



WIA Grant Funded Community College Programs

Northern Cook County College Partnerships

Innovative, Intensive, and Community Driven Service Models

The Workforce Board has funded each of the three area community colleges to partner with the workNet Centers and provide services to the unemployed and underemployed. Each college designed a very unique service strategy and each has been successful in meeting the needs of the individuals being served.

Job Seekers, Students, Professionals and Veterans are getting Ready to Work with Oakton Community College's Strategies for Career Transition

Fast Forward...Success Strategies for Career Transition is Oakton's unique service strategy to assist unemployed or underemployed individuals in building skills to accelerate their careers. Through a series of comprehensive professional training courses, workshops, and individual skill appraisal and counseling; individuals can successfully manage their own employment related goals and achievements. The professional training series includes core business computer skills, job search success skills, life management success techniques and best practices to be successful in the workplace. Oakton looked to their business and employer advisory group to better understand the challenges and successes in hiring practices and workplace behaviors to assist them in designing the series of courses and workshops. Oakton kicked off *Fast Forward* with a cohort of 28 workNet customers currently attending or have attended classes at Oakton.

A priority of services to the veteran population continues to demonstrate a need with the student veteran population. Student veterans have

responded positively to outreach activities through the various publications and advertising materials created by OCC And funded through the grant funds made available by the Workforce Board.

OCC has identified 280 student veterans, which is a 100% increase from one year ago. While this population has responded in smaller numbers than our dislocated workers, OCC has succeeded in raising awareness of the services available and has developed a new club for student veterans. OCC continues to develop and offer diverse seminars and workshops for our veterans and their families. The Veterans and Workforce Specialist has hosted or presented at seven workshops/ seminars for student veterans. These workshops/seminars have addressed a diverse number of topics including community resources, health and wellness, mental health issues, employment resources, academic services, and financial aid resources.



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Harper College Capstone Experience

Harper College has developed a capstone experience that delivers job search and readiness services to job seekers that require additional services to be competitive in today's job search environment. The services included in this capstone experience will be offered based on an individual assessed need through a seamless, centralized delivery system transparent to the participant.

Through job search training workshops, monthly support groups and individualized job search assistance, Harper offers unique programming combining expert speakers and accountability groups designed to maintain displaced workers engagement and enhances skills that assist in employment attainment.

Funding provided by the Workforce Board has assisted Harper College in offering enhanced career guidance and assistance to special populations with diverse needs. Harper hired a Veterans Specialist who assists approximately 400 veteran students with admission and enrollment processes. Harper College has founded the Student Veteran's Association at the College which meets regularly and hosts guest speakers who provide valuable information on veteran benefits. Harper has also been able to earn the designation of "Military Friendly School" by the *Military Friendly Guide* and website which helps veterans identify colleges, universities, and trade schools that meet pre-determined standards.

Harper College offers full time support on-site at the Arlington Heights workNet Center providing immediate assistance to approximately 500 job seekers on a yearly basis. This partnership has been successful in providing needed and ongoing services that are necessary to meet the continued diverse needs of these individuals.



Elgin
Community
College

Elgin Community College, Elgin and Streamwood Village Hall

The need for services provided at the Streamwood Village Hall has not diminished as the unemployment rate in the region is still well above the national average of 9.6%. New clients come to the Streamwood Village Hall every week; some are unemployed and others are grossly under-employed. Services offered at the Streamwood Village Hall provide job seekers access to resume development, interviewing skills, job search strategies, comprehensive career counseling, community resources, and training, while networking with other clients in similar circumstances.

Elgin Community College has not only been successful in providing workforce services to individuals residing in the far northwest area of Cook County; but a well attended job club has fostered camaraderie and support among the unemployed people through networking, accountability and positive feedback. The job club, held at the Streamwood Village Hall has over 300 attendees a quarter. The attendees are predominately white, middle-aged and have a high school diploma or higher; 40% have been unemployed for less than 6 months and 34% are long term unemployed, over one year. The challenges faced by most are out-dated skills, unrealistic expectations in terms of the skills needed in today's workplace, low or inflated levels of self-awareness regarding their worth and skills, earnings expectations, employer expectations and an inability to accept employment at a lower level than what they had before. Elgin partners with the workNet Center to make training services available to the individuals as they move along their employment and training career pathway.