



NEWS RELEASE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Westchester-Putnam Workforce Development Board
Talent Shortage Symposium Addresses Issues Facing Employers and
Solutions for Continued Partnerships and Innovative Thinking**

“Studies predict 40 million unfilled high skilled jobs by 2020 and demand for recruiting, training and staffing services continues to grow as labor markets tighten and companies place a higher strategic focus on customized talent and training,” says Thom Kleiner, Director, Westchester-Putnam Workforce Development Board.

Mount Vernon, NY, Nov. 1, 2018 –The Westchester-Putnam Workforce Development Board presented a high-level learning and discussion symposium on October 24 at the Mount Vernon Career Center (130 Mount Vernon Avenue, Mount Vernon, NY, 10550). Panelists from recruiting, workforce development, colleges, economic development, and area businesses discussed multiple issues surrounding the current talent shortage.

Moderated by **Allison Madison**, *President*, Madison Approach Staffing, members of the panel representing all facets of local workforce development included: **Bridget Gibbons**, Director, Westchester County Office of Economic Development; **Thom Kleiner**, Director, Westchester-Putnam Workforce Development Board; **Dr. Sterling Jasper**, Owner, Express Employment Professionals; **Jeanne Maloney**, Assistant Dean Workforce, Westchester Community College; **Orane Barrett**, Kool Nerd Club; and **Joseph DiCarlo**, MBA, SPHR, Chief Talent and Engagement Office, WESTMED Practice.

Employers from multiple sectors, as well as non-profit and educational organizations, attended the free symposium to hear how county agencies partner with local colleges, staffing professionals, and HR managers to help private employers address the talent gap and provide career paths with state-of-the-art technology, innovative training approaches, resources and services to youth, adults and employers.

Moderator Allison Madison kicked off the lively discussion by asking the panel to “Describe the kinds of positions being hired for and how the talent gap or shortage is impacting each of the respective sectors and some of the ways to compensate for those gaps.”

“We need to be more proactive and reactive at the county level. For example, we're working closely with the Mount Vernon Career Center and Westchester Community College to help a hospitality company find cooks and front desk staff. We've put together a two-week rapid response training

program to bring people in, get them interviewed, trained and on the job. We need to do more of that,” responded Bridget Gibbons, *Director*, Westchester County Office of Economic Development.

“It's great to aspire to go to college, but that's not the only route to get a great job. We need to work with our educational institutions to get them more information about the varying routes to certain careers, how to get credentials and certifications, not only from four-year colleges but the community colleges and BOCES,” expanded Thom Kleiner, *Director*, Westchester-Putnam Workforce Development Board

“Sound tech, radiology tech, lab tech—these are roles within the healthcare industry that pay a good income for 12 to 18 months training. We need to work with the institutions of learning and government officials to inform and educate our young people as to what fields are in demand. A lack of qualified workers impacts us as a business and affects the economy and our ability to deliver quality healthcare, because if we don't have the right people, we can't grow,” explained Joe DiCarlo, MBA, SPHR, *Chief Talent and Engagement Office*, WESTMED Practice.

Topics explored included innovative ideas like ‘returnships’ and ‘rapid response training’ as well as observations on the lack of soft skills in the millennial workforce, recommendations for earlier career exploration at the high school level, informing high school students of real-world job opportunities and alternative career pathways utilizing community colleges and BOCES for certifications and credentials in addition to 4-year degree and graduate programs. Audience members pointed out the need for a return to technical schools and more frequent communication with representatives from school districts, particularly those that have invested in CTE (Career and Technical Education) programs.

“Symposiums like the one we held today are very important because it brings together experts from government, staffing services, secondary and higher education, and the private sector to dive into the talent shortage topic,” explains program specialist and organizer of the symposium, Dr. LaTasha Hamlett-Carver. “We have to all be in the room together to brainstorm solutions, as these are systemic issues that no one can solve by themselves. We plan to do more of these panels.”

THE WESTCHESTER-PUTNAM WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD (WPWDB) is comprised of leaders and staff of state and county government agencies, non-profits, public education, and the private sector who work together to strengthen the partnerships between business, education, and service providers within the “Career Center Network” to meet the needs for a skilled workforce. The WPWDB pursues funding opportunities and develops model programs and leading-edge practices. The “Network” is made up of four Career Centers (White Plains, Mount Vernon, Peekskill, and Carmel) as well as partner agencies that provide state-of-the-art technology, training, resources, and services to youth, adults and employers. For more information, visit www.westchesterputnamonestop.com.

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WESTCHESTER COUNTY OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, The Office of Economic Development works to improve the County's economic well-being and quality of life. This includes a broad range of activities to attract, create and retain jobs, and to foster a resilient, pro-growth and inclusive economy. Westchester is led by County Executive George Latimer, who took office in January 2018 as the ninth County Executive. Learn more about Westchester County by visiting www.westchestergov.com

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Pictured left to right: OJ Yizar, Manager, Westchester Career Center; Bridget Gibbons, Director, Westchester County Office of Economic Development; Dr. LaTasha Hamlett-Carver, Program Specialist, Westchester Career Center; Thom Kleiner, Director, Westchester-Putnam Workforce Development Board; Allison Madison, President, Madison Approach Staffing; Orane Barrett, Kool Nerd Club; Joseph DiCarlo, MBA, SPHR, Chief Talent and Engagement Office, WESTMED Practice; Dr. Sterling Jasper, Owner, Express Employment Professionals; Jeanne Maloney, Assistant Dean Workforce, Westchester Community College



Links to transcripts:

Thom Kleiner giving stats:

<https://www.temi.com/editor/t/wOmLR8kg5h0hlg8to-OgcEPR-8PYISQmwXEihDCGgrSo8FhKkJKxwu9DRqspqgC2XPtQzQLcudIWnFrdHQ8P2AXKX0?loadFrom=Dashboard&openShareModal=False>

Bridget Gibbons discussing Rapid Response:

<https://www.temi.com/editor/t/NwKSv-iPVDIBZaWwRhEBsvl6r1ipc2WMLreKNrJyc9BAXlDcchTnkbPt3iehWTQT0IxHu1JFk2IjH21UBQ9I5jM17Tg?loadFrom=SharedLink>

Jeanne Maloney and Dr. Sterling Jasper discussing career pathways:

<https://www.temi.com/editor/t/2sigsXMnzseVzCVVDb7FAZ7ZApDb0UjokGe70WY58kvei0yiHQZQwvq4lIKlegniyAIPNnximDku9MR4pX4LAqyrv8?loadFrom=Dashboard&openShareModal=False>

Orane Barrett discussing lack of soft skills:

https://www.temi.com/editor/t/59cDEjP9ETYliunKUvcASqvlc2na7ujzHZ6O2Ry_ZWv9uTH5Ob-f6opkC_wr-uUUZQhZPalsoZcOm0G4c3IAf7pGhkk?loadFrom=Dashboard&openShareModal=False

Joseph DiCarlo discussing jobs that don't require a 4-year degree:

https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FRNC8QYzD5WWnAHngNo8-3hCRcN1HfKo4bJieuAJyMzBn7SGr52mamnulxmGBO1Q7uG0kFB1xdNZ2gKDPazqUxit_IU?loadFrom=Dashboard&openShareModal=False

Thom Kleiner and Bridget Gibbons discussing barriers and demotivators:

https://www.temi.com/editor/t/t7RU9LNKmyiNjs3p2cT1VhEv_5KeFFhFRaTdE2RisxNnUEHKJgxWaFzrzvDn--WeCf6_j5CCOXgyoOmCbXos9bvXK6s?loadFrom=Dashboard&openShareModal=False

Daniel Bonet from Guidance Center discussing more communication with Dept. of Education:

<https://www.temi.com/editor/t/gWlaicYaaGODoEP5O6wZrOi4sBXIGm-7wyZoRMeCiYr4X6kdXV5VBqMwrL6wvkslfcFZEri73o-ZXJshBrLgRkwZvN8?loadFrom=Dashboard&openShareModal=False>

More quotes from the Symposium

“Lack of soft skills is the biggest complaint we hear from HR departments and it's across the board for all types of jobs and education levels. Candidates that have the desired technical skills don't make it past the interview because they lack personal skills like how to smile, greet people, communicate and present themselves. It's a big, big issue,” pointed out **Orane Barrett**, Kool Nerd Club.

“The stated unemployment rate is 3.5% but that number really doesn't mean anything to the people diligently seeking work who have barriers to employment—economic barriers, transportation and childcare challenges, language challenges. We need to continue these kinds of conversations to figure out how government, educational institutions, and social service providers can pinpoint where the deficiencies are and how to collectively solve them,” **Thom Kleiner**, Director, Westchester-Putnam Workforce Development Board.