



EXTENSION OUTREACH EFFORTS FOR RESOURCE-STRESSED FAMILIES

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Return of Extension Outreach Efforts Newsletter

Yes, this is the newsletter you used to receive about welfare reform issues. The focus is the same, but it has been broadened to address the educational needs of low-income clientele. Other University faculty and staff will be submitting articles from their program area that relate to low-income programming. This will provide you with an update of programming information relevant to the educational efforts for low-income clientele.

Workforce Investment Act of 1998

Signed into law August 7, 1998, the Workforce Investment Act has the potential to change low-income job training programs. Effective July 1, 2000, the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) will be repealed. The new Workforce Investment Act authorizes funding streams for adults, dislocated workers, and youth.

The goal of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) is to provide for the customer seeking training and employment services a “one-stop” delivery system. The new system is based on the “one-stop” concept where information about and access to a wide array of job training,

education, and employment services are available at a single location. In Pennsylvania, the one-stops are called Career Link Centers. These centers are to serve all individuals seeking employment—not just welfare recipients.

The formation of the Career Link Centers offers Cooperative Extension the opportunity to become an identified program provider. Since all of the one-stop locations will be designed in the near future, now is the time to become proactive in initiating contacts. Governor Ridge has set the expectation that the Team Pennsylvania Career Link delivery system will be operating statewide by July 1, 1999. Currently, there are four demonstration Career Link Centers open in Pennsylvania: Philadelphia; New Castle, Lawrence County; Uniontown, Fayette County; and Pottsville, Schuylkill County. At least ten centers must be operational by March 1, 1999, in order for Pennsylvania to meet its first year implementation goals. The Pennsylvania “Career Development Marketplace System” is being administered at the state level by the Department of Labor and Industry.

The system being developed is being regionally planned and locally directed. There are ten regions. However, there will be more than ten one-stop facilities. Where the facilities will be located is dependent upon population and accessibility.

Partners in the one-stop centers will become involved at various levels: *investor, contributor, and affiliate*. An *investor* organization will make a commitment to participate on a full-time basis and provide

funding to maintain an office at the site. A *contributor* participates with rotating staff and assists with funding. An *affiliate* will work as part of an extended network providing services and a contribution as agreed.

Key organizations in the local one-stop will be the current job centers, JTPA, county commissioners, and local business and agency representatives. All of their interests are to be involved in the local planning process.

To access more information about and a copy of the Workforce Investment Act, visit their web site at: www.usworkforce.org/act.htm

To reach the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry web site check www.li.state.pa.us/ under Workforce Development.

Strategies For Contact

At the local level, contacts can be made to express Cooperative Extension's interest in becoming involved in the Career Link or one-stop centers. The following strategy comes from suggestions provided by various professionals currently involved in administering Pennsylvania's Career Development Marketplace System Grant.

- Contact the local JTPA director. Express Cooperative Extension's interest in becoming an educational provider at the local one-stop. As you market any program area, whether it is finance, nutrition, or parenting, relate all your educational efforts to the workplace—either assisting individuals in getting a job or in maintaining employment. For example, learning to budget your income to pay bills on time assists the individual in avoiding crisis at the end or beginning of the month, which helps them to remain focused on work. Learning to parent more effectively relieves the stress of parent/child conflict, assisting the working individual to be more in control of their life. Remember the goal of today's welfare and workforce acts are work placement and retention.

- Contact the following Workforce Investment Act CDM regional representative in your area:

Central Region

Ms. Barbara Corter, Assistant Regional Director, Williamsport Regional Job Center, 208 West 3rd Street, Suite 303, Williamsport, PA 17701-6401; Phone: 570-327-3769; Fax: 570-327-3647; Email: R00400@sunlink.net

Lehigh Valley Region

Mr. J. Curry McLaughlin, Acting Regional Director, Job Center Field Operations, 640 Hamilton Mall, 10th Floor, Allentown, PA 18101-2110; Phone: 610-821-6571; Fax: 610-821-6294; Email: jmclaug@palihost.state.pa.us

Ms. Patricia Adamecyk, Regional Representative, PENNCARD Team Manager, P.O. Box 7921, Reading, PA 19603-7921; Phone: 610-378-4322; Fax: 610-378-4381; Email: padamcz@palihost.state.pa.us

North Central Region

Mr. Larry Horning, Assistant Director, NCPDRDC, 651 Montmorenci Avenue, Ridgway, PA 15853; Phone: 814-773-3162; Fax: 814-772-7045; Email: lhorning@ncentral.com

Ms. Kathy Watazychn, Regional Job Center Director, Erie Region, 1316 State Street, Erie, PA 16501; Phone: 814-871-4363; Fax: 814-871-4170; Email: kwatazy@palihost.state.pa.us

Northeast

Charles F. Luce, Executive Director, Luzerne County Human Resources Development Department, 53 Blackman Street; Wilkes-Barre, PA 18702-4299; Phone: 570-822-1101; Fax: 570-824-4514; Email: luzco@epix.net

Southern Alleghenies Region

Mr. James Coley, Director of Employment & Training, Southern Alleghenies Planning & Development Commission, 541 58th Street, Altoona, PA 16602; Phone: 814-949-6531; Fax: 814-949-6505; Email: coley@sapdc.org

Ada McFarland, Regional Job Center Director, Williamsport Regional Job Center Office, 208 West 3rd Street, Suite 303, Williamsport, PA 17701-6401; Phone: 570-327-3501; Fax: 570-327-3647; Email: R00400@sunlink.net

Southwest Region

Dr. Rob Rogers, Director, Commission for Workforce Excellence, 425 6th Avenue, Suite 340, Pittsburgh, PA 15219; Phone: 412-281-2000, Ext. 34; Fax: 412-281-3153; Email: rogers@learn2earn.org

These individuals are key at the local level and will provide the leadership to facilitate the organizational plan for the Career Link Centers in their respective region. When expressing the role Cooperative Extension can play at the centers, market from an employment perspective.

- Take a sample of the program materials that Cooperative Extension can provide. Dr. Marilyn Corbin and Dr. Natalie Ferry visited with Mr. Michael Acker, Deputy Secretary for Workforce Development and Safety with the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, in early January 1999 to express Cooperative Extension's interest in providing educational programming for resource-stressed individuals. Mr. Acker received several examples of program materials developed by Penn State Cooperative Extension.

- Contact Dr. Natalie Ferry at 814-863-3439 or email at nmf3@psu.edu for any help in making local contacts or answer questions.

Response From Counties Working With Low-Income Families

To date, 36 counties have returned the request for information survey. Of these 36, 35 are working with low-income clientele. The most frequently used delivery method (26) is individual programs presented within programs of other agencies/organizations. This method is self-marketed single program (14) and series of sessions (14). The most frequently presented educational topics are financial management, nutrition, balancing work/life issues, parenting, and workforce preparation.

Keeping Debt Under Control

Many consumers start the New Year with additional bills made from celebrating the December holidays. If you feel the need for professional help to assist clients, below are sources to consider. Before contacting any organization, clientele need to have a good idea of who they owe money, how much they owe, and what they want from an agency working with debt management/counseling.

• Genus Credit Management

This non-profit community service organization located in Columbia, Maryland has a debt management program that offers individuals help in regaining financial stability. Genus is a relatively newcomer on the debt management scene. Most of the work can be accomplished by telephone and fax. Call their toll-free number to find out about their services or to enroll in their debt management program (1-888-793-4368). This program may be useful for consumers who do not live near face-to-face credit management organizations. Genus can be reached 24 hours a day, Monday-Friday, and during the weekends on a shorter work schedule. Visit their web site at: <http://www.genus.org/>.

(Extension educators, contact Cathy Bowen via telephone at 814-863-7869 or email at cbowen@psu.edu, regarding Genus if you want to know more about her on-site observations of this company.)

• Consumer Credit Counseling Services (CCCS)

CCCS is a local non-profit organization that provides consumer credit education, budget, and debt counseling, and debt repayment programs. Call 1-800-782-9832 to find a location nearest you. An automated office locator can also be reached by calling 1-800-682-9832. Visit their web site at: <http://www.nfcc.org/>

• Debt Counselors of America

Debt Counselors of America ® has a special program that can help to stop collection calls and organize your debts. Call 1-800-680-3328 for more information and visit their web site at: <http://www.dca.org/>

Links to the above sites are also available from Cathy Bowen's web site at:

<http://www.cas.psu.edu/docs/casdept/familyliving/cb/cbmenu.html>

— *Cathy Faulcon Bowen*

Data from DPW

In Pennsylvania:

- The caseload total continued to fall—down to 120,150. In November, there were 96,619 families that included an adult receiving cash assistance, and 62,255 of those adults were required to be in work-related activities. About 37 percent of those adults (22,910) were employed. How many were employed at least 20 hours a week? That information is not yet available for November. In September, 11,353 adult recipients were working at least 20 hours a week.
- That September total (11,353 recipients employed 20 or more hours a week) was the lowest of the year, and reflected a *decrease* of over 4,000 from August. The percentage of non-exempt adults employed 20 or more hours a week also dropped to its lowest level of the year—and by over five percentage points from August. This may reflect the fact that a smaller share of the families still receiving TANF are job-ready.
- As of October 26th, there were 38,847 adults who had received TANF continuously since March 1997. Sixty percent of these adults lived in Philadelphia County, and 80 percent lived in Philadelphia, Allegheny, Delaware, Erie, and Fayette counties.

Sincerely,

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