

Reemployment Services Performance Report

State: Oklahoma

Date: September 25, 2004

The Oklahoma Employment Security Commission (OESC) has continued to expend the Reemployment Services Grant fund this year to maintain the Job Skills Workshop program. The availability of this grant has allowed OESC to utilize these specific positions designated as Job Skills Workshop Presenters to conduct enhanced Job Skills workshops across the state. Presenters provide quality information through Job Skills workshops not only in the metro areas but the rural areas as well. The presenters are very knowledgeable and qualified individuals. Among them are a retired assistant school superintendent and a retired high school principal. Five are degreed professionals, with four having veteran status. They are a versatile group that meets quarterly to identify any problems or best practices that could benefit them in their own presentations. The presenters are stationed in the following areas across the state, Oklahoma City Metropolitan Area, Tulsa Metropolitan Area, Southeast, Northern and Southwest

These presenters work with the Workforce Center staff to insure that local communities interests and needs are met within the workshop. Workshop presenters work closely with workforce center staff and partners devising methods for expanding job and training opportunities for claimants. Feedback from the individuals in the workshops is an integral part of our learning process as it alerts staff to any problems or needed changes. One such needed change caused a committee comprised of the presenters and selected staff from the field to come together this year to revise the Workshop Manual.

The availability of the workshops for the claimants has allowed staff time to provide intensive one-on-one staff assisted job search activities in the individual workforce centers. The activities and/or services provided in the Centers are; career counseling, testing, labor market information, resume assistance, job development and referral to jobs. Workforce center management and staff evaluate their individual situations in the workforce centers throughout the year to ensure that existing policies and procedures are understood and to identify best practices for providing reemployment services. Continuous improvement is a commitment the local areas strive to attain. The quality and quantity of reemployment services given to the claimants should result in the claimants achieving positive outcomes.

The Workforce Centers in Oklahoma are comprised of staff from Wagner-Peyser, WIA and a variety of agencies partnering to provide claimants a multitude of seamless services. Claimants are selected for Profiling and sent a call-in notice directing their attendance at an Orientation Session. Each workforce center's room and staff capacity determines the number of claimants called in to participate in the Orientation sessions. Workforce Center staff are aware that early intervention is key in moving claimants successfully back into the labor market. This Orientation session is for a preliminary assessment of their marketable job skills, their likelihood to return to the workforce or their need for additional training/retraining. Claimants identified in Orientation sessions, who are not being referred to training, are scheduled to attend a Job Skills Workshop. Providing effective reemployment services is a goal of each center, and the workforce staff and the presenters interact weekly to ensure that the claimant's needs are identified and met.

While reviewing this program, we examined whether this program has improved the quality and quantity of the services that are being provided to the claimants in our state. Through customer feedback the state is satisfied that the Job Skills Workshop program is meeting the needs of the communities. Each and every workshop that is presented has feedback from the participants. From the information provided in these comments, the program is continuing to improve. Claimants across the state are being exposed to new and innovative ways of returning to the labor market. This is a service that the state feels benefits each and every claimant that attends.

Feedback has continued to show claimants who are able to receive more intensive one-on-one help are more successful.

Positive feedback comments received from the Workshops:

- Individuals are made aware of new and existing job search materials.
- Individuals identify how to market their abilities.
- Individuals gain valuable insights and ideas.
- Individuals gain hope
- Individuals learn to become more confident.

Common success stories:

Claremore participant: "I feel like I'm better prepared now to get a great job."

Muskogee participant: "The program was very helpful. I was able to tweak my resume into something perspective employers would look at."

Pryor participant: "I especially liked the computer-projector. I'm a visual learner. Just by watching the presenter point and click, I could negotiate the sites she introduced us to easily. That was very helpful. There were many resources used (workbook, the local person to talk about jobs in the area) as well as visual aids. I found the "mock" interview helpful. I enjoyed the day."

A central Oklahoma participant: "Thanks for your presentation today, it was very valuable. As part of my severance package I received one month of training from Right Management Consultants in OKC on the very things you were able to present in 6 hours. Your presentation stressed some of the exact same things that their program does and even provided me with additional tips. Again, it was well worth my time to attend today and I felt I had gleaned some useful interviewing skills."

Some individuals feel compelled to discuss privately how the workshop impacted them. One young lady described how her sister labeled her a GED candidate with "people like you are a dime a dozen! You will never succeed in anything." She felt that the workshop resulted for her in new ideas, new resources, and new contacts through the local workforce centers as well as a new motivation that she could accomplish anything she set her mind to.

One senior citizen indicated how she was having difficulty just getting out of bed each day, reluctant to face yet another day of rejection. After discussions with the presenter and a local workforce staff person about contacts and web addresses available, she left the workshop with a renewed sense of well being.

Our goal was to raise our percentage of claimants receiving job search activities to 34%. We exceeded that measure.

- Program year 2002, the percentage of claimants receiving job search activities was 31%.
- Program year 2003, the percentage of claimants receiving job search activities was 43%. This is a 40% increase in the claimants to job search activities ratio.

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