



# Retooling Reemployment: WOLIP and Post WOLIP

Region 2 Technical Assistance Forum  
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**Michael Lawrence, Corporation for a Skilled Workforce**  
**Heather McKay, Center for Women and Work, Rutgers**  
**University**

# Online Learning in the Workforce Development System

- Single Mothers Project – NJ
- Sloan Center on Innovative Training and Workforce Development, ITWD
- Prison Project – NJ
- Technology based learning - an approved mode of training delivery

# Elements of the WOLIP

- Creation of a web based portal to host online learning courses customized to individual states' workforce development high demand occupations
- Each state was responsible for identifying its most important job areas and educational needs not already adequately supported by in-state, traditional delivery institutions

# Elements of the Project Cont.

- Each developed a campaign to promote the portal, online offerings, and financial aid
- Facilitate access to federal and state Department of Labor funds to support working adults and new workers

# Partners in the Project

- Rutgers Center for Women and Work
- Sloan Foundation
- Penn State University Office of Outreach / Corporation for a Skilled Workforce
- US Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration
- Sloan Consortium/Southern Region Education Board
- Colorado, Maine, Mississippi, and Pennsylvania

# Workforce Online Learning Information Portal

Workforce Online Learning Information Portal Search - Windows Internet Explorer

http://wolip.sreb.org/SearchResults.aspx

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Workforce Online Learning Information Portal Search

Workforce Online Learning

*New skills for a new economy.*

## Pennsylvania • High Priority: Energy – Green

Workforce Development Courses (Approved for State Support)

Course	Institution	Course Number	Course Level	Delivery Method	Discipline	Start Date	Open Start Date
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Workforce Development Programs (Approved for State Support)

Program	Degree Type	Institution	Program Level	Delivery Method	Discipline	Application Deadline
<a href="#">Biofuel Production Operations</a>	Certificate	Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania	Workforce Development/Training	Online	Alternative Fuel Vehicle Technology/Technicians	Open
<a href="#">Building Analyst Quick Start Program (BPI BA Certification)</a>	Certificate	Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania	Workforce Development/Training	Online	Architecture and Related Services, Other	Open
<a href="#">Home Inspection Certificate</a>	Certificate	Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania	Workforce Development/Training	Online	Building Inspectors including "Green"	Open

Done Internet 100%

# Implementation of WOLIP

- Implementation differed by state: Maine, Mississippi, Colorado, Pennsylvania

Method of implementation

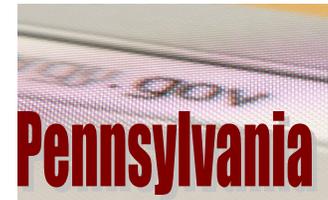
State culture

State focus

Use of the portal

# Student Access to Online Learning

**A**



**B**

State  
Info/Links

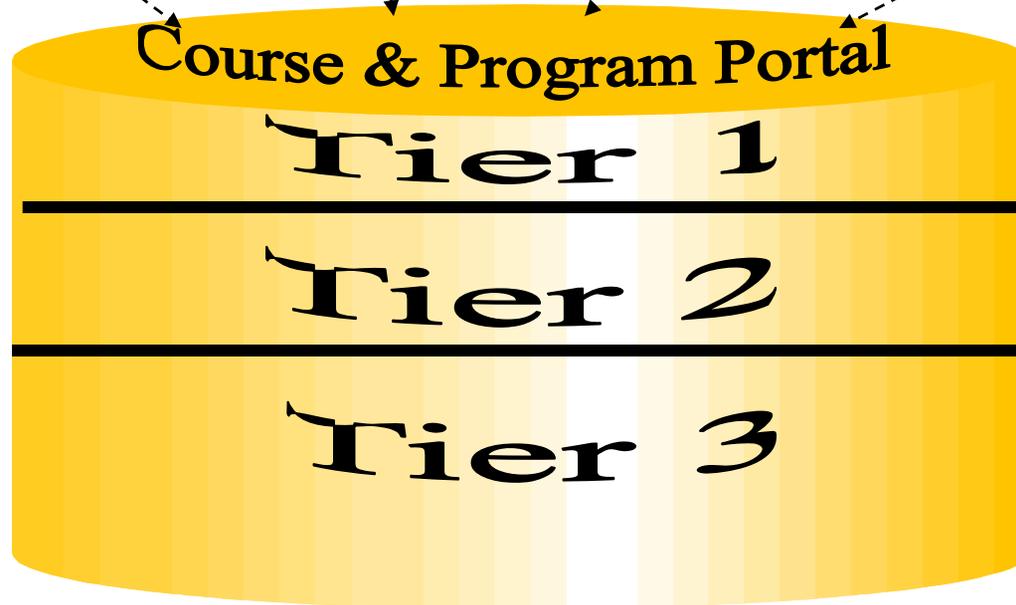
State  
Info/Links

State  
Info/Links

State  
Info/Links

**C**

Click on Course/Program Search Button



**E**

Move to Course/Program Provider or return to State Portal

# Pennsylvania Case Study

- The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania participated in the WOLIP project with the primary goal of bringing a broader range of education and training options and certifications to rural areas in the state.
- Pennsylvania sought to use WOLIP to ensure that both incumbent and dislocated workers in rural regions were prepared for jobs in local high demand industries. Project was run through WIBs.

## Industry partnerships

- Healthcare
- Manufacturing
- Plastics
- Interest in energy (natural gas)

# Pennsylvania and the Recession

- 2010 US Census – population of 13 million – 25% live in urban areas.
- Rural PA does not have a good educational infrastructure
- As of May\_2011, Pennsylvania's unemployment rate was 7.4% - 33rd highest rate in the United States.
- High school graduate with no college and those without a high school diploma make-up the largest unemployed group.
- Current employment rate for this group is over 20%
- Unemployment among college degree holders is below 5%.

# PA and WOLIP

- WOLIP program began in February of 2009.
- Pennsylvania was the first state to finish the WOLIP portal demonstration project, expending all project funds by December 31, 2010.
- Three rural Workforce Investment Areas: Central WIA, North Central WIA, and the Northern Tier WIA.

# WOLIP Funding in PA

- Pennsylvania was awarded \$500,000 by USDOL, ETA for this demonstration project.
- These funds were divided equally among all three local areas. Each received \$150,000 for training and a further \$15,000 for administration costs.
- The Department of Labor and Industry in Harrisburg also retained \$5,000 for administration costs.
- An initial state match was provided by PA - Central WIB received \$100,000 and North Central WIB and Northern Tier WIB each received \$50,000.
- PA invested a further \$820,000 in funding an expansion of WOLIP in 2010 and 2011. All three WIBs involved in the initial WOLIP demonstration project received funds as well as two other areas.
- Central WIB - \$350,000, North Central WIB - \$160,000, and Northern Tier WIB - \$160,000. Two additional: Northwest WIB - \$75,000, and Southern Alleghenies WIB - \$75,000.
- As of December 2010, Pennsylvania had invested \$1,020,000 towards the expansion and use of online learning as a training tool within the state.

# Participant Outcomes

- Total – 739 people were trained
- North Central trained 342 workers as of December 2010 for at least 13 different companies.
- As of December 2010, 274 incumbent workers had been trained in the region.
- As of December 2010 the region was able to train 103 employees at 23 different companies.
- Remainder of those trained were dislocated workers

# Findings: State Perspective

- Great commitment to online learning within states – workforce board buy-in

*“Now that we have done it [online learning] we don’t want it to go away. I would hate for it to go away.”*

- Good case management is crucial to success

- Some states – cost savings

- Online learning has helped alleviate problems in state workforce development education delivery

Weak educational infrastructure

Rural nature

Coursework that cannot be found in-state

# Participant Findings

- Answer for many during the recession

*“I have been unemployed for a good year, year and a half, because you’re not going to find employment here in the valley. It’s really tough....I had just finished my unemployment [insurance] at the time...and heard about the program. .Basically, what I was doing was trying to keep up with the technology, and being unemployed, you have to do something or you lose it.....Technology was changing and I didn’t want to fall behind.”* Woman, Colorado

# Participant Findings

- Online nature of the program was important - offers flexibility in time and space to learners

*“I can do it anytime, anywhere that I have access to a computer.”* Woman,  
CO

*“If production picks up [at work], I can be called back. If I am in a classroom I can't. If I had signed up for a classroom course, and gotten a call back, ...signing up would have been a waste of [tuition] money.”*  
Woman, PA

*“If my kids were older and all of the house, I could go back to [traditional] school and not worry about things at home. But now, I would be sitting there in a classroom worried about ‘oh I should be doing this or that-- right now --at home for my family’”* Woman, Maine

# Participants Findings Cont.

- Online learning requires self-discipline

*“You have to be disciplined. My goal is to have the medical billing certificate...before July 14<sup>th</sup>, which is my daughter’s birthday...I try to get on the computer every day so that I make sure I do something...I want to make sure I am on top of things...I have dates that I study. I have a planner and...Friday, Saturday and Monday are my days to do my classwork.” MS, woman*

- Dollars helped people return to school

*“I wouldn’t have done it [without the scholarship] program because I really don’t have the money right now. At my wife’s job, they cut her back to 3 ½ hours a day in the school district, so that kind of hurt.” Man, Maine*

- Saves money – transportation and childcare costs

*“You know [online classes] save gas; for me it would be 30 miles back and forth going to a school; and it helps since the[traditional] classes you take are never scheduled one right after the other...so it’s’ to and fro’ and ‘back and forth.” Man, Maine*

# Participant Findings Cont.

- Self- Efficacy – Stave off depression

*“This training has given me a routine; because after my husband leaves for work, instead of sitting around or just puttering, because sometimes you feel like you are lost when you are not working, this gives me something to look forward to.”*

Woman, ME

- Training helped people get jobs

*“..Having the [ training ] was one of the bonuses [my employers ] were seeing with me coming in. They were very happy to see that I was in the program, and ...basically offered me a position [and] said that “once your certified I’ll give you a \$5,000 increase in your salary.”* Man, Co

# Challenges

- How does a state identify training that serves their needs?
- How does a state determine if training is high quality?
- What happens when training in key industries is not available?
- Can skilled trade training be effectively delivered online?
- Blended model
- How should a state determine if a client will be a good online learner?
- Who manages the student and how?
- Importance of assessment-both traditional and online readiness
- Self-selection does not always work
- How much flexibility is too much?
- The challenge of open-entry, open-exit

# Next Steps: Lumina Foundation Grant

- Utilize the Workforce System to deliver training towards degree completion
- Four states:  
Mississippi  
Pennsylvania  
Colorado  
One state to be determined
- Dislocated and Incumbent workers
- 3-12 credits away from degree completion

# Why is this project important now?

- Connection between training, education and employability
- Demand for postsecondary training – emerged from research

*“There is nothing around here; there are no jobs, honestly, unless you have an advanced degree and could find work at a local university...or work at Taco Bell or Burger King.” Man, MS*

- Focus on occupational training in a long-term recession has not worked
- Skills shortage for available jobs

# Contact Information

Michael Lawrence, Corporation for a Skilled  
Workforce

[mlawrence@skilledwork.org](mailto:mlawrence@skilledwork.org)

734-769-2900, Ext. 249

[www.skilledwork.org](http://www.skilledwork.org)

Heather McKay, Rutgers University

[hmckay@rci.rutgers.edu](mailto:hmckay@rci.rutgers.edu)

732-932-0052

[www.cww.rutgers.edu](http://www.cww.rutgers.edu)