

WELFARE PEER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Event: Post-Employment Training Workshop

Date: October 11, 2000

Location: Holiday Inn, Worcester, Massachusetts

1. OVERVIEW

The Welfare Peer Technical Assistance (TA) Network, funded by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Family Assistance (OFA), Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) assisted the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) in the planning and coordination of this workshop involving select representatives from sixteen Service Delivery Areas (SDAs), various workforce investment boards, several community colleges, employers, and key individuals from various private welfare service organizations from around the state of Massachusetts. The Massachusetts Department of Labor and Workforce Development also participated along with representatives from the DOL Region I office.

The purpose of this one-day workshop was to promote the sharing of ideas and innovative practices in the use of TANF and Welfare-to-Work funds to improve the earnings of working and former welfare recipients. The majority of the SDAs are providing career advancement activities to their clients such as individual and group on-the-job training contracts, education/training vouchers or referrals to existing programs, mentoring, and employer-based job readiness programs with commitment for employment and advancement. The focus of the workshop was to explore creative methods to strengthen and expand these activities to ensure that all clients are provided with optimal opportunities to advance in their careers and progress toward a higher standard of living for their families. Speakers included individuals from all around the state of Massachusetts as well as from Washington, DC, California, and Washington State. During the workshop, participants examined post-employment training from a national perspective including future job growth sectors and promising practices nationwide, post-employment training from a county social service office perspective, workplace models, career ladders, distance learning, and classroom/non-workplace models. In order to address all of these topics sufficiently, participants were able to attend their choice of concurrent sessions during the second half of the workshop.

2. WELCOME COMMENTS

Edward Sanders-Bey, Assistant Commissioner for Policy and Program Management, began by welcoming the SDAs as partners in welfare reform. He stated that Massachusetts' welfare

reform has generally been a success as TANF caseloads have dropped steadily in the last several years. However, he pointed out that falling caseloads alone do not constitute complete success. The State must ensure that families who leave TANF get the support services and job advancement opportunities they need to climb out of poverty. The SDAs are key partners in this effort.

Janice Tatarka, Chief of Staff of the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, next made some comments from the perspective of the workforce development system. She explained that the United States Department of Labor structured the Welfare-to-Work federal grant in a way that encouraged collaboration between the TANF and workforce development systems, and that these systems have collaborated well in Massachusetts. She also stated that a move from pre- to post-employment training has been pushed by several factors: the Welfare-to-Work grant's initial prohibition on pre-employment training (since revised); the low unemployment rate in Massachusetts; and the existing "skills gap" in the State.

3. NATIONAL OVERVIEW OF POST-EMPLOYMENT TRAINING

Demetra Smith Nightingale, Principal Research Associate and Director, Welfare and Training Research Project, Urban Institute

Demetra Smith Nightingale of the Urban Institute provided an overview of the topic of post-employment training, including fast-growing industries and promising practices nationwide. Her presentation set the context for the more detailed presentations that followed throughout the day.

Ms. Nightingale began by emphasizing that most research shows stand-alone, pre-employment training is not more effective than job search in helping TANF recipients find and retain good-paying jobs. There are some preliminary data showing that linking job training and education to work is the most effective approach, but few long-term studies have been completed on this subject. Ms. Nightingale also explained two other rationales for focusing on post-employment training: (a) the TANF time limit requirements force recipients to enter jobs quickly, and (b) most recipients are entering low-wage, high-turnover jobs, so require further training to stay off cash assistance.

While there has been increase in the provision of retention services designed to help current and former TANF recipients keep their jobs, Ms. Nightingale explained that there is solid research suggesting that these services do not have a major effect. Retention services, to some extent, can help TANF recipients deal with their personal problems. However, these services cannot change the fact that most TANF recipients are placed in jobs with high turnover rates. In addition, retention services are not always effective because TANF caseworkers often do not make the effort to place TANF recipients in jobs that require their particular skills.

Ms. Nightingale then listed the industry sectors with high projected employment growth and projected employment decline, as well as specific occupations for which demand is growing. Health care, services, and retail are all high-growth sectors, not just high-tech. Hospitality is a

particularly good sector for upward mobility, because there are so many different types of jobs to move up to in hotels. Breaking down the high-growth occupations by required educational level, Ms. Nightingale pointed out that two-thirds of new jobs in the future will not require a college degree. What Ms. Nightingale referred to as “good” non-college jobs, those that are full-time, with wages of \$13/hour or more plus benefits, will typically require some combination of long-term on-the-job training and work experience. There will not be so many “good” non-college jobs that require only short-term on-the-job training or stand-alone post-secondary education. Finally, many of these jobs will be in industries that have not typically employed large numbers of women and minorities (e.g., truck drivers, mechanics, and heating/ventilation/air conditioning repair).

Turning to innovative programs for post-employment training that are developing across the country, Ms. Nightingale listed several promising approaches: sectoral partnerships, which develop training programs tailored to a particular industry sector; publicly subsidized jobs, to help TANF recipients gain work experience; and joint public/private investments in training. She emphasized that education and training tied to the workplace and to concrete work skills is most effective, because it keeps new workers motivated to learn. On-site classes can be developed through collaborations between employers, unions, community colleges, and other training providers; employers and employees can each donate “time” to training (e.g., an employee uses one hour of the workday and one hour of his or her own personal time to complete a class).

Ms. Nightingale mentioned a number of specific locations where there are innovative programs to help TANF recipients advance in their jobs. Kansas City and West Virginia are using wage supplements effectively to help workers afford time off from work to train. The New Hope project in Wisconsin uses wage supplements and the guarantee of a job to ensure recipients get the work experience and training they need. Chicago uses Welfare-to-Work funds for targeted post-employment training, and has worked with South Shore Bank to help recipients with their financial planning (including tax counseling and the use of Individual Development Accounts). Finally, the Scans 2000 Welfare-to-Work competitive grant is a multi-site project based at Johns Hopkins University. It works with seven community colleges across the country to help employers define the skills that are needed for particular jobs, and help employees receive and document the training required to retain their jobs and move up to better jobs.

Questions and Answers

The session ended with a lively question and answer session. These are some of the main questions, and Ms. Nightingale’s responses:

Q: Can Workforce Investment Act funds be used for wage supplements?

A: Probably yes, through on-the-job training, but this would have to be included in the Local Workforce Investment Board’s five-year plan.

Q: Are there any evaluations of “sectoral” approaches to training, i.e., developing training programs in conjunction with an industry sector?

A: No formal evaluations have yet been completed, but anecdotal data suggest this is a promising approach.

Q: Where else around the country are there distance learning programs?

A: Distance learning programs began to crop up four to five years ago in rural areas, as a way to deal with transportation issues. Also, New York City has an innovative program that trains women to be licensed child care providers at home. The program gives women computers, which help them get training and informational updates from a central child care center.

Q: Does the guarantee of a job at the completion of a training program make a difference in the success of joint public/private programs?

A: Yes, it probably encourages more commitment from both the employee and the employer. Service providers should be cautioned, however, that employers’ guarantees of jobs are often not as firm as they appear. Employers’ commitments may be strongest when they have played a role in designing the training curriculum.

Q: What are some resources you recommend for further information?

A: If you are interested in obtaining more information on what I have presented on, the Urban Institute at <http://www.urban.org> has my articles posted. Look under my name in the “search by author” function. Here are two other resources that specifically address low-skilled workers.

- *The Low-Wage Labor Market-Challenges and Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency* (2000). Prepared by the Urban Institute for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, this publication includes contributions by thirteen authors from various private and public organizations from all over the country. Demetra Smith Nightingale directed this project and served as a contributing editor. Copies can be obtained by contacting Urban Institute Press at 1-877-UIPRESS or www.urban.org/uipress.
- *Entry-Level Jobs- Long-Term Care, Hospitality, Child Care: Information for Workers and Job Counselors* (2000). A packet of information on employer and employee perspectives in these industries along with job growth and listings of related studies and reports. Copies can be obtained by calling (202) 261-5687 or e-mailing paffairs@ui.urban.org.

4. POST-EMPLOYMENT TRAINING: ONE COUNTY’S EXPERIENCES

John Rodgers, Deputy Director, Planning and Evaluation Division, Riverside County (California) Department of Social Services

John Rodgers, Deputy Director, Planning and Evaluation Division, Riverside County Department of Public Social Services in California, spoke about Riverside's success with job retention. Riverside County California has about 21,000 families on the TANF caseload currently, and 12,000 of those families are receiving Welfare-to-Work benefits.

Riverside has a Work Plus Program that is divided into three phases. Phase 1 is designed to move clients into unsubsidized employment for twenty or more hours per week. The client will then move to Phase 2, which focuses on job retention and training and education. In Phase 2, the twenty hours per week minimum of unsubsidized work is still required, but hours spent on approved training and education can be counted toward the 32 hours per week work requirement. After the client has been working, and the family has left TANF completely, Phase 3 begins. Phase 3 services are delivered by community-based organizations and are designed to assist families with staying off of aid and improving their self-sufficiency by focusing on mentoring, job retention, and training and education. Phase 3 is still in the planning stages and has not yet been implemented.

The part of the Riverside Work Plus program that deals most with job retention is the second phase. It is important to note that community service, work experience, and partially subsidized employment do not qualify as unsubsidized employment. When a Welfare-to-Work client begins working at least twenty hours per week in unsubsidized employment, he or she is transferred from Phase 1 to Phase 2—which includes changing case managers. The Phase 2 case managers are separate from their Phase 1 counterparts and report to different supervisors. This separation allows the case managers to focus on the task of job retention rather than job placement. The performance standard for Phase 2 case managers is based on two numbers: the number of clients retaining jobs and leaving TANF, and the number of clients engaged in and/or completing training and education. Mr. Rodgers credits this simple system of evaluation with being crucial to the success of the program. Throughout Riverside's program, there are clear and distinct goals for the case managers as well as for the clients.

The training and education aspect of Phase 2 is very specific. Almost no training or educational activity that is expected to last for more than twelve months is approved. Clients are also not sent directly to specific institutions. Rather, they are encouraged to find opportunities and institutions in the area and speak to those who are responsible for recruiting clients. This process enables the client to find a program that is a good fit, and forces the institutions to market to individual clients and to tailor their programs to work for clients. Initially, clients tend not to be interested in training and education. The financial benefits are not immediate, and many clients have had negative experiences with education in the past. It is also difficult for many to combine work and school while caring for a family at the same time. Currently, the program offers incentives to the entire family for completion of training or education. For instance, when the parent completes a nine-month training, the entire family may be rewarded with a personal computer or a trip to Disneyland. Gift certificates for various family-oriented items are also

given at key points throughout the training and education process in order to reinforce and support retention in the program.

Phase 2 of the Riverside County Work Plus program has proven to be a success. The second phase was adopted in 1998, and in July of 1999, only 8% of the Phase 2 clients were involved in training and education. However, instead of giving up on the program, it was re-organized. It was at this time that the Phase 2 case managers and supervisors were separated from Phase 1. The performance standards for the staff were also made more clear at this point, and new management and resources were introduced. The numbers have since then improved dramatically. Today, 42% of Phase 2 clients are engaged in training and education. The current manager of the program has set a goal of 70%. Recently, the Work Plus program was selected to participate in the Employment, Retention, and Advancement (ERA) study by the Department of Health and Human Services and Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC).

5. CONCURRENT SESSIONS

The second half of the workshop included concurrent sessions featuring a variety of topics. The sessions featured local programs as well as programs from other parts of the nation. Workshop participants were able to choose the workshop of their choice to attend.

5.1 WORKPLACE MODELS

This session covered workplace learning/on-the-job learning activities that employers offer for working clients. Discussions centered on benefits for employers and how to get them involved, funding sources, and how to work with employers to help them set up training programs. Presenters made brief introductory remarks and the rest of the session was reserved for questions and answers. The session was moderated by Demetra Smith Nightingale from the Urban Institute.

5.1.1. Worksource Staffing Partnership

Neil Silverston, President

Mr. Silverston began by telling participants that his organization works with employers to promote career development initiatives for their employees. His organization partners with both employers and education providers. He mentioned two partnerships in which WorkSource Staffing Partnership is currently engaged. One is with a local hospital where an on-the-job training at the cardiac unit is available as part of the hospital's patient care career development program. A second partnership mentioned by Mr. Silverston involves a local community college that is providing nursing training.

Next, Mr. Silverston discussed the importance of career development to employers. He referred to a statewide study finding that nearly half of Massachusetts' current workforce has only a high school degree or less (from *Opportunity Knocks, Training the Commonwealth's Workers for the New Economy*, a joint project of Mellon New England and The Massachusetts Institute for a

New Commonwealth). This poses an imposing hurdle to growth for today’s “new economy.” However, he stated that he felt employees are willing to meet this challenge by engaging in career development activities. A 1997 Society for Human Resource Management survey, *Retention Practices Survey*, found that more than eight out of ten (85%) respondents (human resource managers/employers) cited dissatisfaction with potential career development at their organization as a threat to employee retention.

Given these research findings and current level of employee career development programs available by most of employers, Mr. Silverston commented that there is a tremendous opportunity for improvement. He shared the following facts related to employee turnover and career development benefits.

Opportunities for Career Development

| Turnover Costs | Career Development Benefits |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruiting costs and fees • Cost of overtime and temporary workers • Training time • Reduced productivity of new employees • Quality losses • Lost management time • Organizational disruption • Lost sales opportunities • Lost of knowledge of the business • Customer dissatisfaction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher employee satisfaction and retention • Increased ability to cope with change • Increased teamwork and connection • Greater skills and diversity • Improved productivity • Higher quality of service • Increased ability to hire from within • Increased revenue per employee |
| Costs of Turnover = 50%+ of an individual’s salary | One year of development = 10-20% productivity improvement |

Mr. Silverston next highlighted some of the efforts by his organization to promote partnerships for career development. WorkSource partners with the employers and internal support system service providers and focuses on leveraging resources to increase recruiting outreach, retention, productivity, customer service, and internal employee promotions. A successful partnership is a long-term (over eighteen months) arrangement that includes a placement/planning phase, a goal setting phase, and a growth phase. One major outcome he cited for career development is that it promotes loyalty and productivity among employees. In closing, Mr. Silverston stressed that all organizations should consider workforce investment a valuable investment in their employees that results in high returns over the long run.

5.1.2. Massachusetts Department of Education
 Andrea Perrault, Workplace Education Specialist

Ms. Perrault provided the state perspective on funding available and offered programmatic suggestions for workplace models programs. The Massachusetts Department of Education funds various programs for work-based training. Several million dollars are available for training of adults with low skills or who lack a high school diploma as well as basic math, computer skills, and ESOL courses. She shared a chart of current workplace education grants around the state that involved partnerships between businesses and education providers as well as a list of regional capacity building partnerships. She also shared a list of important information (i.e., timeframes, eligibility criteria, grant match requirement, etc.) related to the Massachusetts' Department of Education's Workplace Education Grants. The grants she highlighted were Phase 1 Planning grants and Phase 2 Workplace Education Services grants. Grant recipients that perform well in phase 1 are eligible to compete for phase 2 grants.

In general, she emphasized that employers understand that basic skills training is needed for many of their employees. She recommended that companies should determine their skill deficiencies and develop training goals for their employees. They should then approach education providers and plan their training programs.

5.1.3. Quinsigamond Community College

Jane Shea, Workplace Education Director, Adult Literacy Representative (member: Southern Worcester Workforce Investment Board)

Ms. Shea offered a hands-on perspective as a recipient of one of the education grants that Ms. Perrault described previously during the panel discussion as being offered by the State. She noted that her college conducts many health care and manufacturing skills training programs. In order for a program to be successful, she reflected that both the employer and the student's needs must be addressed. Course times must not compete with a company's overtime schedule. In addition, course schedules must be aligned with child care hours in order for students to be able to attend classes. She then mentioned some barriers to program success. Programs must be set up and planned with proper input and support from company supervisors. The program curricula should be planned appropriately to match a company's training needs. Lastly, she suggested that goals and outcomes be considered in designing a training program. Programs are evaluated by these outcomes, and their future funding may be dependent upon this program evaluation.

Questions and Answers

Ms. Nightingale allowed ample time for questions and answers. Participants asked many detailed follow-up questions to each of the presenters and to the panel as a whole.

Q: Describe some of the skills being taught using workplace learning models?

A: Many employers are teaching basic skills such as reading, writing, and math. In addition, they are also stressing job related skills that employers need to successfully complete their work. These skills are also valuable to the employee because success in job-related skills

leads to job retention and advancement for most workers. Computer skills are the most commonly trained skill, and they are also the most transferable for employees.

Q: How do you get employers involved in workplace training activities?

A: Go out and market the value of workplace learning to their bottom line. Many employers do not realize the importance and the savings benefit to them by training their employees. They need an “orientation” to better understand why workplace learning is in their best interests. The economy is strong right now; many employers are reaching out to labor pools they normally would not consider. This is an excellent opportunity to work with employers while they have an open ear toward working with service providers to find employees to fill their current job vacancies. Some community colleges conduct training on-site at the employer’s location. However, many community colleges currently do not need to seek out employers to work with because the economy is so strong. This situation may change if the economy weakens. Community colleges may soon consider taking advantage of the current economic situation and get by getting more actively involved with service providers and employers in this employer “orientation” process.

Q: How do you work with employers who are not flexible?

A: The key is to emphasize to employers that they try things. Suggest to them that they consider lowering their skill requirements for some job vacancies. Employees can be trained on these skills once they are hired. Encourage an employer peer-to-peer approach where employers talk to each other and see what others are doing with workplace learning activities.

Q: What are some other funding sources for post-employment training?

A: Besides the Department of Education, there are dollars available through the Department of Labor (Welfare-to-Work grants, etc.) and the Department of Health and Human Services (TANF). In addition, programs are available from other agencies, such as the Department of Housing and Urban Development, that most people do not consider when they think of training and education. Private funds and local funds are another source of funding.

Q: What is the return on investment (ROI) for education and training activities?

A: Training is sometimes difficult to evaluate in regards to its effect on the company bottom line. However, all the research available indicates that most employee training results in higher employee loyalty, morale and productivity as well as less staff turnover and absenteeism.

Q: Are there liability issues involved (such as safety, etc.) that might keep employers from considering workplace learning activities?

A: No. For the most part, this has not surfaced as issue of concern by employers.

Q: Why should public money be used (to fund education grants, etc.) for workplace learning since businesses have their own money they could use?

A: It is in the best interest of clients for them to receive skills training in order for them to advance in their jobs and become self-sufficient. It is also cheaper in the long run for employers to train current employees to appropriate skill levels as opposed to hiring a new employee altogether. Public funding can act as seed money to start a workplace learning program. The employer will gain a better understanding of how it is profitable to their organization, and the employee will become self-sufficient. This is better for the economy and saves the government money by reducing clients' need for public assistance funds.

Q: What is the number one training topic in workplace learning?

A: Computer training. Both clients and employers need this training. Clients need it to reach basic skill levels. Employers also offer it to all their employees to familiarize them with the company's computer systems.

5.2 CAREER LADDERS

This session featured a local employer's example of a career ladder, and another career ladder administered by a community college that is from outside the state.

Laurie Sheridan, Career Centers Coordinator with the Boston Workforce Development Coalition, provided an overview of the topic and moderated the session.

Debra Hancock, Student Placement Manager/Instructor at Shoreline Community College in Washington State, explained Shoreline's Job Ladder Partnership. Finally, Andrew Harris, Senior Vice President for Business Management for Benjamin Healthcare Center, discussed his institution's career ladder program for certified nurses' aides (CNAs).

5.2.1 Overview

Laurie Sheridan, Career Ladders Coordinator, Boston Workforce Development Coalition

Ms. Sheridan defined a career ladder as a series of steps -- within a particular company, an industry sector, or even across sectors -- that advance employees' responsibilities and wages. There are two aspects for Service Delivery Areas to consider in building career ladders within a company or an industry sector: (a) helping individual TANF recipients move up the career ladder, by providing training and information, and (b) helping employers/industries develop career ladders. Perhaps the most significant goal of career ladders, Ms. Sheridan suggested, is helping workers advance to jobs that pay "Family Economic Self-Sufficiency" wages (about two-and-a-half times the federal poverty level).

Ms. Sheridan discussed several industries in greater Boston that have growing demand for non-college educated, entry-level workers, as well as potential career ladders: long-term health care,

telecommunications, financial services, and hospitality. In particular, Ms. Sheridan focused on long-term health care (which has many jobs, but entry-level pay is low) and telecommunications (which has fewer but higher-paying entry-level jobs, and is growing quickly). Entry-level jobs in these industries do not pay “family economic self-sufficiency” wages, but there are efforts underway to develop career ladders so that workers in these industries can advance to that goal.

Next, Ms. Sheridan offered advice on working with employers to develop career ladders within their industries. Career ladders and workplace learning opportunities have not typically existed for entry-level workers with low educational attainment. However, investing in entry-level workers and adding “rungs” to career ladders (i.e., intermediate jobs for workers to move up through) can create loyal employees and reduce turnover-related costs. Service Delivery Areas should help managers change the way they work with entry-level workers, pushing managers to give workers more freedom to make their own decisions and develop professionally, and to build in supports for workers trying to gain skills. Finally, Ms. Sheridan closed with two key points: (a) the need to build partnerships between employers, unions, community colleges, community-based organizations, and other training providers/funders, and (b) the need to build career ladders not only within individual companies but within industry sectors.

5.2.2 Shoreline Community College’s *Job Ladder Partnership*

Debra Hancock, Student Placement Manager/Instructor, Shoreline Community College (Seattle, Washington)

Ms. Hancock began by providing background information on Shoreline Community College. Shoreline, one of 34 professional technical colleges in Washington, serves 13,000 students annually. It offers credit and non-credit classes during the day and during evenings and weekends, and offers on-site child care from 8:00 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. on weekdays and from 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on weekends. Shoreline emphasizes close collaboration with students, community-based organizations, and employers, and internships/work-study jobs are key parts of its curriculum.

Shoreline Community College is one of the few community colleges that has integrated its career ladders into its welfare to work programs. Ms. Hancock then explained Shoreline’s *Job Ladder Partnership* initiative, which is geared specifically to TANF recipients and low-income workers. Funding for the program is the result of the commitment of the Governor to focus welfare reform on moving people out of poverty and not just welfare. The state’s community college system was seen as essential in accomplishing this goal. Toward this goal, the state made an initial transfer of \$17 million from the Department of Social and Health Services (TANF funds) to the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges in 1998. The funds were earmarked for developing programs to promote job advancement and wage progression. In 1999, an additional \$20 million was allocated for the program.

There are six community or technical colleges in the Seattle area that are part of the partnership, as well as about 50 area employers. The colleges create work and learning pathways in four occupational clusters--manufacturing, customer relations, information technology, and health

services--that lead to jobs with the partner employers. These courses are offered at different times at each college, so that students can always find a course that fits their schedule. An innovative feature of the *Job Ladder Partnership* is the “Career Pathway Passport.” This career planning tool includes information about the courses offered by the partner colleges, documents what skills/certificates the participant has gained, and lists available jobs at partner employers. Using the passport theme, the tool helps students map out a long-term plan for combining work and learning to advance their careers. It is both a career plan and a career transcript, allowing students to document progress to date and future goals and objectives.

One of the guiding principles of Shoreline’s *Job Ladder Partnership* is its effort to combine education and work as much as possible. Students begin the program with the twelve-week “Pre-Employment Training” (PET) component that combines life skills training, technical training (partly at the work site), and job placement. One-third to one-half of PET participants are also working in low-wage and PET courses are scheduled flexibly around their work hours. Getting PET graduates, who are placed in jobs related to their training, back to Shoreline for further training is a difficult task. Typically, some students are ready to return after six to twelve months in their new jobs, and work towards a degree with state tuition assistance (available to those working at least twenty hours per week). Shoreline tries to retain its connection to PET graduates through the Employer Exchange Network (an ongoing support group) and through mentoring opportunities that allow PET graduates to help out new PET participants.

Ms. Hancock provided statistics on the success of the *Job Ladder Partnership*. PET graduates’ average placement wage is \$10.29 per hour, compared to \$7.35 for other TANF recipients in Washington. 73% of PET participants complete the program; 76% of those are placed in jobs; and 80% of those retain some job for at least 6 months.

In closing, Ms. Hancock shared some lessons learned and challenges that Shoreline has encountered with the *Job Ladder Partnership*.

Lessons Learned- Job Ladder Partnership

- Adopt a job ladder pathway approach and be patient
- Identify roles and responsibilities of collaborating entities
- Develop a process for upgrade training with employer partners
- Make job ladders accessible to TANF and low-income workers

Challenges- Job Ladder Partnership

- Resources for ongoing retention services, especially non-TANF
- Additional inducements for enticing parents back to college after they get a job
- Students have increasingly more barriers and PET completion rates have dropped
- Development resources for automated tracking and career passport systems

For more information on Shoreline Community College's *Job Ladder Partnership*, or its other welfare to work initiatives, visit their web site at <http://intranet.shore.ctc.edu/intranetecdev/>.

5.2.3 Benjamin Healthcare Center Certified Nurses' Aides Career Ladder (Boston, Massachusetts)

Andrew Harris, Senior Vice President for Business Management

Mr. Harris first presented some background on the need for career ladders within the long-term care industry. He explained that although Certified Nurses' Aides (CNAs) are the backbone of the industry, and do the tough day-to-day work of caring for chronically ill and elderly patients, they are the least respected workers in the industry because they lack advanced nursing skills. Career ladders (offering the opportunity for better wages and more responsibilities) are necessary to entice more workers to enter and remain in the industry, because while the elderly population is growing, the population of young workers available to take care of them is declining.

Next Mr. Harris described the CNA career ladders program at the Benjamin Healthcare Center. To become a CNA 1, entry-level workers must complete the training and work experience requirements of the state certification process. BHC has then added two more rungs to the ladder: CNA 2 ("restorative nurses' aide") and CNA 3 ("life enhancement assistant"). These positions require further training and successful work experience, and each carries a raise of 30 cents per hour. BHC offers supportive services to entry-level workers, including a job readiness program for TANF recipients (funded by the Welfare-to-Work federal grant); case management; and ESL, ABE, and GED programs. BHC also offers training to its managers on how to build up entry-level workers' self-esteem.

Mr. Harris listed some results for entry-level workers, specifically TANF recipients who entered the Welfare-to-Work job readiness program. Between 1998 and 2000, there have been seven cycles of this short-term program. Seventy-two TANF recipients have participated, 60 have graduated, and 45 have been retained in their jobs. Successively smaller numbers have moved up to CNA 2 and CNA 3, and two have enrolled in community college (while working as CNA 3's) to become nurses.

The career ladder program has also had benefits for BHC, Mr. Harris explained. BHC has more job applicants, because word of the program has spread in the community. BHC has saved a considerable amount of money in recruitment costs, because of lower turnover (and some of these funds have been shifted to services and scholarships for CNAs) and the quality of care has improved.

Finally, Mr. Harris gave the SDAs advice on what they can do to build career ladders in long-term care facilities in their areas. They should educate themselves about the issues facing entry-level workers in long-term care that cause such high turnover in the industry. They should fund classroom training and on-the-job training for CNAs to become nurses. And they should foster collaboration between training providers and healthcare institutions.

Questions and Answers

There was time for only a few questions for the presenters:

Q: How does Shoreline provide child care on-site during non-traditional hours?

A: Shoreline hired its own child care staff to work evening and weekend shifts, but there was considerable resistance to this among workers.

Q: Why don't CNAs trained by BHC simply leave BHC for better-paying jobs once they have received their training?

A: Most CNAs who go through the career ladder program actually stay at BHC, because of their loyalty to a generous and supportive employer. In addition, BHC offers wages that are competitive with other long-term care facilities.

5.3 DISTANCE LEARNING

Roger Hooper, Manager of the Adult Basic Education Distance Learning Project at Massachusetts Corporation for Educational Telecommunications, introduced the session. Anne Holbrook, Director of the Home Education and Learning Program (HELP) at Bristol Community College, next explained her college's distance learning program. Then Mr. Hooper led a panel discussion of his Jobs and Learning Together (JOLT) proposal, along with Bill Norris of the Massachusetts Corporation for Educational Telecommunications, Sylvette Betancourt of the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency, and Marisol Reyes of Marken Properties, Inc.

5.3.1 Home Education and Learning Program (HELP)

Ann Holbrook, Director, Home Education and Learning Project, Bristol Community College

with

Richard Moore, Assistant Director and Pamela Chadwick, Primary Instructor

and

Diane Nadeau, Welfare Programs Coordinator, Bristol County Training Consortium

Ms. Holbrook described HELP, with a panel from Bristol Community College and the Bristol County Training Consortium (which funds HELP and refers all participants) available to answer questions. Ms. Holbrook began by setting out the basic components and goals of the program. HELP provides each participant with a computer and appropriate software applications; four hours of at-home tutoring per week; telephone and e-mail support between tutoring sessions; case management to deal with personal and logistical problems; and monthly support group meetings. HELP participants are current and former TANF recipients who are working at low-wage jobs and are motivated to build their skills so they can advance to better jobs (either within or outside of their current employers).

The tutors for the program all reside in the participants' community, and all have at least basic computer skills. Individual tutors have their own areas of expertise -- such as foreign languages, advanced computer skills, GED instruction, office administration, and human services -- and they are matched with participants according to participants' job goals.

Ms. Holbrook explained that HELP aims to boost participants' job prospects in a number of ways. Participants become computer literate, which is crucial to most jobs in the current economy; they learn to use the Internet to search for jobs; they improve their basic reading, writing, and math skills, through the adult basic education component of the program; and they may acquire GEDs or even move on to college-level distance learning courses. Besides helping participants advance to better jobs, HELP can have a positive effect on family literacy. Children as well as parents get a chance to use the computers and the educational software, and they see their parents studying and working.

The selection of participants, from the pool of working current and former TANF recipients who are receiving post-employment retention services from the Bristol County Training Consortium, is one of the key elements of HELP. Participants are not required to have any previous computer experience. Those who are chosen are individuals with the most motivation to study independently; the most barriers to advancement in the absence of HELP; and the willingness to have tutors come to their houses on a regular basis. Part of the selection process is a site assessment of the potential participant's home, to determine whether computer installation in the home is feasible; whether there will be sufficient quiet time in the home for tutoring sessions; and whether there are pets that may be an impediment to tutors.

Once a participant has been selected, HELP staff conduct a careful assessment and develop an Individual Education Plan. The assessment considers employment and educational history; computer skills, if any; support needs; student life and career goals; and the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE), if necessary. Individual Education Plans establish lengths of service time; general career and educational goals; and minimum computer proficiencies (e.g., orientation to personal computers, working with Windows 98 programs, using e-mail as a communication tool, and connecting to America's Job Bank/Register).

Questions and Answers

The HELP panel responded to a few questions at the end of their part of the distance learning session:

Q: What is the primary funding source for HELP?

A: Up to now, the Welfare-to-Work federal grant, through the Service Delivery Area (the Bristol County Training Consortium), has been the funding source. With the recent expansion of Welfare-to-Work eligibility, it should become easier to find eligible participants.

Q: How has Bristol Community College addressed the issues of potential theft of or damage to computers?

A: HELP actually gives, rather than loans, computers to participants. Once a participant has a computer, he or she can decide on individually how it will be used. Despite initial concerns, the program has found that participants take very good care of their computers and do not sell or give them away to other people.

5.3.2 **Jobs and Learning Together (JOLT) Panel Discussion**

Roger Hooper, Manager, Massachusetts Adult Basic Education Learning Project (MA ABE Project), Massachusetts Corporation for Educational Telecommunications (MCET)
with
Bill Norris, Director of Development, MCET
and
Sylvette Betancourt, Program Specialist, Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency
and
Marisol Reyes, Resident Services Coordinator, Marken Properties, Inc.

Mr. Hooper began by emphasizing that distance learning is not only the computers or other technology that enables people to learn outside of the traditional classroom setting, but also all the support services that are given to participants to help them complete their educational programs. He then explained that the Department of Education (DOE) Adult Basic Education Distance Learning Pilot Project is a collaboration of several entities: the four pilot sites (in Hyannis, Springfield, North Adams, and Lawrence) that are actually operating the programs; the Massachusetts Corporation for Educational Telecommunications (MCET), which coordinates the project and provides technology and technical assistance; and DOE, which funds the project.

Mr. Hooper stated that the basic principles of distance learning, which are being tried out in a few parts of the state through DOE's pilot project and through HELP, should be expanded to the rest of the state and translated more frequently into services for TANF recipients. He said his JOLT proposal is a vision of collaboration between technology, Adult Basic Education, and case management, intended to bring education and training directly into the homes or housing developments of low-income people/TANF recipients. Mr. Hooper also mentioned that "Workplace Essential Skills" -- which includes video, print, and Internet components -- is an excellent learning package on which to build a JOLT-like program (he showed a few minutes from a video section of this curriculum). Mr. Hooper then turned the floor over to other members of the panel. Mr. Norris, representing MCET, emphasized the importance of combining different learning modes -- such as text, video, e-mail -- to ensure that adult learners receive training that fits their schedules and learning styles. He also stressed that service providers should ensure that participants work with high-quality and up-to-date technology.

Ms. Betancourt and Ms. Reyes presented the perspective of housing agencies in the State that are interested in collaborating on JOLT-like programs. Ms. Betancourt explained that the

Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency (MHFA) is different than traditional public housing agencies, because it funds housing developments that are actually managed by private companies. MHFA funds over 300 housing developments across Massachusetts, which are managed by 66 separate companies. MHFA is committed to helping its residents advance towards better wages and self-sufficiency, so they can afford private housing and free up MHFA-funded units for needier families.

Ms. Reyes stated that she represents a company that manages an MHFA-funded development in Holyoke, Massachusetts (Jarvis House). In coordination with the local career center, her company developed a job readiness and placement program for Jarvis House residents. However, it found that lack of basic skills among residents remained an obstacle to job placement, and that traditional classroom education was not a good solution because (a) most residents do not have enough time to go to school, and (b) most residents want to work at their own pace. Distance learning appeared a good solution, and Ms. Reyes' company has installed computers with Internet access in Jarvis House.

Questions and Answers

The questions for Mr. Hooper's panel focused on what educational resources are available on the Internet for participants in distance learning programs. Mr. Hooper and Mr. Norris explained that there is currently no thorough inventory of the best Web sites, software packages, and on-line tutoring services, but that MCET sees the development of such an inventory as part of its mission. Audience members agreed that this inventory would be a useful resource for SDAs seeking to develop distance learning programs.

5.4 CLASSROOM/NONWORKPLACE MODELS

This session focused on post-employment training that is not offered at work. Discussions centered around how to encourage clients to engage in training during non-work hours; suggestions for partnering with employers; what training vendors can do to offer flexible hours and locations for training; how to accommodate client logistical needs such as child care and transportation; and strategies to address basic client workplace training needs such as language, culture, and "job readiness." John Rodgers, Riverside County Department of Social Services, moderated the session.

5.4.1. Massachusetts Institute for Health Careers

Dr. Mona Dorsinville-Phanor, President

The Massachusetts Institute for Health Careers (MIHC) is located in Boston, MA (Hyde Park). It is a school licensed by the MA Dept. of Education offering nursing assistant, pharmacy technician, phlebotomy, EKG, hospice care, bilingual medical terminology, and other health care seminars. It is located in a neighborhood at the crossroads of a large multilingual/multicultural population from all over the world that mostly comes from low socio-economic backgrounds.

The student body is made up of students who self-pay their own tuition (by installments) as well as those who are subsidized through Welfare-to-Work and TANF funds.

Dr. Dorsinville-Phanor began by engaging the group in a group singing session of “Alouette.” This was to demonstrate the creativity and diversity of the programs her school offers its students. Music and foreign language training is part of the school’s unique approach to learning. The school offers musical instrument lessons, chorus, and foreign language classes for the children of its students as an alternative to traditional on-site day care during courses. Choir lessons are also available in different languages for children while their parents are in class. They have found that this is an incentive for students to remain in the program for both the parents and the children. Eighty-percent of the student body do not speak English as their primary language. The school accommodates for them by providing courses in their native language first and then again in English.

The Institute uses variety of methods for its employed student body to both attract them to its programs and also to help them stay engaged until graduation day. It accommodates its students by offering courses during evenings and weekend hours. Satellite sessions are offered at churches, YWCAs, schools, municipal buildings, and public housing sites. Additional flexibility is provided for students in that some courses enable participants to progress at their own pace. Job readiness seminars are available that address topics such as interviewing, resumes, business attire, and cultural awareness (both work and national culture for immigrants). Graduation day is designed to be an exciting and moving day for its students. Employers are invited to attend with job application forms in hand; relatives are invited; a musical recital is featured in which the students’ children play the instruments they learned to play at the Institute; ethnic food is available from many countries; and student personal testimonies are heard.

The Institute actively markets its programs through churches, radio, television, mailings, and neighborhood flyers in stores and businesses. It offers weekly radio programs in different languages that promote the school. Job placement and job fairs are available at the beginning of training, during the training, and upon completion of the training. Working relationships have been formed with several area medical centers to promote job placement and job advancement efforts. Graduates have been placed in over fifty health-related employers throughout the greater Boston area. Most of these employers are nursing homes, hospitals, and home health care type agencies.

Ongoing encouragement is provided through a mentoring program featuring the involvement of former students. Many former students are now nurses, doctors, and pharmacists. Seventy-five percent of the Institute’s students become gainfully employed upon course completion, and fifteen percent continue to go on to college or another study program.

Questions and Answers

Q: How does the Institute develop relationships with employers and medical centers?

A: Aggressive marketing allows us to build relationships with employers. The success of our previous students in the workplace is a selling point to most employers. Cold calling to medical centers is a routine practice for the Institute.

Q: How do you respond to employers who want applicants who have graduated from courses taught in English only?

A: Students whose primary language is not English are offered their choice of courses in their native language first along with English classes to enhance their language needs. They then take the same courses in English.

Q: Are there any prerequisites to your courses (similar to Red Cross training courses)?

A: No. Students do not even have to have a high school diploma. Many students had successful medical careers in their own country prior to coming to the United States and only need cultural and language courses to be successful in the program.

5.4.2. Shoreline Community College (Seattle, Washington)

Debra Hancock, Student Placement Manager/Instructor

Ms. Hancock began by noting that much of Shoreline's success in the area of classroom/ non-workplace type training is due to its *Job Ladder Partnership* initiative that is designed to serve TANF recipients and low-income workers. (For more information on Shoreline and this program, refer back to Ms. Hancock's Section 5.2.2 in the *Career Ladders* workshop summaries section of this report.) She then went on to describe some of Shoreline's programs and strategies that are relevant to the topic of classroom/nonworkplace post-employment training models.

Shoreline's courses offered as part of its pre-employment training (PET) program set the foundation for future courses students take once they are working. The philosophy of this program is to make the training as similar to the workplace as possible. Life employability skills are incorporated along with technical training. Students are encouraged to create a job vision, set goals, and research the labor market related to their choice of careers. The program promotes responsibility of its student body by maintaining a strict absence and tardiness policy. Shoreline continues to develop its students (many who are low-income parents) once they become employed by offering a continuum of services through its state-funded WorkFirst programs. Students are encouraged to return for additional training and the college accommodates them as long as twelve months or more later.

Shoreline conducts an innovative employment strategy to assist its students in locating and as well as advancing in their jobs. The college has various well-integrated partnerships with local employers and maintains repetitive contact with its employer partners. Ample opportunities are provided for students and employers to meet and network through activities such as job fairs, a mid-term mixer, and even employer visits to the classroom.

Ms. Hancock then went reflected on how Shoreline has adapted its programs to the needs of its students. The college emphasizes community involvement in all of its activities. She joked that the school used to be known as the “Harvard on the Hill” years ago. Through a refocused emphasis on short term (twelve weeks) skills training, community involvement, and partnership building with employers, the college was able to change its image and position itself for future success in today’s job training market. The college’s willingness to change and become more flexible in its operations was one of its major key components for success. Shoreline now offers features such day and evening courses, distance learning options, on-site child care, and mentoring programs to meet the needs of its working students. Another example of Shoreline’s continuing ability to adapt to the needs of its students is its efforts to provide training to its learning disabled population. Many instructors having mental health backgrounds have recently been certified to teach students who have a learning disability.

Questions and Answers

There was limited time available for questions during this last session of the day.

Q: What types of funding does Shoreline College have?

A: The college receives grants from an array of agencies. Many of its programs serve TANF recipients and utilize state WorkFirst funding dollars.

Q: How does the college conduct recruiting?

A: Shoreline is actively involved in the community. Marketing brochures are distributed and its partnerships and relationships with local area employers helps it attract students to its programs.

The session moderator, Mr. Rodgers, then provided the group with a summary of similarities he noticed between both of the classroom/nonworkplace models programs featured. Some of these included flexible course scheduling, strong employer connections, a focus on the short-term goal of work and the long-term goal of a career, programs and incentives for children, different types of supportive training, and mentoring programs.

6. FINAL REMARKS

The *Massachusetts Post-Employment Training Workshop* proved to be an effective opportunity for SDA’s to learn more about programs both inside and outside of the State. Participants’ evaluation comments showed that they appreciated the workshop’s overall program design that began with a large group overview and then provided concurrent sessions. Participants also said they enjoyed the opportunity to hear about funding sources, gain new insights into post-employment training, and network with peers.

For more information about this event, contact Lorin Obler, Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance, at (617) 348-5144 or e-mail at Lorin_Obler@dta.state.ma.us. For information on the Welfare Peer Technical Assistance Network in general, contact Blake Austensen at (301) 270-0841, ext. 215 or e-mail baustensen@afyainc.com.

Appendix A

AGENDA

AGENDA

Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance/
Welfare Peer Technical Assistance Network

Post-Employment Training Workshop

Holiday Inn
Worcester, Massachusetts
Wednesday, October 11, 2000

All sessions are in the Colonial/Federal room, unless otherwise noted.

8:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.

Registration/Continental Breakfast

9:30 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.

Welcome, Introductions, and Workshop Overview

- *Edward Sanders-Bey, Assistant Commissioner for Policy and Program Management, Massachusetts Dept. of Transitional Assistance*
- *Janice Tatarka, Chief of Staff, Massachusetts Dept. of Labor and Workforce Development*
- *Blake Austensen, Deputy Project Director, Welfare Peer Technical Assistance Network, AFYA, Inc.*

9:45 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

National Overview of Post-Employment Training

Demetra Smith Nightingale, Principal Research Associate and Director, Welfare and Training Research Project, Urban Institute

11:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.

Break

11:15 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Post-Employment Training--One County's Experiences

John Rodgers, Deputy Director, Planning and Evaluation Division, Riverside County (California) Dept. of Social Services

12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Lunch

Concurrent Sessions

Session One:

1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Workplace Models

Moderator: Demetra Smith Nightingale, Urban Institute

- *Neil Silverston, President, WorkSource Staffing Partnership*
- *Andrea Perrault, Workplace Education Specialist, Massachusetts Dept. of Education (currently with Dept. of Labor and Workforce Development)*
- *Jane Shea, Workplace Education Director, Quinsigamond Community College/Adult Literacy Representative, Southern Worcester Workforce Investment Board*

or

1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Career Ladders (Adams/Hancock Room)

Moderator: Laurie Sheridan, Career Ladders Coordinator, Boston Workforce Development Coalition

- *Dr. Andrew Harris, Senior Vice President for Business Management, Benjamin Healthcare Center*
- *Debra Hancock, MA, VRC, Student Placement Manager/Instructor, Shoreline Community College (Washington State)*

2:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.

Break

Session Two:

2:45 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.

Distance Learning

Moderator: Roger Hooper, Manager, Massachusetts ABE Distance Learning Project, Massachusetts Corporation for Educational Telecommunications

- *Anne Holbrook, Director, Home Education and Learning Project, Bristol Community College*
- *Richard Moore, Assistant Director, Home Education and Learning Project, Bristol Community College*
- *Pamela Chadwick, Primary Instructor, Home Education and Learning Project, Bristol Community College*
- *Diane Nadeau, Welfare Programs Coordinator, Bristol County Training Consortium*
- *Sylvette Betancourt, Program Specialist, Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency*
- *Bill Norris, Director of Development, Massachusetts Corporation for Educational Telecommunications*
- *Marisol Reyes, Resident Services Coordinator, Marken Properties, Inc.*

or

2:45 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.

Classroom/Non-Workplace Models (Adams/Hancock Room)

Moderator: John Rodgers, Riverside Co. Dept. of Social Services

- *Dr. Mona Dorsinville-Phanor, President, Massachusetts Institute for Health Careers*
- *Debra Hancock, MA, VRC, Student Placement Manager/Instructor, Shoreline Community College (Washington State)*

4:15 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Evaluation/Wrap-Up

Blake Austensen, Deputy Project Director, Welfare Peer Technical Assistance Network, AFYA, Inc.

Appendix B
PARTICIPANT LIST

Welfare Peer Technical Assistance Network
Post-Employment Training Workshop

Holiday Inn
Worcester, MA
October 11, 2000

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| PARTICIPANT LIST |
|-------------------------|

SPEAKERS

Sylvette Betancourt

Community Services Specialist
Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency
1 Beacon St., 28th Floor
Boston, MA 02108
Phone: (617) 854-1076
Fax: (617) 854-1028
sbetancourt@mhfa.com

Mona Dorsinville-Phanor

President
Massachusetts Institute for Health
Careers
1166 River St.
Hyde Park, MA 02136
Phone: (617) 361-5910
Fax: (617) 361-1374

Pamela Chadwick

Primary Instructor
Home Education and Learning Project
Bristol Community College
777 Elsbree St.
Fall River, MA 02720
Phone: (508) 678-2811
Fax: (508) 730-3280

Debra Hancock

*Student Placement
Manager/Instructor*
Shoreline Community College
16101 Greenwood Ave. North
Shoreline, WA 98133
Phone: (206) 546-4570
Fax: (206) 546-6992
dhancock@ctc.edu

Andrew Harris

*Senior Vice President for Business
Management*

Benjamin Healthcare Center
120 Fisher Ave.
Boston, MA 02120
Phone: (617) 738-1500 x156
Fax: (617) 738-1995

Andrea Perrault

Career Center Manager
Dept. of Labor and Workforce
Development
1 Ashburton Place
Boston, MA 02108
Phone: (617) 727-6573 x102
Fax: (617) 727-1090

Anne Holbrook

Director

Home Education and Learning Project
Bristol Community College
777 Elsbree St.
Fall River, MA 02720
Phone: (508) 678-2811 x2290
Fax: (508) 730-3280

Richard Moore

Assistant Director

Home Education and Learning Project
Bristol Community College
777 Elsbree St.
Fall River, MA 02720
Phone: (508) 678-2811
Fax: (508) 730-3280

Diane Nadeau

Welfare Programs Coordinator

Bristol County SDA
446 N. Main St.
Fall River, MA 02720
Phone: (508) 730-5043
Fax: (617) 727-0569

Demetra Smith Nightingale

Principal Research

Associate/Director

Welfare and Training Research Project
Urban Institute
2100 M Street N.W.
Washington, DC 20037
Phone: (202) 261-5570
Fax: (202) 463-8522

Bill Norris

Director of Development

Mass Corporation for Educational
Telecommunications
1 Kendall Square, Bldg. 1500
Cambridge, MA 02135
Phone: (617) 252-5700
Fax: (617) 252-5718
billn@mcet.edu

Marisol Reyes

Director of Resident Services

Jarvis Heights
Marken Properties, Inc.
Gerard Way
Holyoke, MA 01040
Phone: (413) 538-9908
Fax: (413) 536-0454
jarvis@the-spa.com

John Rodgers

Deputy Director

Riverside County Dept. of Public Social Services

4060 County Circle Drive

Riverside, CA 92503

Phone: (909) 358-3-16

Fax: (909) 358-3036

jroddgers@co.riverside.ca.us

Janice Tatarka

Chief of Staff

Department of Labor and Workforce Development

1 Ashburton Place, Rm. 2112

Boston, MA 02108

Phone: (617) 727-6573 x103

Fax: (617) 727-1090

Edward Sanders-Bey

Assistant Commissioner for Policy and Program Management

Department of Transitional Assistance

600 Washington St.

Boston, MA 02111

Phone: (617) 348-8412

edward_sanders-bey@dta.state.ma.us

PARTICIPANTS

Julie Abreu

Case Manager

Southern Essex Office of Employment and

s St.

Salem, MA 01970

Phone: (978) 825-7459

Jane Shea

Director

Adult Basic and Occupational Training

Quinsigamond Community College

670 West Boylston St.

Worcester, MA 01606

Phone: (508) 854-4358

jshea@qcc.mass.edu

Nancy Ahmadifar

Welfare-to-Work Program

Coordinator

Office of Jobs and Community Services

43 Hawkins St.

Boston, MA 02114

Phone: (617) 918-5245

Fax: (617) 918-5299

nancy.ahmadifar.jcs@ci.boston.ma.us

Neil Silverston

President

WorkSource Staffing Partnership

1 Harvard St., Suite 200

Brookline, MA 02445

Phone: (617) 423-7256

Fax: (617) 232-2531

Don Anderson

Director

Workforce Central Worcester

44 Front St.

Worcester, MA 01605

Phone: (508) 799-8000

Fax: (508) 799-8012

E-mail: donand@splusnet.com

William Appleton
Vice President of Operations
Job Training and Employment
Corporation
77 High School Rd. Extension
Hyannis, MA 02601
Phone: (508) 862-6659

Patricia Auerbach
Executive Director
Bristol County Workforce Investment
Board
1 Government Center, 5th Floor
Fall River, MA 02722
Phone: (508) 675-1362
Fax: (508) 675-1166
bristolreb@aol.com

Donna Bellerase
Case Manager
City of Lowell Office of Employment
and Training
107 Merrimack St.
Lowell, MA 01852
Phone: (978) 452-6074
donna671@msn.com

Barbara Brennan
Career Specialist
Welfare to Work Program
CareerWorks
157 Centre St.
Brockton, MA 02302
Phone: (508) 513-3404
Fax: (508) 513-3450
bbrennan@donahue.umassp.edu

Fanny Bueno
*Welfare to Work Resource
Coordinator*
Southern Essex Office of Employment
and Training
35 Congress St.
Salem, MA 01970
Phone: (978) 825-7465
Fax: (978) 741-4869

Arlene Canavan
Senior Contract Administrator
Office of Jobs and Community Services
43 Hawkins St.
Boston, MA 02114
Phone: (617) 918-5243
Fax: (617) 918-5299
arlene.canavan.jcs@ci.boston.ma.us

Cassandra Carey
Program Manager
Employment Services Program
Department of Transitional Assistance
600 Washington St.
Boston, MA 02111
Phone: (617) 348-5372
Fax: (617) 727-9153
cassandra_carey@dta.state.ma.us

Arthur Chilingirian
Program Manager
Welfare-to-Work
Corporation for Business, Work, and
Learning
529 Main St., Suite 110
Boston, MA 02129
Phone: (617) 727-8158
Fax: (617) 242-7660

Richard Claytor*Director*

Responsible Fatherhood Programs
Department of Revenue, Child Support
Enforcement
51 Sleeper St.
Boston, MA 02210
Phone: (617) 626-4171
Fax: (617) 626-4169
richard.claytor@state.ma.us

Ross Comeau*Senior Planner*

Department of Training and
Development
Bay State Building, 6th Floor
11 Lawrence St.
Lawrence, MA 01840
Phone: (617) 683-9963
rcomeau@detma.org

Neida Contreras*Case Manager*

Employment and Training Resources
110 Mt. Wayte Ave.
Framingham, MA 01702
Phone: (508) 661-6614
ncontreras@detma.org

Elida Crowley*Contract Manager*

Employment Services Program
Department of Transitional Assistance
600 Washington St.
Boston, MA 02111
Phone: (617) 348-5958
Fax: (617) 727-9153
elida_crowley@dta.state.ma.us

Kevin Crowley*Operations Manager*

Workforce Central
44 Front St.
Worcester, MA 01608
Phone: (508) 799-1600
Fax: (508) 799-1628

Isabel DaSilva*Career Services Manager*

New Directions/Greater New Bedford
Career Center
618 Acushnet Ave.
New Bedford, MA 02740
Phone: (508) 990-4157
Fax: (508) 990-4080
idasilva@detma.org

Susan Desmond*Federal Representative*

United State Dept. of Labor--Region 1
John F. Kennedy Federal Building
Boston, MA 02204
Phone: (617) 565-3929
Fax: (617) 565-2229
desmonds@doleta.gov

Kristina Dower*President*

Job Training and Employment
Corporation
297 North St., Suite 322
Hyannis, MA 02601
Phone: (508) 790-0400
Fax: (508) 790-0964
jtecked@aol.com

Maria Duca*Deputy Director*Metro South/West Employment and
Training Administration

275 Prospect St.

Norwood, MA 02062

Phone: (781) 769-4130

Fax: (781) 551-9648

mduca@detma.org**Jeffrey Gabriel***Planner*Southern Essex Workforce Investment
Board

70 Washington St., Suite 314

Salem, MA 01970

Phone: (978) 741-3805

Fax: (978) 741-3809

jeffgab@shore.net**Peter Espiefs***Welfare-to-Work Case Manager*

Career Source

185 Alewife Brook Parkway

Cambridge, MA 02138

Phone: (617) 661-7867

pespiefs@detma.org**Melanie Gelaznik***Manager of Programs*

Berkshire Works

184 North St.

Pittsfield, MA 01201

Phone: (413) 499-2220

Fax: (413) 499-0503

mgelaznik@btep.org**Marilyn Foster***DTA Programs Manager*Southern Essex Office of Employment
and

Training

35 Congress St.

Salem, MA 01970

Phone: (978) 825-7363

mfoster@detma.org**Linda Greenbush***Welfare to Work Field Rep.*

Berkshire Works

184 North St.

Pittsfield, MA 01201

Phone: (413) 499-2220 x159

Fax: (413) 499-0503

lgreenbush@btep.org**Pamala Frye***Case Manager*

Montachusett Opportunity Council

430 Main St.

Fitchburg, MA 01420

Phone: (978) 343-5706

Fax: (978) 343-2935

Anita Harris*Program Manager*

Employment Services Program

Department of Transitional Assistance

600 Washington St.

Boston, MA 02111

Phone: (617) 348-5820

Fax: (617) 727-9153

anita_harris@dta.state.ma.us

Constance Harris
Assistant Director
Employment Services Program
Department of Transitional Assistance
600 Washington St.
Boston, MA 02111
Phone: (617) 348-5830
Fax: (617) 7270-9153
constance_harris@dtma.state.ma.us

Joe Heisler
Program Manager
Employment Services Program
Department of Transitional Assistance
600 Washington St.
Boston, MA 02111
Phone: (617) 348-5831
Fax: (617) 727-9153
joe_heisler@dtma.state.ma.us

Roger Hooper
Manager
ABE Distance Learning Project
Mass. Corporation for Educational
Telecommunications
1 Kendall Square, Bldg. 1500
Cambridge, MA 02139
Phone: (617) 252-5700 x726
Fax: (617) 252-5718
roger@mcet.edu

Adam Jarvis
Program Assistant
Jump Start Program, Holyoke
Community College
303 Homestead Ave.
Holyoke, MA 01040
Phone: (413) 552-2085
Fax: (413) 552-2745
ajarvis@hcc.mass.edu

Linda Jeneski
SDA/DTA Operations Manager
Workforce Central
9 Walnut St., 4th Floor
Worcester, MA 01608
Phone: (508) 767-3198

Peter Kamberelis
Director/Operations Manager
Valley Works Career Center
11 Lawrence St.
Lawrence, MA 01840
Phone: (978) 683-9963
pkamberelis@detma.org

Theresa Kennedy
Case Manager
Employment Resources, Incorporated
185 Alewife Brook Parkway
Cambridge, MA 02138
Phone: (617) 661-7867
tkennedy@detma.org

Robin Kimbrough
Assessment Coordinator
Brockton Area Private Industry Council
4 Main St.
Brockton, MA 02301
Phone: (508) 584-1888 x22
Fax: (508) 580-1930

Diane Lally
Program Manager
Department of Transitional Assistance
600 Washington St.
Boston, MA 02111
Phone: (617) 348-5837
Fax: (617) 727-9153

Pamela LeFebvre
DTA Coordinator
Post-Placement Services
City of Lowell Office of Employment
and Training
18 John St.
Lowell, MA 01852
Phone: (978) 446-2485
Fax: (978) 446-2535

Maria Medina
Case Manager
Career Center of Lowell
18 John St.
Lowell, MA 01852
Phone: (978) 446-2462
Fax: (978) 459-2111

Roger Neild
Program Manager
Employment Services Program
Department of Transitional Assistance
600 Washington St.
Boston, MA 02111
Phone: (617) 348-5957
Fax: (617) 727-9153
roger_neild@dta.state.ma.us

Carla Normandin
*Welfare-to-Work Coordinator/
Case Manager*
Employment and Training Resources
110 Mount Wayte Ave.
Framingham, MA 01702
Phone: (508) 661-6651
Fax: (508) 661-6674
cnormandin@detma.org

Monica Nou
*Welfare-to-Work/Post-Placement
Services Counselor*
Lowell Office of Employment and
Training
107 Merrimack St.
Lowell, MA 01852
Phone: (978) 459-2336

Lorin Obler
Welfare-to-Work Coordinator
Department of Transitional Assistance
600 Washington St.
Boston, MA 02111
Phone: (617) 348-5144
Fax: (617) 727-9153
lorin_obler@dta.state.ma.us

Alysia Ordway
Program Coordinator
Boston Private Industry Council
2 Oliver St.
Boston, MA 02109
Phone: (617) 488-1309
Fax: (617) 423-1041
aordway@bostonpic.org

Roberta Petrocelli
Post Placement Casemanager
Metro South/West Employment and
Training Administration
PO Box 740
Norwood, MA 02062
Phone: (781) 969-4120

Willard Pinn*Director*

YMCA of Greater Boston, Training, Inc.
294 Washington St.
Boston, MA 02108
Phone: (617) 542-1800
Fax: (617) 542-1811
wpinn@ymcaboston.org

Steve Raymond*Program Director*

Franklin/Hampshire Career Center
1 Arch Place
Greenfield, MA 01301
Phone: (413) 774-2099
Fax: (413) 784-1765

Carolyn Reid*WPP Job Developer/Retention
Specialist*

Mass Job Training
391 Main St.
Fitchburg, MA 01420
Phone: (978) 343-4452
Fax: (978) 345-2647

Theresa Romanovitch*Director*

Special Projects
Massachusetts Community Colleges
Executive Office
294 Washington St.
Boston, MA 02108
Phone: (617) 542-2911
Fax: (617) 542-2904
romanmcc@aol.com

Al Roy*Vice President*

Human Services/Employer Services
Job Training and Employment
Corporation
77 High School Rd. Extension
Hyannis, MA 02601
Phone: (508) 862-6667
Fax: (508) 771-6418
aroy@detma.org

Judy Selesnick*Executive Director*

Job Training Partnership Association
c/o North Shore Career Center
PO Box 5060
199 Rosewood Dr.
Danvers, MA 01923
Phone: (978) 762-0007
Fax: (978) 762-0008

Laurie Sheridan*Career Ladders Coordinator*

Boston Workforce Development
Coalition
26 West St.
Boston, MA 02111
Phone: (617) 542-7442
Fax: (617) 542-7452
lrsheridan@hotmail.com

Nancy Speller*Career Service Advisor*

Valley Works Career Center
11 Lawrence St.
Lawrence, MA 01841
Phone: (978) 683-4202
nspel@detma.org

Shai Spinola-Ramos

Supervisor

Welfare-to-Work/Post-Employment
Greater New Bedford Career Center
618 Acushnet Ave.
New Bedford, MA 02740
Phone: (508) 990-4121
Fax: (508) 990-4080
sspinola-ramos@detma.org

Sarah Wing

Career Center Counselor

Franklin/Hampshire Career Center
1 Arch Place
Greenfield, MA 01301
Phone: (413) 774-3182
Fax: (413) 784-1765
swing@detma.org

Sheryn Stover

Employment Specialist

Employment Links, Inc.
100 Erdman Way
Leominster, MA 01453
Phone: (978) 665-8744
Fax: (978) 345-0935
sstover@detma.org

Eleanor Wroblewski

Vice President of Operations

New Directions
181 Hillman St.
New Bedford, MA 02740
Phone: (508) 961-3107
Fax: (508) 979-1791
ewrob@detma.org

Mary Terry

Executive Director

Employment Links, Inc.
100 Erdman Way
Leominster, MA 01453
Phone: (978) 534-1481
Fax: (978) 534-1375
mterry@detma.org

Jacqueline Yancey

Marketing Outreach

Department of Training and
Development
11 Lawrence St.
Lawrence, MA 01841
Phone: (978) 683-4202
jyanc@detma.org

Lauriane Westberg

Post Placement Coordinator

Brockton Area Private Industry Council
4 Main St.
Brockton, MA 02301
Phone: (508) 584-1888
Fax: (508) 580-1930

Joyce Young

Program Director

South Coastal Workforce Investment
Board
1431 Hancock St.
Quincy, MA 02169
Phone: (781) 745-4020
Fax: (781) 328-0215
jyoung@quincycareercenter.org

Phyllis White

Case Manager/Counselor

Franklin/Hampshire Career Center
1 Arch Place
Greenfield, MA 01301
Phone: (413) 774-3182

Susan Zall

Site Manager

Cambridge Career Source
185 Alewife Brook Parkway
Cambridge, MA 02138
Phone: (617) 661-7867
szall@detma.org

Elizabeth Zarrella

Organizing Director

MassFESS
Women's Educational and Industrial Union
356 Boylston St.
Boston, MA 02116
Phone: (617) 536-5651
Fax: (617) 247-8826
EZarrella@weiu.org

CONTRACT STAFF

Blake Austensen

Deputy Project Director

Welfare Peer Technical Assistance
Network
AFYA, Inc.
6930 Carroll Ave., Suite 820
Takoma Park, MD 20912
Phone: (301) 270-0841
Fax: (301) 270-3441
baustensen@aftainc.com