

**EMPLOYER AND LABOR REPRESENTATIVE FOCUS GROUP
60 MINUTES**

**INTRODUCTION - 10 minutes
(include sign-in sheet)**

Welcome! My name is _____ and I will be your moderator for this focus group.

Thank you for agreeing to be a part of our focus group. Your participation today will provide us with the opportunity to gather information about adult and dislocated worker needs related to work and preparation for careers in _____ County.

Although some of you may know each other, we would like each of you to introduce yourselves. Please tell us your name and your company. This will help me as a moderator of the focus group and our observer _____, get to know you.

Social Policy Research Associates is in the process of developing a community asset investment portfolio for the Workforce Investment Boards of Monterey, Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties. This process involves conducting a needs assessment, an inventory of services, and a gap analysis. Your opinion is very important to us and the Board because it will help shape how career-related services are provided in this county.

As part of the needs assessment, we are conducting focus groups like this one in each county to gather feedback from private sector employers and labor representatives like yourselves to help Workforce Investment Boards understand workforce development needs. To do this, we have developed a list of questions addressing issues related to the needs of employers and workers in _____ County.

During the next 60 minutes, we will give each of you time to answer all of our questions. There are no right or wrong answers. Each of you has equally valuable information and thoughts that we are very interested in hearing. I would encourage you to be as open and honest during the meeting as you possibly can.

The purpose of our observers is to record what you say. We don't want to miss any of your ideas. In addition to taking notes, we will be recording this session. I want to assure you that all the information gathered at this meeting will be kept confidential and anonymous. The tapes will not be used to identify who said what, but to record all the ideas from the discussion.

Because our time is limited during this session, my role as moderator is to make certain that all topics are covered and to move the discussion along, while ensuring that everyone has a chance to participate in the discussion. As moderator, I want to review the guidelines for participating in a focus group:

- Give priority to those who have not spoken.
- Speak briefly and often.
- Speak one at a time, not on top of each other.

- Be open and honest.
- Be specific. Talk from your own experiences.
- There are no right or wrong answers. All responses are valid.

Again, the focus group is scheduled to last approximately 60 minutes. Are there any questions about what we are going to do today or about anything that I have said? Okay, let's turn on the tape and begin our discussion.

MODERATOR'S QUESTIONS FOR EMPLOYER AND LABOR REPRESENTATIVE FOCUS GROUP

I. OVERALL LABOR MARKET AND HIRING PRACTICES

- What is the status of your industry? Is it growing?
- What competitive pressures do you face?
- How are you achieving competitive advantage?
- What occupations and industries have or will have labor shortages?
 - How could these labor shortages be alleviated?
- How do you find most of your workers?
- What skills deficiencies do you see in:
 - Entry-level workers?
 - Youth?
 - Current employees?
- Are these skills deficiencies primarily general work readiness, basic skills, or specific occupational skills?
- What are the most critical skills for:
 - Adult workers?
 - Youth workers?
- Are computer skills particularly important? Which ones?
- Which of these skills are most difficult to find?
- For entry level workers, do you prefer:
 - Workers who have received occupational training or;
 - Workers who have strong basic skills so you can train them yourself?
- Do you hire young people? Why or why not?

II. YOUTH AND ADULT EMPLOYMENT AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

- How well is the education system preparing youth for careers?
 - How could the system do a better job of preparing youth for careers?

- What is needed to help people find and keep jobs or move up in their careers:
 - Adults?
 - Youth?
- Is there a shortage of specific training programs to meet labor market needs?
 - For adults?
 - For youth?

III. EMPLOYER NEEDS

- Do you feel that you can fulfill your business goals here in _____ County? Why or why not?
 - If not, are you considering re-locating? Where?
 - Are there any workforce or staffing-related barriers?
 - Is the transportation system a problem? Where?
 - Is the high cost of housing a problem? Where?
 - Do you think these barriers are keeping other businesses from locating or expanding here?
- What are your needs related to staffing and training of employees?
- Do you need help upgrading the skills of your workers? What kind of assistance would be useful?
- Do you face significant turnover problems? Why?
- How are you attracting or retaining workers?
 - What would help you in this area?

IV. EMPLOYMENT AND STAFFING SERVICES

- Who has used staffing or training services in _____ County? What services did you use? (examples: EDD services, One-Stop Career Center Services)
- What is your opinion of the services you received?
 - Did they meet your staffing or training needs?
 - What was the best part of your experience?
 - What would you change if you could?
 - Have you needed any additional services that were not available?
 - Were there any services you would have liked to use but could not access?
- If you have not used staffing or training services, why or why not?
 - Are they difficult to access or use? How could they be easier to access?
 - Do they lack the services you need? What services would be more useful?

- What would it take for you use staffing or training services?
- Overall, what is your opinion of services to assist employers in meeting their staffing and personnel needs in _____ County?
 - Can you find the services you need?
- What do you think of services to assist workers in finding and keeping jobs and with career advancement?
 - Are the services workers and job seekers need available?
- What do you think of services to assist youth in finding jobs and preparing for careers?
 - Are the services workers and job seekers need available?

V. CONCLUSION

- Is there anything else anyone would like to add?
- Is there anything we could have done to improve this focus group?