We maintain on-site kiosks to address immediate needs of individuals, ensuring they have access to necessary resources. Note that we do not hire sexual offenders due to proximity to a school.

#### **Core Pillars of Support:**

1. **Basic Needs:** Assistance with housing, transportation (bus passes and Uber), legal services, and predatory loan mitigation.
2. **Thriving vs. Surviving:** We focus on helping individuals move beyond short-term survival to achieve long-term goals and overcome persistent poverty (the "Cliff Effect").
3. **Affordable Housing:** Providing support through Nehemiah properties and offering up to \$5,000 in down payment assistance for first-time home buyers.
4. **Social Services:** Connecting employees with social services programs that have aided with transportation needs.
5. **Mental Health Services:** On-site mental health services and the 180-Degree Program, which trains supervisors as counselors for addiction and recovery.
6. **Family Impact:** By changing one person's life, we positively affect up to 14 family members, including grandparents, children, siblings, and others.
7. **Turnover Rate:** Our turnover rate in manufacturing is 15%, significantly lower than the industry average.
8. **HR Issues:** We experience fewer HR issues and threats compared to companies that do not hire second-chance employees.

#### **Partnerships:**

- Our mission is now supported through a partnership with Tim Tebow and his wife, Debbie, enhancing our outreach and impact.

This summary highlights Nehemiah's commitment to transforming lives through employment and support, reflecting our ongoing efforts to make a positive societal impact.

**Presenter: Mr. Jeff Korzenik - Chief Economist Fifth Third Commercial Bank, Award winning Author, Speaker**

Second chance hiring represents a strategic business opportunity that addresses the critical need for workforce growth and productivity in the United States. As workforce growth slows and fertility rates decline, companies must explore alternative talent pools to fill the gaps left by

retiring baby boomers and address labor shortages. Over 19 million individuals with legal history currently exist within the United States. If those individuals were employed, we could eliminate our Labor Force Participation problem.

## **Key Points:**

### **1. Workforce and Productivity Challenges:**

- **Growth Factors:** Rapid staff and productivity growth are essential drivers of business expansion. However, workforce growth is declining, posing a significant challenge for the next 10-20 years.
- **Labor Shortage:** Record-low fertility rates and the retirement of baby boomers create a need for new workers. Despite legal immigration, there is a shortage of available labor.

### **2. Overlooked Talent Pool:**

- **Second Chance Individuals:** A significant, often overlooked pool of talent consists of individuals with felony records. Many of these individuals are unjustly categorized and can provide valuable contributions to the workforce.
- **Misconceptions:** It is crucial to address misconceptions about this group. For example, some individuals are labeled with felonies due to non-violent offenses or minor infractions.

### **3. Identification and Support:**

- **Talent Identification:** Effective strategies include implementing coaching and training to guide second chance individuals toward successful employment.
- **Partnerships:** Collaborate with organizations such as Goodwill Services, Workforce Boards, and the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation to access and support this talent pool.

### **4. Implementation Strategies:**

- **HR and Committee Involvement:** Establish an HR professional and a dedicated committee to oversee the integration of second chance hiring into your business practices.
- **Leadership Commitment:** Ensure that company leadership prioritizes second chance hiring as a core component of talent acquisition and business strategy.
- **Understanding Needs:** Develop a deep understanding of employees' backgrounds and provide community support to address their specific needs.

### **5. Effective Hiring Practices:**

- **Criminal Record Analysis:** Train staff to interpret criminal records accurately, focusing on the skills and rehabilitation successes beyond the criminal history.
- **Life Coaching:** Utilize life coaches to support and guide potential hires through their personal and professional development.

## 6. Considerations:

- **Focus Areas:** While second chance hiring can be highly beneficial, be cautious about hiring individuals with severe offenses or those struggling with active drug addiction. Prioritize education and rehabilitation programs that demonstrate potential for success.

**Conclusion:** By adopting these practices, businesses can tap into a valuable talent pool and address the labor shortage effectively. Investing in second chance hiring not only helps fill critical positions but also contributes to positive social impact and business growth.

### Resource Information

- **Checker Company:** Provides background check services specifically designed to assist with hiring individuals with felony records.
- **Envoy:** Offers a 20-second survey to streamline and enhance the hiring process.

### Questions:

Debbie Lieberman thanked Jeff for attending the meeting and mentioned that more leaders like him are needed to drive the changes required for progress. She inquired about the "Ban the Box" initiative and whether there have been any observations or experiences with its effectiveness.

### Answer:

Jeff acknowledged the importance of having more CEOs committed to driving change. Regarding the "Ban the Box" initiative, he shared that while it may not be effective in all states, such as Illinois, and others it's great if it's showing change in Ohio.

**Presenters: Haley Corretta, Quinn Howard, Jamie Gee- Adult Reentry**

**1. Leadership Commitment and Communication** In Montgomery County, securing commitment from the CEO and upper leadership is crucial for effective communication and placement of returning citizens. Challenges arise when felony records become known in HR or through the job environment, potentially disrupting successful employment. A structured commitment from employers, from leadership to line staff, is essential to support the reentry process.

**2. Jamie Gee - Resources and Philosophy** Our approach, known as the Triple A Philosophy—Action, Alliance, and Accountability—focuses on transforming obstacles into opportunities and trials into triumphs for each individual who walks through our doors. Notably, 1 in 6 Ohioans have a misdemeanor or felony record, and Ohio loses \$2 billion annually in GDP due to barriers faced by qualified workers with prior court records. Our current workshops include:

- **Stages of Change**
- **Career Life Program** (4 weeks)
- **Knowledge Over Time**

We collaborate with over 2-3 dozen providers to assist individuals in overcoming obstacles and creating opportunities. Successful program completion leads to direct referrals to employers. Additionally, our Eichelberger Prison Outreach bridges the gap from prison to community, and our Move-In Assistance Program provides \$500 for housing support.

**3. Quinn Howard - Reentry Program Manager** To continually support our reentry clients, we utilize several tools:

- **CAE (Federal Bonding):** Provides bonding for individuals still in prison.
- **CQE (Certificate of Qualification for Employment):** Offers immunity to employers for negligent hiring claims, demonstrating due diligence in the hiring process.
- **WOTC (Work Opportunity Tax Credit):** A federal tax credit available to employers who hire individuals from target groups with significant barriers to employment.
- **REACH (Entrepreneur Program):** Supports reentry clients in becoming business owners, backed by the Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce.
- **Reverse Job Fairs:** Allows job seekers to set up information tables for employers to review their skills.

Several Montgomery County employers, including DHL, Gem City Tire, and Montgomery County itself, have supported these initiatives. As a closing thought: "Every moment in life is a second chance."

Meeting Adjourned – 10:28 AM

#### **2024 Meetings:**

Wednesday, November 13, 2024