

Aging Worker Initiative: Strategies for Regional Talent Development

Quad Area Community Action Agency, Inc.



Grantee: Quad Area Community Action Agency, Inc. (Louisiana)

Industry Focus: Healthcare/Science, Construction/Skilled Labor, Energy, Transportation, Architecture/Engineering, and Financial and Administrative Office Support

Location of Grant Activities: Ascension, Livingston, East Feliciana, West Feliciana, St. Helena, Tangipahoa, and Washington Parishes in Louisiana

Key Partners: LWI20 Job Services; LWI20 Career Solutions; St. Amant Academy; Florida Parishes Louisiana Technical College; Ruth Cook Computer and Medical Training School; Turnaround Adult Education; Ferrara Fire; Gainey's Concrete; Sanderson Farms; King Barber Construction Company; Young Electrical and Air-Conditioning; Senior Community Service Employment Program; Foster Grandparents; Retired Senior Volunteer Program; District Attorneys Sam D'Aquila and Scott Perilloux; Parish Sheriff Department; Make-A-Start; Office of Mental Health; Office of Addictive Disorders; Harvest Family Church; Office of Elderly Protection; Frances Special Services, My Brother's Keeper; Daily Star; Channel 17.

Grant Amount: \$1,000,000

Leveraged Funds: \$321,000

Challenge: There is not currently a focused, organized, method of recruiting older workers in this region. Because of the impact of Hurricane Katrina, a mismatch exists between qualified labor supply and labor demands. Results from a local independent survey show that eighty-percent of older workers in this region need to increase their skills to keep pace with technology, but have limited access to training; eight-percent need flexible work arrangements due to health problems and disabilities; and ninety-percent lack the confidence to search for a new position.

Addressing the Challenge: The *SilverForce* project will create a talent development model that recognizes older workers as a valuable labor pool, and includes employment and training strategies to retain and/or connect them to high-growth, high-demand industries. The model will:

- Expand and increase skill-development opportunities for older workers in high-growth, high-demand industries;
- Cultivate career opportunities with employers providing flexible work arrangements;
- Increase support services for job search, placement and retention through case management;
- Increase microenterprise and microenterprise education opportunities;
- Advocate against discrimination of older adults in the workforce through public awareness and legal advice.

Projected Outcomes:

- 500 older workers will be served by the project annually with 300 completing education/training activities each year.
- 270 older workers who complete their education/training activities will enter employment annually.
- A *High-Growth Career Information Handbook* will be developed.
- Six applied learning and clinical experiences, internships, and simulations will be developed and implemented.

