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Program Spotlight

WIA Reauthorization

On October 2, 2003, the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee made some minor changes to their Workforce Investment Act (WIA) reauthorization bill (S. 1627), which was introduced in September. The bill is expected to be scheduled for consideration by the full Senate in the coming weeks. HR 1261, the House version of the bill on WIA reauthorization, passed on May 8, 2003.

Trade Adjustment Assistance Reform Act of 2002

It has been more than one year since the new Trade Act was signed into law on August 6, 2002. The Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Reform Act of 2002 has made significant changes in the operations of Trade programs across the region in the areas of benefits and system design.

One of the more important initiatives in the new Trade Act is the Health Care Tax Credit (HCTC). HCTC expanded the scope of assistance under the Trade Act program. Under HCTC a percentage of Trade Impacted Worker's medical benefits can be paid by the program. (Guidance can be found in UIPL 24-03 and UIPL 33-03). Set up was difficult, but all of the States in the Region have been certified as HCTC ready and have the appropriate infrastructure in place to run the program.

There is also another major change. Beginning on August 6, 2003, Trade impacted workers gained the ability to request consideration for benefits under the Alternative Trade Adjustment Assistance (ATAA)

program. The ATAA is a new initiative which provides assistance to Trade affected workers, who are over the age of 50.

In lieu of training and TRA, the new Trade programs allows individuals in ATAA under certain circumstances to receive a wage subsidy for up to 2 years. Further details on the program can be found in TEGL 2-03. A compilation of Q's and A's on the ATAA is currently in clearance.

The amount of funds available for trade training, relocation and job search was also doubled in the new Trade Act. The number of certified petitions and affected petitioners has also increased dramatically. This makes partnering with Dislocated Worker Programs in each local area even more of a priority.

The Trade Adjustment Assistance Reform Act of 2002 is a broad attempt to drive collaboration and system reform. It is clear that the program will pose a challenge to grantees as they seek to implement the system, but in the end, the system will be stronger and more comprehensive because of it.

In this Issue:

News from Around the Region	2
Serving Customers in Other Languages	3
Serving the Business Customer	4
Information to Enhance Your Programs	5
Partner News	6



News From Around the Region

Innovations in Serving At-risk Youth

By: Lindsey Miller, Baltimore City Health Department

Between 1999 and 2002, 464 juveniles were shot and 90 were killed in Baltimore.

In response to this epidemic of juvenile victimization, the Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) designed and implemented Operation Safe Kids with a DOL Youth Offender Demonstration Grant.

Operation Safe Kids is an innovative approach to preventing youth violence. The program has three key functions: preventing violence, identifying risk factors in youth and enhancing the skills and entrepreneurship of at-risk youth.

The program provides intensive monitoring and case management to youth ages 13-17 that are most at risk of being victims or perpetrators of violent crime. The program identifies and assesses issues pertaining to mental health, substance abuse, housing status, educational attainment as well as employment needs. Once these needs are identified, the youth is rapidly attached to services.

Operation Safe Kids is successful because it sought to collaborate with two key organizations involved with at risk-youth: the Baltimore City Police Department and Department of Juvenile Justice. This partnership also created a new program, which complements Operation Safe Kids....Operation Night Light.

Through Operation Night Light, the police department and Department of Juvenile Justice perform twice-weekly curfew checks to youth involved in the Operation Safe Kids Program. The curfew keeps kids off the street between the hours of 10 p.m. and 6 a.m.--peak violent hours. Youth who repeatedly miss curfew or otherwise violate probation receive graduated sanctions.

These programs are innovative ways of addressing the needs of at risk youth.

Perdue Farms, Inc. Plant Closing

Submitted by: Louise Tomlinson, Manager, Virginia Workforce Center, Emporia, VA

Perdue Farms, Inc., a major employer in Emporia, Virginia for 17 years, closed September 19, 2003, eliminating approximately 600 jobs.

The Rapid Response Unit was notified and immediately began working with the Virginia Employment Commission One Stop. Several visits were made to the Perdue plant to provide information on One Stop Services, including Unemployment Insurance and the Dislocated Worker Program.

Efforts were coordinated through the State Rapid Response Unit, the Emporia One-Stop, Southside Virginia Community College, and two Workforce Investment areas. The two area Local Workforce Investment Boards partnered to coordinate and amend an existing grant to serve the Perdue workers. This amendment allowed the existing grant to provide workshops, training and on-the-job training.

To date, the Emporia One-Stop has served more than 300 customers with UI claims and has helped numerous workers find employment and training.



TEAM DC Honored by National League of Cities Award

The National League of Cities selected the District of Columbia's TEAM DC summer youth employment program as one of the models of successful programs developed nationally in response to the events of September 11th. TEAM DC was recognized for

creating a program that used peer education as a tool for preparing DC residents for the event of a disaster.

For the second year, program youth spent their summer vacation learning the essentials of emergency management and educating all segments of the City on how to keep safe when disaster strikes. Funded by the D.C. Emergency Management Agency and administered by D.C. Department of Employment Services, participants provided workshops for children, the elderly, the disabled, the Latino and other ethnic populations. This summer, approximately 40 TEAM DC participants conducted over 300 presentations throughout the District of Columbia.

One group of TEAM DC youth had the honor of giving a presentation to U.S. Department of Homeland Security Secretary, Tom Ridge, the Lt. Governor of Maryland and the Governor of Virginia. Another group educated participants at the Potomac Job Corps with Councilwoman Sandy Allen in attendance. The entire team also went to New York City where they visited *Ground Zero* and interacted with professionals who were actually involved in emergency response activities following the bombing of the World Trade Center.

“These young adults, who were trained to provide emergency preparedness and disaster relief, provided invaluable assistance to our community. They are role models of caring community citizens and have learned how to give back to the community by educating our most vulnerable populations,” said Director Gregg Irish. “TEAM DC is a model program that could inspire other metropolitan areas to develop a similar community awareness program.”

The National League of Cities is the largest national organization for American cities and towns.



Serving Customers in Alternate Languages

Pennsylvania Unemployment Compensation Services to Spanish Speaking Claimants

For several years, Pennsylvania has been aggressively pursuing a wide variety of limited English proficiency initiatives. Early in the planning for Unemployment Insurance Service Centers, translation services were contracted for interviews conducted with limited English or non-English speaking customers through Language Line Services®.

This service is able to assist in interpreting over 150 different languages. In addition, Pennsylvania has bilingual staff that provides direct Spanish services in the Service Centers as well as at Rapid Response events for mass layoffs and other informational forums.

The Pennsylvania Teleclaims continued claims filing system is also available in Spanish at a special toll-free number. The UI Program has a paper mail claim that is in Spanish as well for use by individuals who have difficulty using the Internet and/or telephone systems.

To supplement its services in other languages, Pennsylvania is in the process of translating critical information contained on the UI Program website as well as Internet continued claims services into Spanish.

These systems play an important role in ensuring that all customers receive the same access to information and services.

Career One stop: New Language Features

Accessing services on America’s Job Bank and related systems has become easier for individuals that speak languages other than English. America’s Job Bank has added enhancements that add context

translation (not word for word translation) into Spanish, Italian, French, German, Brazilian Portuguese, simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, Japanese and Korean.

The new feature can be accessed by clicking on the "Translation" link in the footer of any of the Career One Stop homepages.



Serving the Business Customer

State helps firms with hiring Little-known job centers also assist residents

Wal-Mart Stores Inc., the nation's largest private employer, hopes to hire 900 people by the time its Smyrna distribution center opens in February.

But Wal-Mart isn't sifting through the thousands of job applications expected for those jobs with wages up to \$13 per hour. The Delaware Department of Labor's Division of Employment and Training is doing that, offering workshops on how to fill out Wal-Mart's application, describing the available positions and screening some 5,000 candidates for Wal-Mart interviews this month.

The state even paid some of its staff in its Dover One Stop overtime on Saturdays in September to assist the giant retailer.

"We have made a conscious effort to reach out to the business community to create opportunities for companies to use our One-Stop Career centers to recruit and review applicants," said Anne Farley, Director of the Division of Employment and Training. "We would like to do more of it."

The Wal-Mart recruitment is part of a larger trend of businesses taking advantage of the little-known service offered by the State's Division of Employment and Training. Several businesses now use the Centers

to conduct interviews instead of renting conference rooms at hotels. This translates into money saved by the employer.

To date, the state has assisted 691 employers by posting 5,900 jobs on its web site and has offered 30,000 people actively seeking employment a chance to apply for those jobs.

"We do a lot of small placements. Small businesses may need secretarial support and basic office help and we provide them with résumés," said Robert Ziegler, spokesman for the DE Department of Labor.

The jobs created by Wal-Mart's distribution center are expected to directly contribute about \$30 million to the state's economy. Direct and indirect contributions will total \$54 million, according to the Delaware Economic Development Office.

National Business Learning Partnership

ETA recently created a program to forge a mentor protégé relationship between high performing local areas in WIA and those that would like to improve their performance. The program also has at its core, excellence in the area of business services. In this program, workforce areas, which have made sustained and significant progress in this transition, will be paired with those areas committed to accelerating the transition to a demand-driven system.

In Region 2, over twenty local areas were nominated by state agencies. Due to budget constraints and program design, the Philadelphia Region was limited to a total selection of only eight sites to participate in this national program.

Congratulations to the following workforce investment areas who will be participating in the National Business Learning Partnership:

Baltimore, MD
State of Delaware
North Central, PA
Southern Maryland

District of Columbia
Frederick County, MD
Region 7, WV
West Piedmont, VA



Information to Enhance Your Programs

Career Info Net Adds Occupational Outlook

Be sure to visit the recently enhanced America's Career InfoNet site (www.acinet.org), and check out the new look of the Employability Checkup Career Tool.

Customers, career advisors, and job developers will now be able to access the Occupational Outlook Handbook. The Occupational Outlook Handbook is a nationally recognized source of career information, designed to provide valuable assistance to individuals making decisions about their future work lives. Revised every two years, the Handbook describes what workers do on the job, working conditions, the training and education needed, earnings, and expected job prospects in a wide range of occupations. These enhancements are sure to be a great resource to your One Stop System.

Mapping Enhancements Added to America's Service Locator

Finding the location of Career Resources is now easier than ever. America's Service locator now contains a new mapping function that allows customers to map the location of One Stop Centers, community colleges, literacy programs and other workforce development services.

Users can use a zip code and access a map that shows color-coded dots for each type of provider. The map also includes the name and address of each location.

America's Service Locator is a database that has more than 13,500 service providers, including 2000 comprehensive one stop centers.



Findings in Comprehensive Reviews Provide an Opportunity for All to Improve

During the months of May, June and July, staff of the Philadelphia Regional Office conducted comprehensive compliance reviews of several states in the region. The purpose was to review program compliance of ETA funded programs in the state, evaluate program performance, and to review services provided to customers. The reviewers also evaluated the overall coordination of programs in the local areas.

The Workforce Investment Act Programs, Wagner Peyser, Labor Market Information, and Trade were included in the review.

Key compliance findings in the reviews included:

- **Improper point of registration:** Several local areas registered customers at points not supported by TEGL 7-99
- **Lack of coordination and integration of services among required partners in One-Stops:** Coordination of services is a key provision of the Workforce Investment Act. Reviewers found several areas where improved coordination (especially among ETA funded programs) was needed.
- **Incomplete participant data in the MIS system:** The cornerstone of an effective performance management system is an effective system for managing customer data. Several local areas were using faulty methods for collecting and tracking customer data.
- **Youth income eligibility not being verified:** Income eligibility for Youth must be documented. Some local areas did not document income, leading to the possibility of disallowed costs, and aberrations in wage gain data.

- **Insufficient protection of participants' personal information:** Safeguarding customer data needs to be a priority for all grantees of ETA funds. Several local areas had Social Security numbers of other customers in case files, filing systems that allowed easy access to customer data, as well as unprotected data repositories in the office.

These findings will be used by ETA as a basis for developing corrective actions in the states involved. Technical assistance with these and all organizations will focus on how to resolve these compliance issues and prevent them from occurring in the future. A second round of comprehensive reviews is scheduled for the current program year.



ETA Announces Career Voyages Web Site
Electronic tool will help bridge gap between education and workforce skills

The Department of Labor and the Department of Education recently announced the launch of the Career Voyages Web site. The web site is part of a larger, more comprehensive effort to link the educational community with the world of work.

The new web site features detailed information about the fastest growing industries and occupations in the country, the skills and education required to prepare for them, job openings by area, and wages, licensing requirements and growth rates for many occupations.

Although some career paths described on the web site require a four-year degree, Career Voyages expands post-secondary opportunities to include on-the-job training, apprenticeship programs for skilled trades, and two-year professional degree programs at community colleges that lead to promising careers.

You can access the site at: www.CareerVoyages.gov



Partner News

Peer to Peer Network Showcases Innovation in Welfare Programming

One resource you may want to have available to staff in your One Stop is a hot link to the Welfare Peer Technical Assistance Network. The website established by HHS lists imaginative ways that services are being provided, or new means of helping TANF recipients with multiple barriers.

The website presents a variety of programs nominated as innovative programs in their field. They are organized by welfare policy topic areas -- from support services, transportation, mentoring, to TANF programs service integration ideas. You can access the site at: <http://peerta.acf.hhs.gov>

EDUCATION: No Child Left Behind-Blue Ribbon Schools

More than 230 of the nation's public and private elementary and high schools were honored recently as *No Child Left Behind*-Blue Ribbon Schools. Twenty-three were from our Region.

Blue Ribbon Schools are outstanding schools that adhere to the core principles of President Bush's sweeping education reform law. The new program recognizes schools that dramatically improve student performance and schools with students from disproportionately disadvantaged backgrounds who perform at the highest levels. The schools were selected based on two assessment criteria:

- Schools with at least 40 percent of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds and that improve student performance, or
- Schools that score in the top 10 percent state assessment tests.

For more information, please see www.ed.gov/programs/nclbbrs/awards.html.

ETA would like to thank those that contributed articles to the Fall edition of Initiatives. Some articles have been altered to accommodate limited space availability.

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