



Priority Populations Committee

Meeting Minutes

Date: October 14, 2025

Location: Clemson Center and Virtual via Zoom

Time: 3:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Attendance

Committee Members

- Lisa Gillespie
- Pat Pruitt
- Cherri Boller
- Sandy Jordan
- Cynthia Sprinkle

Board Staff

- Windy Graham
- Jennifer Campbell

Center Staff

- William Hunter

Guest Speaker

- Sammie Stroud, Upstate Returning Citizens Program

Meeting Overview

The Priority Populations Committee focuses on addressing the workforce needs of individuals who face significant barriers to employment, including **youth facing barriers to employment, justice-involved individuals, low-income jobseekers, individuals with disabilities, people experiencing homelessness, the long-term unemployed, and veterans**. The committee met to review ongoing initiatives, discuss community partnerships, and explore strategies to improve access to employment, training, and supportive services for these priority groups.

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Program Updates

Upstate Returning Citizens Program

Guest speaker **Sammie Stroud** provided an overview of the Upstate Returning Citizens Program, highlighting:

- Job fairs and employer engagement for individuals returning from incarceration
- Skill-building opportunities to support successful reentry
- Housing assistance and community reintegration services

WorkLink Updates

Windy Graham referenced reports included in the meeting packet and shared key data points:

- **South Carolina unemployment rate: 4.6%**
- **National disability population: 8.6%**

- **Local labor force with a disability:** 25.1%
(Source: U.S. Department of Labor)

Committee Discussion

Members discussed:

- Proposed meeting dates for **2026**
 - National Disability Employment Awareness Month activities
 - Upcoming events and resources for veterans
 - Continued support for at-risk populations through community partnerships and outreach
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Action Items

- Committee members to review upcoming events and outreach opportunities related to disability employment and veteran services.
 - Staff to continue monitoring and reporting workforce data trends.
 - Follow-up on reentry support opportunities and potential partnerships highlighted during the presentation.
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Next Meeting

Priority Populations Committee

Date: Tuesday, January 13, 2026

Time: 3:00 PM

Format: Clemson Center or Virtual via Zoom