

Governor's Council on Women and Girls
Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity & Workforce Equity
MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, March 4, 2025, 3:00pm
Virtual Meeting – TEAMs

I. Introductions

Tracy Opoku, General Counsel to the Lt. Governor welcomed all participants and began the meeting at 3:02pm.

II. Presentation: Issues Facing Women Returning to Work & Related Programming, Candace Freedenberg, Founder and President, Untapped Potential Inc.

Candace Freedenberg, Founder and President of Untapped Potential Inc., presented on programs, focusing on the mission of “advancing business and reigniting careers”. The organization focuses on workplace equity and economic development through a model that helps businesses access experienced talent that is often overlooked. Freedenberg identified the challenges returning women face when coming back to corporate America such as a lack of a network, confidence, skill currency/perceived currency, and childcare or money for childcare. Businesses may face an inability to find experienced, diverse talent and their reliance on automatic job filters may weed out talent. Some of the barriers to adopting talent include lack of visibility, lack of training, and lack of available hours due to other obligations (*i.e.* childcare). However, returners bring maturity, institutional knowledge, leadership, and loyalty.

Untapped Potential highlighted a solution based on a network of support, skill-up opportunity, and real curated engagement.

- Support: Leverage peer and mentor engagement to rebuild connections, as well as career coaches
- SkillUP: professional development, including workplace tools and free courses in areas such as data analytics and cybersecurity
- Engage: Flexible, mid-career internship program ("Flexreturn")—a 12-week, 240-hour engagement to reintroduce candidates to the workforce

Untapped Potential also hosts “mentor mingles” to encourage engagement between industry mentors and candidates. For Women’s History Month they are running our client candidate speed interview events to bring together forward-thinking business leaders with stay-at-home moms or other women in transition trying to jumpstart their second stage career. They also offer “Me Time” events, coffees, SkillUP opportunities and info sessions.

Upcoming info sessions include:

- Thursday, March 6 – Return Women to Healthcare, BioTECH, and Pharma
- Thursday, March 13 – Return Women to IT, Data, and CyberSecurity
- Thursday, March 20 – Return Women to Banking, Insurance, and the Financial Sector
- Tuesday, March 25 - Return Women to Manufacturing, Engineering, Supply-Chain
- Friday, March 28 - Return Women to Start-UP's/Women-owened, Small Biz, Non-Profit

III. Announcements

Melvette Hill presentation on the potential impact of artificial intelligence on women in the workforce was cancelled and will be rescheduled at a later date.

IV. Adjournment

Tracy Opoku ended the meeting.