

# *From* **Welfare** *to* **Work**

*Using HUD's Programs  
to Help Families  
in Transition*



U.S. Department of Housing and  
Urban Development



Office of Policy  
Development & Research

# Foreword

I am pleased to present *From Welfare to Work: Using HUD's Programs to Help Families in Transition*, a profile of the creative ways our programs are helping low-income families succeed.

Welfare reform has brought with it many new challenges. For instance, time limits and work requirements are significantly changing the lives of many families that receive housing assistance. HUD plays a vital role in helping our nation meet these challenges.

Although much more remains to be done, we're off to a good start. For families that need housing assistance to make the transition to work, HUD offers the Welfare-to-Work Housing Voucher program. We also have helped other Federal agencies — such as the Departments of Labor and Transportation and the Small Business Administration — shape their welfare-to-work efforts to assure that the benefits of their programs will reach residents of public and assisted housing. Finally, we have examined our own programs and revised them, as necessary, to make sure that they, too, can be used individually and in partnership with other public and private resources to support families who are determined to succeed under welfare reform.

This publication details 25 functional welfare-to-work models that make use of a variety of HUD programs. It is part of the Department's ongoing effort to assist public housing and community development agencies, community-based nonprofit organizations, and others to respond to the challenges and opportunities posed by welfare reform. The initiatives profiled feature diverse program designs that include employment and training, career counseling, job placement assistance, job retention services, and self-employment training and support. They also include funding from the full range of HUD programs, many of which are bundled with funds from other Federal, State, or local sources.

By demonstrating how local initiatives can creatively use our programs to help families succeed on the path to self-sufficiency, these examples are both instructive and inspirational. I encourage you to use this publication as a learning tool — a source of models that can be adopted as they are or adapted to reflect the unique circumstances of your own community.



Andrew Cuomo  
*Secretary of Housing  
and Urban Development*

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U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
Office of Policy Development and Research

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## Internet Information Resources

# Introduction

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 has brought sweeping changes in welfare programs and policies. The Act replaces a 65-year entitlement to assistance for eligible families with the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) block grant to the states. While the block grant allows considerable discretion at the state level, it is clearly intended to help move welfare clients into work and off assistance. In addition to establishing a five-year lifetime limit on an individual's eligibility for assistance (with some exceptions), it also requires adult recipients to find work within two years of receiving assistance. To reinforce the work participation rule, states must meet specific levels of active client employment or face fiscal penalties.

The impact of these changes on the lives of public housing residents and Section 8 participants is significant because approximately half of all HUD-assisted families with children received welfare benefits in 1996.<sup>1</sup> As public housing agencies assess the effect of welfare reform on their operations and on their residents, HUD is providing them with information, funding, and local policy options to serve their TANF beneficiaries.

This publication profiles 25 initiatives where innovative providers are adapting existing HUD programs to help families transition from welfare to work. Designed as a resource for public housing agencies, community residents, local community development agencies, homeless service providers, assisted housing owners and other local service providers, it features promising programs already in place. The activities compiled here were identified by polling HUD Headquarters and Field staff as well as other knowledgeable sources for recommendations. Although the outcomes of most of these programs have not been formally evaluated, their results to-date are encouraging and they show real potential for helping public assistance clients transition to employment.

The case book is organized in two parts. The first highlights some common themes that recur through multiple programs. The second part presents detailed profiles of individual programs. It begins with a table summarizing the key program features. This table may be useful to readers interested in specific types of programs, such as those targeting particular population segments or those focusing on specific types of employment. Suggested additional resources are listed in the Appendix.

## Recurring Themes

The initiatives described here feature diverse program designs, funding sources, targeting strategies, and organizational structures. Despite their diversity, however, they illustrate a number of common, recurring themes — themes which may be the foundation for their individual and collective potential.

## Designating Lead Agencies

Local program sponsors of these HUD-supported programs include what one thinks of as “typical” housing organizations — public housing agencies (HAs) and non-profit organizations that administer Section 8 rental assistance programs. In the course of compiling this case book, we learned of a number of programs administered by entities other than the “usual suspects.” Thinking creatively about organizational structures can help local programs tap into additional resources. For example:

<sup>1</sup> Khadduri, Jill, Mark Shroder, and Barry Steffen. 1998. Welfare Reform Needs and HUD-Assisted Housing: Measuring the Extent of Needs and Opportunities.

The Housing Authority of Baltimore City and the Richmond, Virginia Housing and Redevelopment Authority have each established non-profit subsidiaries to create employment opportunities for public housing residents. In Norfolk, Virginia, a non-profit organization affiliated with the local housing agency coordinates workforce development activities in Norfolk's Enterprise Community (EC). The HA serves as the funding conduit for EC funding.

In Seattle, the local Private Industry Council holds the contract to coordinate the Seattle Housing Authority's self-sufficiency efforts under the Campus of Learners and HOPE VI programs.

In Detroit, a private medical center has established the New Beginnings training program to help residents of the Lower Woodward Corridor (now a HUD Empowerment Zone) prepare for jobs in the health care field. The majority of the program's participants are public housing residents. In Raleigh, the North Carolina Home Builders Association uses Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and other funds to provide construction training for unemployed and underemployed city residents.

In New York City, the collaborative efforts of a not-for-profit housing and community development organization and an affiliated supportive services provider have launched an employment training program that is linked to supportive housing.

### **Establishing Effective Partnerships**

Achieving self-sufficiency forces people to develop the technical and workplace skills necessary for employment, make arrangements to ensure that they can get to work (such as child care and transportation), identify employment opportunities, and obtain and retain employment. For many, the task is substantial, and the services and expertise needed to help them may exceed the capacities of the individual sponsoring organization.

Many of the programs featured in this publication rely on collaboration between two or more partner agencies. In addition to filling gaps in the service spectrum, creative partnerships can also help one or more partner meet funding requirements.

Successful partnerships are often the result of active outreach to potential participants, carefully structured Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) among partners, and watchful oversight through coordinating committees or advisory groups representing all involved. Some examples include:

The Denver Housing Authority's (DHA's) North Lincoln Homes Campus of Learners program is supported by a number of partners. The Mayor's Office of Employment and Training operates a One Stop Center near the development, offering employment referrals and support to North Lincoln Homes residents. A community-based organization provides small business and entrepreneurial skills training and employment referrals as well as other services. DHA also has an MOU with the local TANF agency to supplement case management services for public housing residents.



The Seattle Housing Authority has contracted with the local Private Industry Council to manage the Campus of Learners program at the HOPE VI Holly Park site. Other subcontracted partners include the public schools, a refugee services agency, and a community college. MOUs have been established with a resident advocacy organization and three social services organizations.

The Family Self Sufficiency Program in Clearwater, Florida is supported by partnerships with local educational institutions, the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) program, as well as the Urban League, the Lions Club, and other service providers.

### **Leveraging Resources as Well as Expertise**

Just as no one organization may have all the expertise to implement a particular strategy, no single funding source is likely to provide enough financial support to accomplish all goals. Virtually all of the initiatives featured in this case book have more than one source of support, including in-kind contributions and creative financing strategies. For example:

The YouthBuild St. Louis AmeriCorps program and the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles both successfully sought competitive Department of Labor (DOL) Welfare-to-Work grants to support their programs.

The San Diego Housing Commission has an impressive record of leveraging outside funding to support their Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) clients. For example, a foundation has recently agreed to provide a two-year \$500,000 grant to support case management, basic and adult education, job development, and skills training for high demand jobs in San Diego.

Funding sources for the Villa D'Ames Neighborhood Networks Learning Center include JTPA funds, DOL Welfare-to-Work monies, small community contributions, and an onsite revenue-producing print shop.

La Grave Place Neighborhood Networks Learning Center in Grand Forks, North Dakota is funded by a non-profit housing provider, the City of Grand Forks, local and regional banks, service organizations, and a variety of local businesses, all of which donate both funds and in-kind services.

### **Maintaining Consistency with Welfare Reform Requirements**

Effective responses to welfare reform require program sponsors to anticipate potential impacts, both on the operations of the sponsoring agency and on the lives of their clients. It is particularly important that sponsors' self-sufficiency efforts are effectively coordinated with any incentives being offered through the TANF system. While many programs featured here were established before recent welfare reforms, program staff have worked closely with local TANF agencies to revise them in a way that ensures mutual clients do not jeopardize their benefits. For example:

The Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee (HACM) has its own resident employment coordinators who work with welfare beneficiaries and case managers to ensure that residents are receiving the services they need. The resident coordinators have negotiated exceptions to Wisconsin's "work first" requirement so that residents can pursue certain types of training without incurring penalties.



The Hartford Housing Authority's (HHA) Family Reunification Program offers job counseling, training, and job placement to absentee fathers who agree to assume responsibility for their families in public housing. HHA negotiated with the local TANF agency so that individuals who make an effort to get training or employment can get a six-month extension on Connecticut's mandatory 21-month benefit limitation. In addition, child support payments can be reduced to \$5/month for participating fathers.

The New Beginnings program, a privately-funded training and employment program for residents of Detroit's Empowerment Zone, has tailored its activities to be consistent with Michigan's TANF requirements. For example, the combination of part-time work and training offered by this program meets Michigan's requirement that TANF recipients be involved in work activities for 20 hours per week.

In Phoenix, the housing authority increased the number of courses offered per year through its Economic Initiatives program in response to increased demand from TANF families. Public housing residents in this popular program receive life skills training, educational/vocational skills training, subsidized on-the-job training, and (if needed) assistance finding unsubsidized employment.

The YouthBuild St. Louis AmeriCorps program is using a Department of Labor Welfare-to-Work grant to reach women whose public assistance benefits will soon expire so they can enroll in the program's education and construction skills training program.

The Richmond Business Employment and Development Corporation (RBEDC) was originally designed to provide entrepreneurial training for residents interested in starting their own businesses. In response to the work requirements faced by TANF residents, the program has expanded its services and target population to include placement in full-time jobs for all residents of Richmond's public housing developments.

### **Preparing for the Workplace**

A successful transition to employment requires the worker to have not only the technical skills to perform the job's duties but also the so-called "soft skills" to succeed in the workplace and organize his or her life around work. These skills include punctuality, reliability, appropriate dress, and effective communication and problem-solving skills. Successful programs also involve helping people develop the "back-up systems" — alternative child care when a child or care-giver is ill and alternative transportation when the family car breaks down — needed to avoid unnecessary absences from work. People with limited work experience may need substantial coaching on these issues to obtain and maintain employment, and a number of the programs featured here offer this kind of training or support. For example:

The Richmond Business and Employment Development Corporation provides a four-week Life Skills/Job Readiness program focusing on topics such as motivation, attitudes toward employment, and lifestyle adjustments necessary for successful employment. This component also includes work experience positions within the housing agency where participants can test their workplace skills.

The Phoenix Economic Initiatives provides a six-week seminar series on life skills. Topics include self-esteem, stress management, time management, effective interaction with co-workers and supervisors, and conflict resolution. Small groups of 15-20 participants progress through the series together, building peer support and camaraderie that carries into the program's training and employment phases.

### **Building Relationships with Employers**

With increased pressure to move TANF beneficiaries quickly into employment, program sponsors have pursued relationships with employers seeking job-ready workers. In some cases, the sponsoring entity itself is one source of employment, but increasingly program staff are cultivating relationships with private firms willing to hire their participants.

These programs usually share at least two features. First, almost all have assigned job development responsibilities to one or more staff who cultivate relationships with potential employers, identify job opportunities, screen program participants for referral, and serve as contacts for employers once a client is hired. Second, they provide follow-up support for both employees and employers to help make sure the placement succeeds. Several programs also feature some kind of transitional (often subsidized) employment before placement in permanent employment.

Some examples of programs with strong connections to private-sector employers include:

The supportive housing program operated by Aletheia House in Birmingham, Alabama serves formerly homeless mothers recovering from substance abuse. After completing a three-month in-patient recovery program, clients participate in on-the-job training within Aletheia House and then receive assistance finding unsubsidized employment. Aletheia House case managers visit their clients both at home and at work to make sure job placements are successful. The case managers try to find employers who can hire several clients at the same time and who are willing to make long-term commitments to the program.

Both the Times Square Jobs Training Corporation in New York and the Villa D'Ames Neighborhood Networks Learning Center in suburban New Orleans operate businesses where program clients may gain work experience before moving to permanent employment. The Workforce Development division of the Times Square program conducts outreach to businesses to identify outside training and employment opportunities. A job developer at the Villa D'Ames Learning Center has established a network of potential employers and receives weekly job postings.

Norfolk Works, Inc. is a non-profit organization that coordinates workforce development activities within Norfolk's Enterprise Community. One of its initiatives is a 15-week training program for EC residents interested in customer service work. NationsBank developed the training curriculum and agreed to hire successful graduates.

Cleveland's Job Match program provides job placement services for job-ready residents of the city's Supplemental Empowerment Zone. A job developer monitors job openings with a network of employers and matches participants with available positions. After placement, a job retention specialist is available via an answering service and pager system to help participants with any problems or concerns. The job developer maintains contact with employers to make sure they are satisfied with employees' performance.

### **Beyond Jobs: Preparing for Homeownership**

The focus of most of these programs is on employment preparation, placement, and retention. A few also provide support for the longer term goal of homeownership:

Partners in Self-Sufficiency, a non-profit organization that operates self-sufficiency programs for the Clearwater (FL) Housing Authority, has developed a homeownership preparation program. Partner organizations — including lenders, a local foundation, and the City of Clearwater — provide budgeting, homeownership counseling, and down payment assistance.

Homeownership preparation workshops are also offered by the Providence Family Self-Sufficiency Program and at the Denver Campus of Learners site at North Lincoln Homes.

While welfare reform poses both challenge and opportunity for everyone, the sponsors of the HUD-supported programs featured here are responding with innovation, creativity, and commitment.

# Case Study Projects

Location	Administering Agency/Department	Funding Source(s)	Target Population(s)	Services	Partners	Page Number
<b>Family Self Sufficiency</b>						
Clearwater FL	Nonprofit subsidiary of Clearwater Housing Authority	HA operating subsidy, CDBG, Junior League, Pinellas County Social Services	Public housing residents, tenant-based Section 8 recipients	placement assistance, homeownership training, escrow account	Community College, JTPA Urban League, City of Clearwater	15
RI	Providence Housing Authority	Education and Human Center (FIC) Grant	Public housing residents, tenant-based Section 8 recipients	services, escrow account	JTPA, Departments of Human Service and Education	20
CA	San Diego Housing Commission	HA operating subsidy, Section 8 administrative fees, Irvine Foundation	Public housing residents, tenant-based Section 8 recipients	al assessment, referrals to job training, supportive services, escrow account	Community Colleges, Private Industry Council, Enterprise Community, Community-based Organizations (CBOs), Foundations	23
	Community Affairs		Tenant-based Section 8 recipients	to job training and job portive services, escrow account	JTPA, educational institu-	28
<b>Enterprise Communities</b>						
	Redevelopment and Housing Authority	Title XX Social Service Block Grant funds, State Department of Social Services, JTPA	residents of Norfolk's Enterprise Community	training, job placement vices	NRHA, City of Norfolk, educational institutions, Greater Norfolk Corporation	31

## Case Study Projects, *continued*

Location	Administering Agency/Department	Funding Source(s)	Target Population(s)	Services	Partners	Page Number
<b>Empowerment Zone</b>						
OH	Job Match Program Vocational Guidance Services, Inc.	Economic Development Initiative Grant	Zone	ment assistance	Private employers	37
	New Beginnings Program Detroit Medical Center	JTPA, foundations	Residents of Detroit's Empowerment Zone	Basic academics, college courses, job placement		41
<b>Comprehensive Grant Program (CGP)</b>						
Phoenix, AZ	Economic Initiative City of Phoenix Housing Department	CGP	Public housing residents	al education, OJT, job placement	—	43
VA	Richmond Business and and Housing Authority	CGP	Public housing residents	skills training, job placement	—	47
<b>Neighborhood Networks</b>						
Grand	Grand Forks Housing Authority (GFA)	Grand Forks Homes Inc., private employers	Residents of three HUD-gram, and all resident	Computer instruction, assistance	private companies, local banks	51
	of New Orleans	JTPA, DOL Welfare-to-Work grant funds, Christopher Homes, Jefferson Parish School District	Residents of Villa D'Ames oponents	placement assistance.	employers, local banks	55

## Case Study Projects, *continued*

Location	Administering Agency/Department	Funding Source(s)	Target Population(s)	Services	Partners	Page Number
<b>Family Investment Center</b>						
CA	Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles	Youth Development Initiative, Youth Entrepreneurial Demonstration	Public housing residents, FSS participants	English-as-a-Second vices.	State of California, Los Angeles Unified School District	59
			Public housing residents, income families in the surrounding community	assessment, referral to vices	State and local agencies, CBOs	64
Hartford, CT		Drug Elimination, Family Investment Center, Family Support Center		Vocational assessment, job placement assistance	—	68
<b>HOPE VI</b>						
WI	Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee	HOPE VI		job placement assistance	community colleges	71
<b>Campus of Learners</b>						
		HOPE VI	Residents of Holly Park (development)	job placement assistance, vices	Private Industry Council, community colleges, public schools	77

## Case Study Projects, *continued*

Location	Administering Agency/Department	Funding Source(s)	Target Population(s)	Services	Partners	Page Number
<b>Campus of Learners (continued)</b>						
	Dominican University, Baltimore	HA operating subsidy, program	Domestic students, Baltimore Homes (a non-HOPE VI housing development)	skills workshops	Community colleges, Mayor's Office of Employment & Training, private employers, CBOs	83
<b>Supportive Housing</b>						
New York City, NY	The Times Square Jobs Training Corporation, Center for Urban Community Services	Supportive Housing Program, Foundations	Residents of the Times Square Hotel single room occupancy dwelling	Case management, job placement assistance	Private sector employers	87
AL	Housing program	Supportive Housing Program	Women with drug addictions, who are homeless, have children, and/or are pregnant	Supportive housing, case management, OJT, job placement services	Private sector employers	92
<b>Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)</b>						
	City of Bangor	CDBG	Homeless individuals and families in Bangor	training, job placement assistance,		95
	City of Raleigh	North Carolina Housing Finance Agency		assistance		98



## Case Study Projects, *continued*

Location	Administering Agency/Department	Funding Source(s)	Target Population(s)	Services	Partners	Page Number
<b>Section 3</b>						
Business Program Baltimore, MD	Housing Authority of Baltimore City, Resident Initiatives Division	Housing subsidy, HOPE VI	Public housing residents	shared services in business incubator	HOPE VI Administration Council for Economic and Business Opportunity	101
Grounds Keeping Program Baltimore, MD	Housing Authority of Baltimore City, Resident Initiatives Division		Public housing residents receiving TANF	groundskeeping	Department of Social Services	102
Step-Up Baltimore, MD	Housing Authority of Baltimore City, Resident Initiatives Division		Public housing residents	training trades, post-program follow-up	—	102
Rosewind Training Program Cincinnati, OH	Construction	HOPE VI	VI development and surrounding community	entrepreneurial training, supportive services		105
<b>Step - Up</b>						
Joliet, IL	Housing Authority of the City of Joliet	CGP, City of Joliet	Section 8 recipients	Classroom and OJT in training	Private Industry Council, Community College, Illinois	109

## Case Study Projects, *continued*

Location	Administering Agency/Department	Funding Source(s)	Target Population(s)	Services	Partners	Page Number
St. Louis, MO	Youth Education and Health in Souldard	Youthbuild Implementation Grant, Corporation for National Service, DOL Welfare-to-Work Grant, Missouri Department of Conservation, St. Louis Public Schools, Missouri Department of Economic Development	St. Louis residents ages 17-24, who are low income or members of a very low income family, and have dropped out of school	Classroom and OJT in construction trades, life skills training, basic education, post-service education award	State Departments of Conservation and Economic Development, public schools	113

### Youthbuild

**KEY:**

Case Management refers to individualized assistance in setting goals, identifying barriers and services to be provided, and ongoing monitoring of progress.

Lifeskills Training covers such topics as conflict resolution, time management, personal budgeting, and self esteem.

Job Readiness Training refers to job seeking skills such as resume preparation, interviewing techniques, and completing job applications, and job performance skills such as punctuality, reliability, and interacting with supervisors.

Job Search Assistance refers to assistance in locating job openings and training in how to conduct a job search.

Job Placement Assistance refers to working with employers to identify job openings, assistance setting up interviews, and referring job candidates to employers.

On-the-Job-Training (OJT) refers to paid training in a job setting in which the employer provides training during a set period of time. The wages of trainees are often subsidized during the OJT period.

Supportive Services refers to assistance locating and/or paying for child care, transportation, tools or supplies needed for work, and clothing.

Entrepreneurial Training refers to training in starting a business including marketing, sales, business finance, accounting, and developing a business plan.

Job Training refers to training in specific job skills.

Escrow Account refers to financial incentive offered to participants in the Family Self Sufficiency Program. Increases in rental payments resulting from increased earned income are placed in an interest-bearing account that be withdrawn when the FSS contract is completed and used for any purpose, or prior to completing the FSS contract with PHA approval to meet work-related expenses.



# *From* **Welfare** *to* **Work**

*Project Profiles*



# Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS)

**Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS)**, authorized by the National Affordable Housing Act of 1990, helps residents of public housing and participants in the Section 8 rental certificate and rental voucher programs become self-sufficient through education, training, case management and other supportive services. Families who volunteer to participate sign a five-year contract with the PHA specifying the steps both the family and the PHA will take to move them toward financial independence. Participants can also save money through FSS: an escrow credit, which is calculated by the PHA based on increases in earned income of the participating family, is deposited to an interest-bearing escrow account which the family can claim upon successful completion of the FSS contract. Beginning in fiscal year (FY) 1993, PHAs that have received funding increments for public housing or for most new Section 8 rental certificates and vouchers were required to operate an FSS program with a minimum program size based on the number of new units received unless approved by HUD to operate a smaller FSS program. Beginning in October 1999, the recently enacted Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 will no longer require that new units carry an FSS obligation. In addition, the legislation stipulates that the minimum size of the FSS programs will decrease as families graduate from FSS.

While there are no HUD funds for services, funds are available from the operating subsidy for public housing FSS Service Coordinators. PHAs that administer smaller Section 8 certificate or voucher programs have been able to apply for Section 8 funding to pay the salary of a Section 8 FSS coordinator. FSS programs (three local and one state program) in Clearwater, Florida, San Diego, California, Providence, Rhode Island, and New Jersey are profiled.

TRAINING

EDUCATION

CASE MANAGEMENT

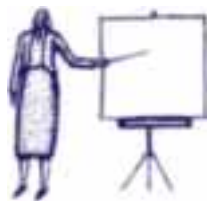
SUPPORT SERVICES

## FAMILY SELF- SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM

### Clearwater, Florida

Homeownership is an integral part of the American dream, and Partners in Self-Sufficiency (PSS) supports that dream as it helps clients of the Clearwater Housing Authority (CHA) become self-reliant. A non-profit agency subcontracted to CHA, PSS provides services under the FSS program to Section 8 recipients and through the Family Investment Center (FIC) to families residing in public housing. The hallmark of the PSS approach is its encouragement of homeownership as a realistic

goal for the future, and the agency has established a program to support clients in this endeavor. In addition, PSS operates a client resource center, drawing upon its long-standing, well-defined relationships with community service providers and referring FSS and FIC clients as appropriate.



## Program Description

Like Family Self-Sufficiency, PSS traces its roots to “Project Self-Sufficiency,” a HUD demonstration program designed to assist low-income single parents and their families on the path to self-sufficiency. The CHA was designated as a Project Self-Sufficiency demonstration site in 1985 and established a separate, non-profit entity to administer the program. Over time, the agency changed the name to Partners in Self-Sufficiency, and began to administer FSS on CHA’s behalf in 1992. In 1996, PSS expanded its staff and began its home-ownership program, and in 1997 was awarded the contract to administer CHA’s Family Investment Center program.

Two advisory bodies link PSS with private and public partners. A thirteen-member Board of Directors includes Clearwater’s mayor and representatives from area banks, major businesses, Pinellas County Social Services, and the Junior League of Clearwater/Dunedin. The Board’s role is to approve program changes, proposals, and policies; it also has a fiduciary responsibility, signing off on grants and approving contracts and major expenditures. Its Executive Council meets monthly and the full board every other month. The second advisor is the Management Advisory Council (MAC), a group that meets regularly to discuss local issues affecting clients; recent meetings, for example, have focused on changing welfare requirements. Membership consists primarily of social service providers, with representation from CHA clients.

Funding sources for PSS include the CHA, the City of Clearwater Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), contributions, training income, and mini-grants from organizations such as the Junior League. Pinellas County Social Services pays the salary of the FSS Coordinator.

## Goals

The PSS mission is to help low-income residents of Clearwater Housing Authority’s Section 8 and public housing programs become economically self-sufficient. The organization considers a family to be self-sufficient when it no longer receives subsidized housing or benefits from federal public assistance programs.

PSS recently defined more specific goals in an application for CDBG funds to cover the salaries of its Executive Director and an administrative assistant:

- To assist 200-275 very low- and low-income families each year to achieve self-sufficiency within a time-limited contract period of three to five years (although a family may complete the contract early, under FSS the contract must be for five years);

- To provide all program participants with an intensive homeownership program, HOMESS (Homeownership Opportunities to Maintain Economic Self-Sufficiency);
- To follow program graduates for two years, tracking their ability to maintain economic independence and identifying barriers they experience when they leave PSS programs;
- To provide participants who become homeowners with ongoing support services — financial assistance funds, continuing homeowner education, and counseling.

## Local Context

Work and Gain Economic Self-Sufficiency (WAGES) is Florida’s welfare reform initiative, and PSS supports clients in complying with its objectives and provisions.

Clearwater’s economy has a large service industry sector. Because there are many older retirees in the area, participants can access many employment opportunities in the health/medical field. For example, a local hospital markets its certified nurse assistant (CNA) program to PSS clients. Employment at assisted living facilities, in child care, and in the home health field enables participants to maintain a stable income. In fact, PSS encourages participants to double-train in these fields to increase their employment options.

## Staffing

The Executive Director has been employed by PSS since November 1995 and has been involved in FSS since 1992. Her responsibilities include guiding program development and expansion, supervising staff, reviewing case files to ensure that proper documentation is provided, and supporting CHA policies. She also manages a small client caseload.

An FSS coordinator manages the majority of cases (75), and a part-time housing counselor supplied by the CHA also provides case management services to FSS clients. An FIC coordinator, two administrative assistants—one of whom is an FSS graduate—and an FIC case manager complete the staff.



## Recruitment and Assessment

The FSS Program is heavily marketed by Section 8 housing counselors, as well as through a monthly newsletter, program brochures, and other social service agencies.

Following a request for enrollment information, an FSS applicant completes a pre-application form, detailing the family’s current situation as well as his or her future goals and aspirations. Then, during an in-depth interview, a case manager evaluates the applicant’s motivation and further explains FSS policies and procedures. Subsequent steps involve development of an Individual Training and Service Plan (ITSP), appropriate testing, agreement to a participation contract, and referral to PSS and community resources. New enrollees are scheduled for monthly case management meetings for the first six months of participation; after that, they typically meet with their case managers every three months.





## Program Components and Local Partnerships

PSS and its many community and government partners provide a wide range of services with many beneficial outcomes.

- One-on-one case management by PSS staff helps participants establish both short- and long-term goals, and meet job training, educational, employment, and homeownership goals.
- Referrals to local social service agencies, educational programs, and career planning and placement organizations provide participants with a wide variety of direct and supportive services. Key education partners include the Pinellas Technical Education Center and St. Petersburg Junior College. Career Options of Pinellas, Inc. is JTPA-funded and features Partners with Options, a program offering education, job training, and support services. Clients are also referred to other service agencies such as the Urban League, the Lions Club, the Furniture Warehouse, and domestic violence services.
- The HOMESS program is an important component of the PSS approach to self-sufficiency. Partners who offer budgeting, homeownership counseling, and down payment assistance include local lenders, the City of Clearwater Housing and Urban Development Department, the Home Buyers Club, and the Community Service Foundation.
- An earned income escrow account is available to all FSS participants.
- A resource center for clients is housed at the PSS offices in the Levinson Center where the agency rents space from the CHA. Through its partnership with the Clearwater Library, PSS has purchased library materials for both adults and children. Materials of particular interest to adults include publications for GED preparation, career exploration, and a job-listing book. The Center has a play area for children, and PSS hopes to add a computer.
- Other special programming, such as presentations on financial planning, auto and home repair, and job readiness skills are open to the community at large.
- A financial assistance program provides up to \$150 per year to help families pay for education, employment, transportation, child care, and utility expenses.
- A mini-loan fund of \$2,000 per year provides small loans to help participants pay off debts or make down payments on a car. Families who demonstrate solid progress in meeting their self-sufficiency goals and who are also in good standing with the CHA may borrow up to \$500 with no interest.
- The recently-established Self-Sufficiency Support and Solutions Group enables participants nearing the end of their FSS contract and those losing their TANF benefits to support each other and share ideas for overcoming barriers to achieving their goals.

Since October 1992, PSS has served 254 participants in FSS, and has released \$105,000 from escrow accounts established on behalf of participants. The program currently has 138 active participants, 102 of whom are working full- or part-time. A total of 81 participants are earning escrow, ranging from \$12-\$666 per month.

- Other supports include the Clothes Closet, from which participants may find clothing appropriate for work; the Holiday Adoption Party, which is held each year to distribute gifts to PSS families who have been “adopted” by private individuals or businesses; and the “Reach for the Sky Awards,” which celebrate participant achievements with certificates.

For job search assistance, PSS links participants to workshops on resume writing, networking, and interviewing skills at Career Options of Pinellas, Inc.

## Outcomes

FSS participants have accomplished other milestones since program inception:



PSS has established a targeted annual caseload of 100 families in FSS as well as an additional 100 in its FIC program. Both programs have consistently met these annual goals.

Participants have this to say about the program, “The most helpful part was the financial assistance on car repairs and utilities - only FSS kept me going ... With guidance and rental assistance, I’ve been able to work myself to independence ... The staff was very helpful with any questions or problems that I had. It was their support and information that helped me buy my own home.”

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## Providence, Rhode Island

The newly renovated Employment Support Center and the host of programs located there affirm the Providence Housing Authority's (PHA) strong commitment to helping families become self-sufficient. Opened in 1997, the building boasts a computer learning center, classrooms, and administrative offices. More importantly, it is home to a Family Self-Sufficiency Program (FSS) that provides both a wide range of education, training, and employment programs as well as an array of supplementary support services. For example, FSS participants receive case management assistance and enrollment incentives such as preferential treatment for scattered-site housing or a low-income homeownership assistance program. To deliver its services, the PHA has developed strong, clearly articulated state and local partnerships, and it receives funding support from several agencies.

Since the enactment of TANF and the state's welfare reform legislation in 1997, PHA staff have concentrated on ensuring that their programs support residents subject to these state and federal policies. They also continue to initiate new programs—for example, training public housing residents to become child care providers.



### Program Description

While the PHA extends FSS eligibility to both public housing residents and Section 8 certificate- and voucher-holders, the vast majority of participants to-date have been public housing clients.

The newly renovated Employment Support Center provides a convenient location for FSS and other resident service programs. Equipped with 12 fully networked stations and sophisticated software that enables instructors and students to monitor progress, its computer learning center offers computer skills training, adult education, and English as a Second Language (ESL).

The PHA enjoys strong support from city government and its state and local partners. The Providence/Cranston Job Training Partnership (the local JTPA provider) provides funds for adult and youth employment programs, and the state's Department of Education funds adult education courses. The Rhode Island Department of Human Services (DHS) administers employment-related services as part of its welfare reform efforts, funding a community work experience program (CWEP) and supportive services such as child care and transportation. The Roger Williams Day Care Center furnishes classroom training for the PHA's licensed home child care provider program, and local lenders participate in a low-income homeownership program.

### Context

Since the passage of the Family Independence Act (FIA) in May 1997, (Rhode Island's TANF program) the PHA's Department of Special Projects has focused primarily on developing the agency's response to sweeping changes in the AFDC program. The agency reports that the "greatest challenge has been adjusting to the pace of TANF implementa-

tion.” While few PHA residents were subject to mandatory work requirements during the early stages of FIA, staff have been reviewing existing services and resources to ensure that they are appropriately focused on employment preparation and support. In her role as chair of the Family Independence Act Legislative Advisory Commission, the PHA’s Director of Special Projects is uniquely positioned to ensure that agency programs are coordinated with the Department of Human Services (DHS) policies.

## Staffing

PHA’s Department of Special Projects administers the FSS Program and all Employment Support Center activities. Three full-time case managers, two of them bilingual, handle approximately 50 cases each, helping participants access appropriate services, advocating for them with DHS and other providers, and identifying training opportunities for those eligible for JTPA-funded assistance. Two of the case managers are funded through the agency’s Family Investment Center grant and the third is paid from the PHA’s operating costs.

Other staff include six part-time instructors and their salaries are paid by the Providence/Cranston JTPA and the state’s Department of Education. Tutoring assistance is provided on a voluntary basis by Providence College students.

## Program Components

Numerous direct services are available:

- **Case management:** helps participants define employment and education goals, identify barriers, and select appropriate strategies for achievement;
- **Education:**
  - Adult education (GED preparation and basic skills education in reading comprehension, language skills, writing, and practical math; available as 20 hour/week classroom or tutorial programs);
  - English language fluency (available as 20 hours/week classroom or tutorial programs); and
  - Guidance and enrollment assistance for other training programs and post-secondary education;
- **Job specific skills:** computer skills training, an office skills certification program, training for licensed child care providers, training in small business development;
- **Minicourses** in homeownership, job search, and job readiness;
- **Job placement** through CWEP, JTPA, and PHA-generated work experience opportunities;
- **Transportation and child care assistance;** and
- **Escrow accounts.**

Additionally, all FSS participants receive preference for a low-income homeownership assistance program, and those residing in public housing are eligible for scattered-site housing.

Staff are developing two additional minicourses: one will highlight the experiences of FSS participants and public housing clients who have secured rewarding employment; another will present a comprehensive inventory of post-secondary educational offerings in the area, and feature panel discussions with admissions and other personnel from these institutions.



## Recruitment, Assessment, and Enrollment

The FSS Program has conducted outreach campaigns to all public housing residents three times every year since 1994. Strategies have included site-based information sessions, newsletters, door-to-door contacts, and rent statement notifications. Since September 1997, the program has mailed bilingual information about the Employment Support Center programs to 1,100 households. As of June 1998, 154 households have responded to the outreach.

Enrollment applications are prioritized according to the resident's perceived commitment to meeting employment and training goals. Public housing residents must be in good standing or capable of taking corrective action and must interview with a case manager to develop a Participation Contract. Once enrolled, clients meet with case managers at least every three months, and more frequently as needed.

One success story involves a single mother of four who signed the FSS contract in April 1995, at which time her only income was from AFDC benefits. She enrolled in the Community College of Rhode Island for an Associate's degree and later transferred to a local university to complete her degree in office administration and computers. She began volunteering at the Providence Housing Authority part-time in the scattered-site management office and within a matter of months was hired full-time by the MIS department where her educational skills were highly valued. Within 18 months of enrolling in the FSS program, this participant had closed her AFDC case.

## Outcomes

### Public Housing Participants

Of the 191 public housing residents signing contracts since 1994, 117 remain active in the program, 49 have become employed, 44 are receiving escrow account credits, and 24 are enrolled in education or training programs a minimum of 20 hours/week or are actively seeking employment. Among the successful participants, eight have moved to unsubsidized rental property and one has purchased a home.

### Section 8 Participants

Of the 42 Section 8 participant contracts established since 1992, 21 are considered positive terminations, i.e., participants have maintained full-time employment without receipt of TANF assistance for 12 months. Twelve participants remain active in the program; of these six are currently employed and six are preparing for employment. Program staff conduct ongoing outreach to fill Section 8 FSS slots vacated by successful participants.

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## **San Diego, California**

San Diego's Family Self-Sufficiency Program is a testimony to good relationships. Over the years, the San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC) has established strong bonds with other public agencies, community service providers, educational institutions, private employers, and professional organizations. As a result, FSS participants can now tap a large coordinated network of culturally appropriate resources as they seek the employment and education that will give them a living, sustainable wage.



### **Program Description**

FSS is an important component of the agency's resident economic self-sufficiency initiatives. Both Section 8 certificate and voucher program participants as well as public housing residents are eligible to enroll in the program.

In San Diego, FSS is not a stand-alone program; rather, it is integrated with other self-sufficiency programs operated through the Learning Opportunity Centers at public housing facilities managed by the SDHC. FSS case management staff oversee activities at the centers, which also house programs such as Neighborhood Networks and Campus of Learners. According to staff members, integrating services funded through various programs leads participants to associate their activities with a center rather than with FSS itself.

SDHC staff, including its FSS case managers, are actively involved in grant writing. The agency recently submitted a successful bid to The Irvine Foundation for a grant that will provide \$500,000 over two years to support FSS activities such as case management, basic and adult education, job development, and skills training for high-demand jobs in San Diego. Staff have also been involved in other successful grant writing efforts to secure funding for child care, literacy, vocational education, and other services.

Community partnerships are the cornerstone of the FSS Program. For example, The San Diego Community College system is a major collaborator, providing vocational assessment services and acting as a source of educational programming for participants. The community colleges were also involved in the design of the grant proposal to The Irvine Foundation.

Other relationships exist with:

- the Workforce Partnership (the local Private Industry Council), which has also been involved in vocational assessments and which funds the One Stop Centers that provide a range of career exploration services;
- the Labor Council and local trade unions, which offer apprentice training experiences;
- the city's Enterprise Community, which provides funding for child care, transportation, and books;

- community-based agencies, such as the Urban League, the Chicano Federation, the Union of Pan Asian Communities, and Neighborhood House Association; and
- the Small Business Administration, which has been instrumental in microbusiness programming.

Other organizations and businesses providing support through employment and training opportunities and other services include two community development corporations, the Nordstrom Company, and the YM/YWCAs.

The Program Coordinating Committee (PCC) serves as an advisory body to the SDHC and its various programs. With representation from the city’s key leaders, the committee has been meeting quarterly since 1991. The PCC ensures wide access to local service and grant writing resources.

## Goals

SDHC has structured the FSS program to coordinate an array of public and private resources to support participants in achieving their individual employment and education goals. In a city that is ethnically and racially diverse, staff members work to ensure that program services and activities are culturally appropriate for their clients.

In addition to its major goal, the program reports that it has several “creative objectives,” some of which include:

- coordinating program efforts with the Private Industry Council, the San Diego Community College system, and trade organizations to introduce participants, particularly women, to the skilled trades, nontraditional occupations, and apprenticeship programs;
- involving the Small Business Administration and designated Enterprise Zones to assist participants in creating microbusinesses; and
- promoting continuing education and life-long learning as mechanisms for achieving success.

## Local Context

Three issues are particularly relevant to the program’s environment: the status of welfare reform activities in the state, the condition of San Diego’s labor market, and the city’s demographics.

CALWORKS is California’s welfare reform initiative, and when fully implemented it will require all families receiving cash assistance to be involved in work-related activities at



least 30 hours per week. Staff are trying to integrate welfare-to-work requirements into individual FSS plans and further develop partnerships to enhance employment and training opportunities for families receiving CALWORKS benefits.

San Diego's large and growing service industry, much of it related to tourism, has resulted in significant job growth in entry-level, part-time, and temporary positions as well as in highly skilled positions requiring higher levels of education. As a result, many jobs are either insufficient for a living, sustainable wage or are inaccessible to SDHC clients. The training and employment programs available to FSS participants are designed to respond to this situation.

Population characteristics also pose challenges to service delivery. San Diego has long been a major immigration port. The largest minority group has traditionally been Latino, and there is now a large African-American population. At the end of the Vietnam War, large groups of Laotian, Cambodian, and Hmong immigrants arrived, while more recent immigrants come from the Middle East and East African countries such as Somalia and Eritrea. This diversity requires that SDHC partner with a vast range of service agencies within these communities to ensure that FSS activities are culturally appropriate.

## Staffing

The FSS Program is managed by the SDHC's Resident Services Department. The Assistant Manager for Resident Services devotes approximately 25 percent of her time to FSS.

Most operational aspects are led by the Resident Initiatives Coordinator (RIC), who is responsible for program marketing and outreach as well as logistics and planning for orientations, workshops, and employment support groups. Like other FSS staff, the RIC works on several department initiatives.

Four Senior Resident Initiatives Coordinators (SRICs) serve as case managers and spend approximately 25 percent of their time on FSS. In addition to managing a large caseload, these staff coordinate Learning Opportunity Center activities and participate in grant writing. Each is responsible for an area of expertise; for example, one SRIC is currently researching best practices in self-sufficiency programs. With limited resources, caseloads have been large, but funding from the Irvine Foundation grant will provide key partners (San Diego Community College and an array of CBOs) with additional case management and program coordinator staff all in support of FSS families.

An administrative analyst, who is responsible for maintaining all program statistics, contracts, and career plans as well as monitoring regulations, is the only staff person fully dedicated to FSS.

Program participants are also involved in FSS operations: one manages a non-traditional training program for women, the Willa Brown Aviation Program, and two serve on the PCC. Some participants are employed by the SDHC, while others contribute to the newsletter and serve on resident advisory boards of the Learning Opportunity Centers.



## Recruitment and Assessment

The FSS Program is widely marketed to public housing residents and Section 8 certificate and voucher program participants. Orientation programs are held in SDHC facilities and in other public meeting spaces, and staff introduce the program during recertification interviews. At one time, notices were enclosed in rent receipts for public housing, and flyers and posters were placed in SDHC and service provider facilities. The agency's public information office publishes a quarterly newsletter and promotes coverage in local media outlets. In addition, referrals also come from word-of-mouth and community partners.

FSS program orientations provide an in-depth description of the program and an opportunity to gather preliminary information on the client's circumstances. Interested individuals schedule an appointment with an SRIC; subsequent activities include an interview and a series of mandatory career assessment and planning workshops where clients complete career plans and specify interim and final goals as well as activities needed to achieve their self-sufficiency goals.



## Program Components and Local Partnerships

In collaboration with its numerous community partners, the SDHC approach offers:

- **direct services:** outreach, program orientation, career planning workshops, vocational assessment, case management, individual and group career support, topic seminars, information and referrals, career training, education, escrow account management; and
- **career support services:** reduced rate and subsidized child care, transportation assistance, adult education and college book scholarships, clothing vouchers, voice mail service, and start-up equipment for family day care providers.

FSS participants have access to community education programs including basic literacy, adult basic education, GED, and community college classes.

Additionally, local employers, community colleges, trade unions, and other public agencies and business organizations provide access to a number of innovative career training and employment opportunities. The following activities illustrate the range of these programs and the partners involved in designing, funding, or otherwise supporting them:

- Training in construction, wastewater management, other non-traditional occupations for women, and trade apprenticeships are funded by grants, private industry, trade unions, and community colleges.
- A training program for heavy equipment operators was established by the SDHC, Latino Builders, and the San Diego Community Colleges.
- A pre-apprenticeship maintenance program originally developed by SDHC through contracts with several partners, including the Carpenters and Painters Union, and is being revised and expanded to include other trades through partnerships with the San Diego Imperial County Labor Council and The City Heights Community Development Corporation.

For Cheryl, life before FSS was a series of minimum-wage, dead-end jobs, a GED with no additional training, and endless years on the welfare rolls. Her quality-of-life improved significantly, however, when she obtained subsidized housing and joined the FSS program. She applied to the Willa Brown Aviation Program at one of the local community colleges and after a rigorous three-year training program, was hired by Boeing in an aviation maintenance position paying \$12.75/hour with full family benefits. Boeing paid for her to relocate and, after additional training and certification, her hourly wage will increase.

Cheryl credits her success to the support she received from the Willa Brown Program - everything from help with study skills, to child care, to transportation assistance. "It was a very challenging process," she said. "I had to juggle college, my family's needs, dirty nails, and most of all the struggles of a woman in a non-traditional field." When asked if it was all worth it, she didn't hesitate. "You bet", she replied, "I got a life."

- Microbusiness training and technical assistance programs offered previously resulted in the creation or expansion of 14 businesses. Training covered goal setting and assessment, business plan development, marketing, accounting, and small/micro business loan applications. A current program supports resident-owned child care and transportation enterprises to serve families enrolled in Learning Center activities.
- Several public housing and Section 8 families have been licensed as family day care providers through training provided by the SDHC. Child care centers established by these participants operate in public housing facilities.

In a report to SDHC's Commissioners on June 1, 1998, program management reported that:

- Since the inception of FSS in July 1993, more than 700 families had enrolled in the program. As of June 1998, SDHC held active contracts with 528 participants (400 Section 8 certificate and voucher holders, 128 public housing residents).
- Although no participants had reached the five-year term of their contracts, 22 were no longer receiving housing assistance.
- The SDHC manages 268 active escrow accounts with a value of \$525,911.
- Forty-one FSS families are scheduled to graduate by December 1998.
- Thirty-nine percent of FSS families were enrolled in adult education, community college, or four-year college programs. Many of these families are also employed.
- Among participants, 283 were employed. Of these, 185 were working when they started the program; of this group, 95 had increased their earnings by an average of \$6,000/year.
- An additional 126 participants had moved from welfare to work, and 70 of these were working full-time. As a whole, the transition group experienced an average annual earnings increase of \$10,687.

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## New Jersey

When Work First New Jersey welfare reform legislation was passed in 1996, the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) was able to respond effectively. Largely through the savings realized by automating Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspections, the agency not only increased staffing resources but transformed its Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) and Section 8 programs to give priority to Work First participants.



### Program Description

DCA's Family Self-Sufficiency Program targets the 18,000 Section 8 certificate and voucher program participants served statewide by its eighteen county-level Field Offices. Funding for FSS is derived entirely from administrative fees.

Many of those involved in the original FSS program design now serve as members of a county-level Program Coordinating Committee (PCC). The PCC is typically comprised of representatives from the county TANF office, JTPA and other service providers, educational institutions, child care providers, and business and social organizations. Because several entities within each county administer Section 8 subsidies—the state (DCA), the county, and local housing agencies—most DCA programs join forces with the other agency FSS programs to form county-level PCCs. For example, eight FSS programs are represented on the PCC in Monmouth County and five on the PCC for Ocean County.

The FSS program has also evolved: staff numbers have increased, the role of Section 8 staff in the agency's 18 Field Offices has expanded, and program priorities have been realigned to reflect welfare-to-work requirements.

### Goals

While the primary goal of DCA's FSS Program is to promote economic independence and self-sufficiency, a priority for central office staff is to ensure that FSS objectives and policies are integrated with those of Work First New Jersey.

Now in its third year of implementation, the state's welfare reform initiative requires welfare recipients to obtain employment or participate in work readiness activities such as community work experience and on-the-job training. The FSS Program reinforces these objectives by incorporating the Work First New Jersey Individual Responsibility Plan into the FSS Individual Services and Training Plan (ITSP). Additionally, DCA central and Field Office staff work closely with the Department of Human Services to support families affected by Work First provisions—for example, DCA regularly conducts group FSS briefings for families receiving welfare assistance.

Another demonstration of cooperative efforts between DCA, the FSS Program, and Work First New Jersey is the participation of some PCCs on County Workforce Investment Boards (WIBS). An integral part of the TANF system, WIBS have been established in each county to support the state's welfare-to-work initiative by involving the private sector in job creation and service enhancement. Active representation on these boards enables FSS program staff to remain informed about available services and appropriate referral channels for their clients.

While the overall objectives of the FSS Program have not changed, its focus has been revised to reflect state welfare policies. More specifically, with job readiness as the principle objective of welfare-to-work programs, FSS field representatives now place more emphasis on job placement issues and less on linking clients to education programs as primary program goals.

## Administration and Staffing

Field Offices vary in size, serving 300-2,000 families with a staff typically consisting of a supervisor and a team of field representatives, with accompanying clerical and technical support personnel. Each office maintains its own waiting list and set of residency preferences.

Field Representatives serve as case managers for Section 8 and FSS, and each is assigned approximately 300 families. These staff are responsible for program outreach, client assessment, development of ITSPs, linking clients to services, and monitoring participant progress. Statewide, 74 Field Representatives have been trained to manage FSS cases, in addition to their Section 8 case-related functions.

In recent years the number of new FSS enrollees has increased steadily, primarily because once automation reduced the time needed for HQS inspections, DCA was able to reassign staff to FSS. After reevaluating program operations, DCA instituted a team approach to Section 8 case management.

## Service Provision

Field Representatives provide case management, an important component of which involves supplying the motivational and supportive counseling to help participants strive for greater economic independence. While counseling focuses on job placement, the overall approach is holistic in that it facilitates all aspects of growth within the individual. Field Representatives refer FSS participants to appropriate resources-to state employment services, including Work First New Jersey and the state's Department of Labor; to public and private resources, including nonprofit groups, PCC member organizations, and other community service providers, for remedial and higher education, vocational training, housing counseling, life management skills, and supportive services such as transportation and child care. Staff also match some participants with peer mentors who are program graduates or with mentors from local businesses. In addition, DCA maintains and disburses FSS escrow funds.

Many FSS participants are described as highly motivated and well on their way to meeting their goals. Because of this, DCA has approved an increasing number of requests for interim escrow withdrawals, which can be used to pay for education fees, transportation, and other expenses related to meeting FSS goals. FSS maintains monthly contact with participants during their first six months; after that, contact is less frequent and is often client-initiated.



## Recruitment

Field representatives promote FSS at every opportunity, introducing it to all families through Section 8 briefings at initial and interim eligibility determinations and mailing outreach packets to all prospective participants. Interest and motivation are among the criteria for selection, and staff use a concise assessment form to determine educational status, employment history, service needs, and involvement with other public agencies. DCA



staff estimate that approximately eight percent of those contacted have enrolled in FSS.

Currently, DCA employs a three-tier hierarchy for selecting FSS participants from families participating in the Section 8 certificate and voucher programs. In priority order, these are:

1. **Households that have successfully completed the Transitional Housing Program.** There are 27 such programs in the state, some of which have been created and funded by DCA. Program graduates have completed a full year of counseling, education, parenting, and job readiness activities. (Through June 1998, 161 Transitional Housing graduates had participated in FSS.)
2. **Participants in the Department of Human Services' Work First New Jersey Welfare Reform Program.** As previously noted, FSS is actively marketed to these participants, all of whom receive cash assistance and some of whom are working when enrolled in FSS. (Through June 1998, 290 FSS participants were enrolled in the Work First Program.)
3. **Participants in the Family Unification Program.** This program is funded by a HUD set-aside of tenant-based Section 8 to assist families who have lost their children or are at risk of losing their children because of their housing conditions. Families are referred to DCA by the state's child welfare agency. (Active in eleven counties, this program had enrolled 292 families and signed FSS contracts with 21 through June 1998.)

Additional FSS participants are selected in chronological sequence based on when they are certified for Section 8 housing assistance.

## Outcomes

DCA has conducted outreach activities to more than 16,000 Section 8 families, and in 1998 the first participants will reach the end of their five-year contracts. Through September 1998, 1,286 families had participated.

Other accomplishments through September 1998 include:

**23 participants have graduated  
and 14 have become homeowners.**

**375 families have established escrow accounts. By the end of the calendar year,  
400 families are expected to have opened accounts.**

**Escrow holdings total \$1,001,000 and are increasing  
at the rate of \$300,000 per quarter.**

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A Mercer County participant successfully completed the program by transitioning from welfare to work to homeownership, using \$13,000 of earned escrow monies to purchase her home. This single parent of two received a certificate in Secretarial Office Automation, an achievement which led first to a job as an Inventory Management Assistant and then to a job with full benefits for the City of Trenton. After clearing debts and establishing credit, she was able to apply for and receive a mortgage.

# Empowerment Zones/Enterprise Communities (EZ/EC)

## HUD's Empowerment Zones/Enterprise Communities (EZ/EC)

initiative combines tax incentives for business development and job creation with a comprehensive approach to community revitalization of the neediest urban and rural regions. A total of 72 urban areas and 33 rural communities were designated, on a competitive basis, as Empowerment Zones or Enterprise Communities in 1994, with another round of awards to be made in Fiscal Year 1999. Workforce development activities in the designated communities — such as job creation, job training, and entrepreneurial support — may be funded through federal Social Services Block Grant funds and state and local financial resources. We highlight three examples of EZ/EC workforce development projects: Norfolk Works, Inc., in Norfolk, Virginia; the Job Match Program in Cleveland, Ohio; and New Beginnings in Detroit, Michigan.

TRAINING

JOB PLACEMENT

SUPPORT SERVICES

## COORDINATING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

### Norfolk, Virginia

In Norfolk, Virginia the Redevelopment and Housing Authority created a non-profit organization to coordinate all workforce development activities within the Enterprise Community (EC). Established with EC funding, Norfolk Works, Inc. forms partnerships with private-sector companies and other local agencies to provide employment and training services to EC residents.



### Program Description

Norfolk Works, Inc. (NWI), is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization created in 1995 and charged with managing all EC activities in the city of Norfolk. In addition to helping employers who want to locate within the EC, NWI offers resources, referrals, and job training to low- and moderate-income residents of the EC. Through its innovative approach to partnerships, NWI has helped EC residents become self-sufficient, adding stability to their neighborhood and enhancing the city.

The program recruits EC residents and assesses their educational attainment and career interests, sometimes referring them to job training or educational programs and sometimes placing them in jobs. In addition to child care and transportation



assistance, NWI offers job readiness workshops, individual employment counseling, and Urban Apprenticeship/Focus classes on site at its four neighborhood career counseling centers. In addition, the program develops a central database of available jobs and corresponding skill requirements as well as an “electronic profile” for each NWI participant listing training, education, and employment experience. The profile can be accessed by prospective employers and/or used for resume development.

NWI works closely with the Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority (NRHA) and is headquartered in the same building. The program is staffed by an Executive Director, four career counselors (each located in different neighborhood centers within the EC<sup>1</sup>), a job developer, and an administrative assistant. NWI is governed by a board of 25 business and professional representatives, all but two of whom are appointed by the City Council.

## Local Context

Home to 43,305 residents or 17 percent of the city’s population, Norfolk’s Enterprise Community covers 8.7 square miles and eighteen contiguous census tracts. Its 14 neighborhoods form an inner urban ring around the city center and include all of Norfolk’s public housing—eight family developments, two mid-rises for the elderly, five housing conservation projects, and six redevelopment projects. As an EC, Norfolk received \$3 million in Title XX Social Services Block Grant funds for three years, of which \$676,000 is devoted to workforce development services. The program has also leveraged funding from outside sources including grants from the Virginia Department of Social Services and JTPA.

Data collected for the 1994 EZ/EC application provide evidence of neighborhood distress: 52 percent of residents live below the poverty line; per capita income is the lowest in the city; 34 percent of the working-age population is unemployed; 30 percent of the families are headed by women; 55 percent of adults do not have high school diplomas; 51 percent of the city’s welfare recipients reside within EC boundaries; and 28 percent of residents received AFDC.

## Design and Implementation

When NWI surveyed them regarding their most important needs, residents uniformly listed jobs as a top priority. In addition, they indicated a desire for coordination and networking among residents, existing public agencies, businesses and organizations.

In response, NWI formed a Technical Assistance Committee to develop partnerships and to design and implement education and training programs. Comprised of 50 individuals from nearly 40 different agencies, the Technical Assistance Committee is responsible for determining the job training and employment needs of residents, identifying gaps in service availability, exploring grant opportunities, expanding existing programs, and developing new ones. Partners include:

<sup>1</sup> The career counselors are located in the Diggs Town Tenant Management Office (public housing neighborhood), the Park Place Community Development Corporation (Neighborhood Conservation area), the Urban League office (downtown location), and the Southeastern Tidewater Opportunities Program (the local Community Action Agency).

- Citizen Leaders;
- City of Norfolk (Departments of Development and Human Services);
- Greater Norfolk Corporation;<sup>2</sup>
- Norfolk Public Schools;
- Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority;
- Norfolk State University;
- Old Dominion University;
- Olde Huntsville Community Development Corporation (CDC);
- Park Place CDC;
- Southeastern Tidewater Opportunity Project; and
- Tidewater Community College.

NWI also established a Business Assistance Committee to design training curricula that are consistent with employer skill requirements. As a result, 50 businesses committed themselves to provide job opportunities for EC residents.

The four neighborhood career counseling centers were established during the design phase of the program and each was staffed with a career counselor. To do this, NWI secured support from the Urban League, which provided a career counselor and office space, and the Southeast Tidewater Opportunity Project, Inc., which committed counselors, instructors, and office space. In addition, the Public Housing Tenant Management Corporation provided office space for the neighborhood career counseling centers.



<sup>2</sup> The Greater Norfolk Corporation is comprised of business leaders and representatives of the area's largest employers. The mission of the corporation is to recruit and attract economic development to the area and to set standards for economic development.

## Recruitment

While NWI uses several client-recruitment methods, the most frequent are the Opportunity and Job Fairs held in EC neighborhoods throughout the year. NWI also regularly presents information about its work to neighborhood organizations, and counselors visit public housing developments weekly to find new recruits. NWI also holds an annual Education Fair and a Business Fair, the latter in partnership with the City Department of Development, local banks, the Small Business Administration, local CPAs, and law firms. Finally, NWI uses the media- television presentations, newspaper ads and articles, even its own newsletter-as well as staff community relations activities.

NWI also receives referrals from the local Department of Social Services, the agency that administers TANF. To date, approximately 6 percent of all participants were referred to NWI in this manner. To comply with the work requirements of the local TANF program, VIEW, clients referred by the Department of Social Services are eligible only for the Nations Bank training program or for immediate job placement.

## Services

The first step for an interested EC resident is to complete a program application, either at one of the neighborhood career counseling centers or at one of the NWI-sponsored fairs. Then, during an in-depth interview, a career counselor talks with the client about his or her educational background, career goals, skills, and interests. A high school diploma or equivalent is required for all of training programs and whenever necessary a counselor arranges for GED classes as the first step. GED classes are offered either at Tidewater Community College or through the Norfolk Skills Center, and NWI will pay for the tuition, books, and transportation.

If the client meets educational requirements, the counselor discusses his or her career goals and motivation and together they decide on the most appropriate next step. NWI offers four types of activities: educational training, job-readiness training, job-skills training, and the Focus/Urban Apprenticeship program.

**Educational Training.** A variety of educational services are available, including GED classes, Adult Basic Education for eight weeks (six hours/week), and some college classes. Participants interested in college classes must pass a college placement test; for anyone who passes, NWI will pay tuition for the first semester, cover the cost of books, and help him or her find a part-time job. During the first semester, NWI assists participants in applying for a Pell Grant to cover tuition in subsequent semesters.

**Job Readiness Workshop.** Job readiness helps residents hone the personal skills that will help them move from welfare to work, make a smooth transition from unemployment to employment, maintain their new job, and generally learn how to survive in the workplace. The job readiness workshops are two weeks long/five days per week and are offered on-site in NWI offices.

**Job Skills Training.** Job training programs help residents prepare for specific jobs that range from processing/data entry to building or shipyard trades. Several job-skills training programs are available:

- **NationsBank.** Designed specifically for EC residents making the transition from welfare to work, this program is the result of an NWI partnership with the Virginia Department of Social Services, Tidewater Community College and NationsBank. To participate in this 15-week /20 hours per week program (developed by NationsBank to meet its customer service needs), clients must first complete the job-readiness training offered by NWI. Graduates are to be employed in the Credit Card Division of NationsBank, and the bank has agreed to hire all successful graduates. On average, those placed in jobs at NationsBank earn \$7.87/hour and receive fringe benefits.

- **Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning (HVAC) Installation and Repair Training.** A non-traditional training program for women that is provided under contract with Tidewater Community College, this is a 15-week /20 hours per week course endorsed by the local HVAC association. Upon successful completion of the program, participants are given internships and on-the-job training, and follow-up support is available from the career counselors for three months. Those placed in permanent jobs at the conclusion of their internships earn an average of \$6.67/ hour.

Other training options include:

- **Fast Track**, a two-week job simulation experience;
- **Customer Service Training** for TransWorld Airlines, a TWA training to which NWI makes referrals;
- **Certified Nursing Assistant Training**, a 12-week course offered at Tidewater Community College;
- **Retail Training**, a 12-week training program offered by Norfolk Public schools;
- **Computer Training**, includes keyboarding, WordPerfect, Microsoft Works, and A+ certification; and
- **Boat fibreglassing.**

**The Focus/Urban Apprenticeship.** Developed in partnership with Tidewater Community College, this program helps residents focus on long-term career goals and employment skills, providing assistance with resumes and offering a variety of services such as support groups. A 10-week program with two- or three-hour classes/week, its instructors are provided by the Southeastern Tidewater Opportunity Project, Inc. (STOP), a local community action agency. To complete the program, all participants must develop a strategic career/life plan and attend a pre-employment class and a job-readiness workshop as well as specific education and job-training classes that support their career plans.

## Job Development/Placement

The job developer on staff at NWI is funded by the Virginia Department of Social Services and works closely with the City's Department of Development to identify expanding or new businesses that may represent employment opportunities for EC residents. The job developer contacts businesses to ascertain their hiring needs and skill requirements and to explain the tax benefits of hiring NWI participants. She also maintains contact with employers who hire NWI participants, to monitor employee progress, help resolve issues that arise, and remain informed about new job opportunities.

NWI has made a concerted effort to reach out to private-sector employers. In the fall of 1995, workers were trained and recruited for construction work on the Norfolk Campus of Tidewater Community College. The general contractor for this project interviewed 56 of the 184 applicants who applied through NWI and hired 50. NWI has also collaborated with Hannafords, a local grocery chain, and with TWA to interview and refer potential employees.

The MacArthur Center Mall currently under construction in Norfolk is a potential source for many new jobs. The construction itself offers the potential for several hundred jobs and the general contractor has agreed to refer program eligible job-seekers at the construction site to the NWI offices for applications, and to contact NWI when they need workers.


Based on the developer's estimates that the completed mall will employ approximately 1,000 people, NWI has begun working with the developer and Tidewater Community College to design a training and recruitment program for EC residents. NWI will coordinate a training program that will include basic job readiness, customer service and basic retail sales, as well as advanced retail sales. Workshops will also be developed to meet the requirements specified by mall tenants.

A computer engineering student typifies the program's success. Now studying in a building he once helped to construct, he pays for his college tuition with his new job as a technical support professional at Gateway Computers, a job he attributes to the Computer Training certificate he received through Norfolk Works. Another Gateway employee concurs. "I used to work two or three jobs," she said, "and I had no chance of going to college. Without Norfolk Works, I wouldn't have my certification, my job at Gateway, or money for college."

## Outcomes

In the program's first two years of operations (May 1995-June 1997), 2500 participants contacted NWI neighborhood career counseling offices. Of those, 1,042 (42 percent) entered a training or educational program and 710 (68 percent) completed a program. Many of those who have not completed are still active in training programs.

 **Of those who completed a training or educational program, 60 percent were placed in jobs.** 

  
**Another 22 percent were enrolled in additional training, and 13 percent were unemployed but working with a job developer to locate an appropriate placement.**

  
**The remaining were considered inactive and could not be located by program personnel.** 

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## **Cleveland, Ohio**

Strategic planners for Cleveland's Supplemental Empowerment Zone have contracted with a local non-profit provider to link job-ready residents with employment. Distinguished by its strong commitment to post-placement support, the Job Match program actively tracks job retention and features several ongoing support mechanisms for individuals it has placed.



### **Program Description**

The Job Match program is operated by Vocational Guidance Services, a non-profit service provider offering vocational evaluation, training and placement services. Having offered job search and placement assistance under the Job Match model to Cleveland-area residents since 1992, the company expanded its Job Match operations in 1996 to include three neighborhood offices in the city's Supplemental Empowerment Zone (SEZ).

To ensure that its job training services are responsive to the workforce needs of local employers, Vocational Guidance Services collaborates closely with the Midtown Cleveland Inc. business association. The Job Match program offers testing and assessment, career counseling, a job-seeking skills course, job placement, and follow-up support. Each of the three neighborhood SEZ offices is staffed by a case manager, an instructor/job retention specialist, a job developer, and a clerical support assistant. Additionally, a program manager, database specialist, and administrative assistant are located in Vocational Guidance Services' company headquarters.

### **Local Context**

The Cleveland SEZ is comprised of four contiguous neighborhoods. Hough, Glenville, and Fairfax are predominantly residential and Midtown Cleveland is an industrial neighborhood with more than 500 businesses. While they all have deteriorated physical infrastructures and significant unemployment and poverty, the neighborhoods also have some important resources-proximity to the area's major employers, several highly motivated resident organizations, and a strong network of neighborhood-based institutions.

As an SEZ, Cleveland received an \$87 million Economic Development Initiative (EDI) grant from HUD, \$87 million in Section 108 loan authority, \$3 million in Title XX Social Security Block Grant funds, and access to EZ/EC-specific tax-exempt bond financing. The Job Match program is funded from the EDI grant. First-year funding was \$946,700 and the second year is funded at \$809,000.

The Job Match program established clear participation goals and in its first year placed 382 individuals in full-time jobs, exceeding its goal by almost 10 percent. Of those placed during the first year, 40 percent had previously been dependent on some form of public assistance. The average hourly wage for those placed was \$6.82 and half received company-paid fringe benefits.



More ambitious goals were set for the second year-1,500 residents to be recruited, 920 served, and 420 placed. Half-way through the second year, the program had placed a total of 172 EZ residents.



## Recruitment

Job Match recruits participants through door-to-door solicitations within the SEZ neighborhoods, mailings to area zip codes, referrals from community agencies, and outreach activities at the community agency fairs held periodically throughout the year. In addition, the program displays billboards and posters throughout the SEZ.

## Assessment and Job-Seeking Skills Training

The first step for interested applicants is to attend a group orientation session at one of the neighborhood Job Match offices. Once staff members have explained the services available and the program requirements, interested participants complete an application form, providing personal information regarding educational and work experience, and a social services needs assessment form. By asking whether they would like assistance with transportation, housing, child care, personal budgeting and domestic violence, the application alerts case managers to potential barriers and allows them to make appropriate referrals.

Following orientation, applicants are scheduled for drug testing, a mandatory requirement of the program. Those testing positive are referred for substance abuse counseling and can reapply only if they have enrolled themselves in a treatment program within 90 days.

Testing and assessment are the next steps and two standardized tests are administered—the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) to test English and vocabulary and the Wide Range Aptitude Test (WRAT) to test math skills. After testing, participants meet individually with the case manager to determine whether or not they are job-ready and to set employment goals. Those who are not job-ready are referred to training programs at the One Stop Career Center, another resource in the SEZ which opened in April 1998.

The assessment process is tailored to individual need. For example, someone with 25 years experience in the cleaning business came to the Job Match program and tested at the third grade level for reading and math. While this individual was considered job-ready because of her strong work history, her long-term goal of a nursing career required her to improve her basic education skills and pursue specialized training. With help from the Job Match case manager, the participant established both short- and long-term goals. To cover living expenses, Job Match placed her in a part-time



job and the case manager helped her understand that adult basic education, GED, and post-secondary education were necessary steps toward her long-term goal. Job Match does not provide these services directly but can make referrals and provide the necessary case management support.

Following testing and assessment, all participants attend the one-week Job Seeking Skills Training class. The 20-hour course is taught by the Job Match instructor and covers such topics as interviewing skills, job application process, resume preparation, job attitudes/behavior, budgeting, self-esteem, and career interests. People must complete all five days of the class before moving on to work with a job developer.

Employers of Job Match participants have noted their satisfaction with the program. "It's hard to find employees. Job MATCH is helpful because it screens applicants. The process increases the likelihood that the new employee wants to work and will remain with the company.... The professional approach and intensive thought given to our company's needs regarding prospective employees has been very worthwhile. Vocational Guidance Services continues to listen to


## Job Development/Placement



The next step is for each participant to meet individually with the job developer to begin the search process. The job developer establishes and monitors a pool of job openings and through regular contact with employers builds an understanding of the skill requirements for available jobs. To make appropriate job placement decisions, the job developer also must have a clear understanding of participants' interests, skills, and work experience. He or she begins by talking with the instructor and case manager about the candidates' interests and skills and reviewing assessment test results. Then, in meetings with individual participants, the developer learns more about the type of work desired, the hours that the participant is available to work, and the barriers that may need to be addressed to make the placement successful. After matching the requirements of available jobs with the skills of available workers, the developer refers participants for interviews.

Using contacts with neighborhood economic development councils and the Midtown Cleveland Business Association, the job developer has established a network of employers. A strong local economy offers a lot of employment opportunities and local employers are willing to hire workers through Job Match. Two other factors have also contributed to the success of the job development component: Vocational Guidance Services is well known as an established job training and placement agency, and all entities receiving business loans from SEZ resources must commit to hiring EZ residents.

## Post-Placement Support and Job Retention

Job Match offers post-placement support to help ensure that placements work well for both workers and employers. The job retention specialist is available through an answering service and pager system 24 hours a day/seven days a week so participants can seek guidance and advice when problems arise on the job or when they need help making child care or other arrangements to accommodate work schedules. Although the program has received few calls outside of regular business hours and few requests for emergency assistance, Job Match staff feel that it is helpful for participants to know they are available if needed. At the same time, the job developer maintains close contact with employers to monitor their satisfaction with employee performance.

 Job Match staff also facilitate a community jobs support group in which people can meet with one another to share their employment experiences and encourage each other in the transition. These monthly meetings are held in the Job Match offices but the agenda is set by the participants to ensure they focus on topics of most interest to newly employed workers. Feedback from participants has been positive.

 While job retention is an important objective of the program and concerted efforts are made to track this outcome, early results highlight the challenges for long-term retention. In the first year of operations, a total of 382 participants were placed in jobs, some more than once for a total of 486 placements. Each placement is tracked by the instructor/job retention specialist who contacts employees and employers 30, 60, and 90 days following placement and then again at six and 12 months. A full 51 percent of placements were maintained beyond six months, yet only 16 percent were maintained for 12 months. Some may have ended when workers moved on to other jobs while others resulted in a return to unemployment, but these details are not available from program data. When placements are not successful, Job Match staff make efforts to find other jobs for those participants. 

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## Detroit, Michigan

In 1994, the Detroit Medical Center (DMC) set up the New Beginnings program to help people in the lower Woodward Corridor of Detroit—home to three public housing developments—enhance their levels of income and education and at the same time increase the supply of qualified health care workers. Now the program provides DMC and its health care partners, Henry Ford Health System (HFHS) and St. John Health System (SJHS), a continuous supply of qualified, entry-level health care employees. This Empowerment Zone (EZ) project receives funding from JTPA and foundations, and approximately 50 to 70 percent of participants are public housing residents.



### Program Description

The New Beginnings program provides training and job placement assistance to residents of the lower Woodward Corridor, which is located in one of Detroit's three Empowerment Zone neighborhoods. In addition to living in the area, applicants must have a high school diploma or GED, and a desire to work in the health care industry.

The three-part training process begins with a 12-week course covering basic academics (to confirm that participants' academic skills are at a twelfth grade level) and the day-to-day skills necessary for success in the workplace, e.g., punctuality and child care arrangements to accommodate work schedules. Instructors from Wayne County Community College teach the course. Participants earn a stipend of \$6.25/hour for four hours a day and receive child care for children under six. Everyone lives within walking distance of the DMC training, so no transportation assistance is needed. Stipends originally were funded from foundation support, but are now paid for using JTPA funds.

For the training's second stage, participants enroll in courses at Wayne Community College to complete their Associate's or Bachelor's degree. At the same time, they begin part-time work at one of the program's sponsoring health facilities. The part-time positions are selected for participants based on their skills and experience; they may range from environmental services to medical records and typically do not include direct patient care. The pay for these jobs varies from \$7.25 to \$10/hour, with health benefits. The length of time it takes for participants to finish this portion of the program depends on their level of education and the type of degree they are pursuing.

As participants advance in their studies and work experience, they may apply for positions closer to or within their chosen field. Once they receive their degrees, they are considered program graduates and may apply for more advanced positions, i.e., they may become a full-fledged physician's assistant or respiratory therapist. Program staff have worked with the local welfare agency to ensure that the New Beginnings program fulfills TANF work and job training/education requirements.

## Local Context

Program staff report that the allied health field in Detroit is currently quite open. Michigan's Department of Labor estimates there will be at least 11,250 vacancies in this field by the year 2000, and DMC's own internal study suggests there is a shortage of people in Detroit qualified to work in health care. Even so, without training many EZ residents were unable to capitalize on these opportunities. When the EZ began, the area unemployment rate was 29 percent, over half the adults did not have high school diplomas, and the high school dropout rate was 40 percent.

The program's lead agency, DMC collaborates with Henry Ford Health System; St. John Health System; Community Foundation of Southeast Michigan; the Detroit Neighborhood and Family Initiatives (DNFI); and Wayne County Community College, Department of Allied Health and Business Programs. The program manager, an employee of DMC, coordinates all components of the program.



## Recruitment

DMC initially advertised with a mass mailing to all residences in the lower Woodward Corridor. Two hundred people applied and 55 were accepted. Since then, recruitment has been predominantly through referrals and word-of-mouth, and the number of applicants has decreased: of 125 who applied in the program's second year, 20 were accepted; and of 50 who applied in the third year, 22 were accepted.

## Outcomes

The program has now been running for three years.

In the first year, 55 people started the program,  
48 completed the 12-week course,  
and 40 were placed in entry-level jobs.

In the next year, 18 started,  
16 completed the 12-week course, and 14 were placed.

The third group has just finished the program  
and many of the 13 graduates have already found jobs.

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# Comprehensive Grant Program Fund (CGP)

**Comprehensive Grant Program Fund (CGP)** provides modernization funding on a formula basis to approximately 900 housing authorities with 250 or more units. Eligible housing authorities prepare a comprehensive plan assessing their physical and management improvement needs every six years and provide annual updates detailing their use of funds. Up to twenty percent of the annual grant may be used for management improvements. These funds may also be used to support certain activities to help residents become employed, such as Section 3 initiatives and apprenticeship programs. The Economic Initiatives Program in Phoenix, Arizona and Richmond, Virginia's Business Employment and Development Corporation (RBEDC) are two cases illustrating ways that CGP funds can be used to help families transition from welfare to work. Beginning in October 1999, modernization funding will be provided by The Public Housing Capital and Operating Funds, new programs recently authorized in the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998.

LIFE SKILLS

JOB PLACEMENT

SELF EMPLOYMENT

## ECONOMIC INITIATIVES PROGRAM

### Phoenix, Arizona

The Economic Initiatives program (EI) in Phoenix Arizona is a comprehensive program offering life skills, assistance with vocational education and training, on-the-job training, and placement in permanent, unsubsidized jobs. Distinguished by its extensive support mechanisms, EI uses peer support, ongoing contact, and economic incentives to help public housing residents make the transition to self-sufficiency.



### Program Description

Established in 1991 and funded through the Comprehensive Grant Program, the City of Phoenix Housing Department's (CPHD) EI program offers a structured sequence of program activities and access to supportive services organized into four phases. The first phase is a six-week life skills training course, and the second focuses on educational/vocational skills training. Phase III involves placement with a local employer in a subsidized, on-the-job training position tailored to the individual's career interests. Phase IV is designed specifically for those not hired into permanent, unsubsidized positions at the conclusion of the on-the job training period; it provides employment assistance, including training in interviewing skills, developing a resume, and conducting a job search.

The EI program's support system encourages regular contact with program staff throughout all phases of the program. Participants who require case management services to assist with personal or family issues are referred to case managers in CPHD's Economic Development and Supportive Services program. EI is also supportive of local employers, ensuring that all participants referred to them are well prepared and appropriately trained. To make sure that both employers and employees are satisfied with the experience, EI staff monitor on-the-job training placements closely and act promptly to resolve any problems that may arise.

EI's overall goal is to help public housing residents become economically self-sufficient. By helping them achieve personal goals and obtain technical skills, the program facilitates their transition from welfare to work within the two-year time limit required by the state's TANF program.

A full-time program director and a part-time administrative assistant staff the EI program, with the program director reporting to the Conventional Housing Administrator (CHA). The CHA is responsible for overseeing the property management of CPHD's public housing units.

## Recruitment and Assessment

While CPHD sends announcements to every public housing family whenever the program is accepting applications for a new class, the program also makes good use of walking-talking models of success and real recruitment generally occurs through word-of-mouth by enrolled residents. To qualify, applicants must be at least eighteen years old, listed on a CPHD lease, and legally eligible to work in the U.S.

Each interested resident completes an application that provides background information on his or her schooling and job experience and helps the program director make a quick needs assessment prior to an in-person interview.

During a 30-minute interview, the program director develops a more thorough understanding of the applicant's work experience, goals, and educational attainment, as well as some insight into his or her family situation. With the exception of those not legally eligible to work in the United States and those who do not speak English, all applicants whose tenancy is verified are accepted into the EI program.

Applicants are not deterred from participation because of educational or employment background. They are not required to have a high school diploma or a GED prior to enrollment, although those who do not have either one or the other are strongly encouraged to work on their GED while concurrently attending Phase I seminars. To complete the educational phase, participants must understand English. Applicants with limited English skills are referred to outside agencies for ESL training and may reapply to EI after improving their language skills.

## Services

Applicants meeting eligibility requirements begin the program with life skills training, a six-week seminar series that meets three times a week. Offered three times a year for 15





to 20 participants, this phase of the program emphasizes peer support — all participants enter the program at the same time and progress together through the program components. Participants discuss barriers to employment and self-sufficiency and explore solutions with each other, building camaraderie essential for supportive group dynamics.

Phase I also focuses on building and reinforcing the life skills essential to success in the workplace. Seminars include topics such as domestic violence (conducted by the City of Phoenix Police Department), self-esteem, stress management, time management, balancing work and family life, personal budgeting, interacting with co-workers and supervisors, and conflict resolution. Most seminars are led by outside experts and professional trainers identified by the EI project director. They include mental health workers, bankers, and private sector employers.

After completing Phase I, participants work with the EI project director to identify an educational or vocational training course that can be completed within six months and that is necessary to pursue employment goals. Those interested in pursuing a career in building maintenance are enrolled in the CPHD's Step-Up program which offers trade-specific vocational training at Maricopa Community College, on-site construction training, and job placement assistance.

Other participants choose a college or community college degree or a vocational school certificate as their Phase II activity. Most opt for a vocational certificate program at a community college. The EI project director has worked with local welfare agency staff to ensure that the EI program components are consistent with the requirements of the TANF program. EI participants receiving TANF benefits must attend school and work or volunteer for at least 25 hours per week. CPHD offers a daily \$5.00 stipend to participants attending school who satisfy attendance requirements.

To provide support and monitor progress, the program director meets with participants at their schools once a week. If concerns or issues develop, she meets with the participant and the course instructor to resolve the situation.

Once they have completed the program's education and training component, participants enter Phase III, on-the-job training (OJT) in a chosen field. Participants are placed with local employers in paid on-the-job training positions in which the employer and the program share the cost of the trainee's wages. The length of training varies with the position. For example, a maintenance OJT position requires approximately seven to twelve months while an office administration position requires approximately 27 weeks. The average wage for the OJT positions is \$6.25/hour; the positions do not include fringe benefits.

The goals of on-the-job training are twofold. First, it exposes participants to a work environment and familiarizes them with the daily requirements of working. Secondly, it gives employers a chance to get to know participants whom they will hopefully hire for full-time, unsubsidized jobs at the end of the OJT period.

Participants are placed in a variety of businesses for on-the-job training. Someone interested in maintenance would be placed on the CPHD's maintenance team or with a private property management company. Other fields include medical records, computer repair, and clerical.

To make the training arrangements, the EI project director identifies jobs through the Internet, word-of-mouth, personal contacts, job ads, Downtown Phoenix Partnership job listings, par-



ticipating employers, YMCA's board of directors, Chamber of Commerce, and Fiesta Bowl. The program currently has a surplus of opportunities in a variety of areas.

The EI program monitors OJT placements closely, contacting each employer once a week. In addition, staff members talk with participants weekly as they come into the office to pick up paychecks. Finally, employers send a monthly evaluation with additional information.

Some participants are hired into permanent positions with their OJT employers and others begin searching for a full-time position after completing their on-the-job training position.

Phase IV focuses on employment assistance. The CPHD offers courses on writing resumes, improving interview skills, conducting Internet searches, completing job applications, and dressing for interviews. For other needed services, such as reducing debt, mental health counseling, or children's issues, clients are referred to appropriate outside agencies.

EI participants receiving TANF benefits have access to childcare support through the TANF program. Throughout each phase, the EI program helps to identify available child care facilities in the participant's immediate community, and has allocated a small budget to assist with this cost.

After permanent placements, EI staff members call participants to monitor job retention and to provide any service referrals that may be necessary. This post-placement support has no time limit; it continues until the participant and the program director mutually agree to end the formal relationship. If a participant's employment is terminated, program staff work with the participant and attempt to locate another job.

The program provides an 18-month income disregard, allowing families that period of time before their rents will be increased due to employment. This incentive encourages families to make whatever purchases are necessary (a car, for example) to facilitate employment.

## Outcomes

During the first several years of operation, the EI program offered one or two classes per year with approximately fifteen residents in each. In 1997 a third class was added to meet increased interest in the program as a result of the implementation of TANF.

Since the program began, 192 people have enrolled. A total of 57 have completed all four phases and 93 percent of them were placed in unsubsidized jobs. The hourly wages for permanent, unsubsidized jobs have ranged from \$7-\$12.00/hour with an average of \$9.50. In addition, 12 of those completing the program have purchased their own homes.

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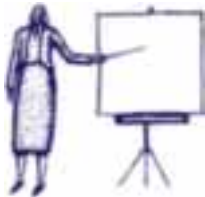
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A single mother with two children, Mary came to the Economic Initiatives program to find a job in the maintenance trade. At the time, she was a resident of public housing and received both AFDC and food stamps. After completing her life skills training, she went on to the Step-Up program for maintenance training, and from there to an on-the-job training position at one of the Phoenix Housing Authority's conventional housing sites.

As a woman pursuing a non-traditional career, Mary met a lot of resistance from her male colleagues but that only encouraged her to work harder. She successfully completed her on-the-job training and found a permanent position as a trades helper with the City of Phoenix where she earns \$11.73/hour with full benefits. Not only is Mary no longer receiving welfare benefits, but she also moved out of public housing and into her own home. Now a mentor and role model for other trainees at her work site, she was recently approached by one of her formerly critical male colleagues—he wanted Mary's advice to help his daughter look for a job!

## **Richmond, Virginia**

In Richmond, Virginia, the public housing agency formed a non-profit subsidiary to offer entrepreneurial training and support to residents interested in starting their own businesses. Since the advent of welfare reform, the program has expanded its services to emphasize job placement and retention for all residents of Richmond's public housing.



### **Program Description**

The Richmond Business and Employment Development Corporation (RBEDC) was established in 1991 as a subsidiary of the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RRHA). A 501(c)(3) organization, RBEDC's original purpose was to serve as an incubator for resident businesses and help resident entrepreneurs find temporary employment opportunities as they developed their businesses. In recent years, largely in response to the work requirements facing TANF recipients, RBEDC has expanded its mission to include placement in permanent employment. Now, all residents of Richmond's 17 public housing developments are eligible for RBEDC training programs.

RBEDC operations, which cost between \$85,000 and \$100,000 annually, are funded through the Comprehensive Grant Program (CGP). The centerpiece of the RBEDC program is a four-week life skills/job readiness training followed by individualized job placement assistance or entrepreneurial training and guidance.

RBEDC is staffed by a Program Manager, two Resident Training Specialists (RTS), a job developer, and a part-time support staff. The Resident Training Specialists focus on particular areas, one on intake/screening and one on program development and training. The job developer provides job placement services.

Oversight is provided by a 12-member board of directors whose members include public housing residents, RRHA staff, and local business and community leaders. Over the past year, board leadership has worked to establish a more proactive, supportive board that can provide policy and programming guidance for RBEDC's activities.



### **Outreach and Recruitment**

Potential participants learn about RBEDC services through posters, brochures and flyers distributed to the housing developments, and word-of-mouth referrals from friends and relatives.

Resident Advisors and RRHA case management staff members refer interested residents. A RBEDC Resident Training Specialist coordinates intake and screening activities and visits each housing development monthly to meet individually with referrals. These informal assessment interviews allow the RTS to learn about the applicants' educational attainment, vocational skills, interests, and employment experience in order to suggest appropriate next steps. Some applicants require Adult Basic Education and literacy skills, and RBEDC staff refer them to Richmond's Adult Career Development Center and to the literacy council's READ Center.

## **Assessment and Life-Skills Training**

Applicants who do not require basic educational training are referred to the four-week Life Skills/Job Readiness Training program at the RBEDC training center. The course is offered every other month and is held four days per week over the four-week period. Life Skills/Job Readiness is a holistic program focusing on motivation, attitudes toward employment, budgeting, self-esteem, lifestyle adjustments that may be necessary for successful employment, and job readiness skills such as interviewing and resume preparation. Work experience is also a part of this training component, and individuals are placed in jobs within the RRHA to help them become familiar with a workplace environment. RBEDC staff attempt to make work experience assignments tailored to the career interests of participants — placing them, for example, as data entry clerks, clerical help, or laborers as appropriate.

In developing the curriculum for the life skills training, RRHA collaborated with the Department of Social Services (the TANF administering agency), and the Richmond Career Advancement Center. The Department of Social Services had been looking for a way to prepare RRHA residents who would be subject to TANF work requirements for the workforce, and the services offered by RBEDC provided the means to do so.

At the conclusion of the life skills/job readiness training, participants meet with an RTS to determine whether entrepreneurial training or permanent employment is the most appropriate next step. Participants opting for entrepreneurial training begin a process designed to help them start businesses; those seeking permanent employment meet with the job developer to identify appropriate positions.

## **Entrepreneurial Training**

To better serve participants, RBEDC has forged a collaborative relationship with the local Small Business Development Center (SBDC). Administered by the Greater Richmond Chamber of Commerce, the SBDC program provides management assistance to current and prospective small business owners. It offers up-to-date counseling, training, and technical assistance in all aspects of small business management, and is the result of cooperative efforts among the private sector, and federal, state, and local governments.

RBEDC participants who wish to start businesses go through a series of activities designed to prepare them for self-employment. The first step involves completing the life skills course and meeting with the RBEDC program manager to discuss their business ideas. Those who have already identified a business idea are referred to a one-day seminar offered by the SBDC that helps evaluate their readiness for self-employment. The risks and rewards of self-employment are discussed and participants are encouraged to think about whether self-employment is the right choice. Those who choose to proceed with their business ideas meet with the RBEDC job developer to locate a temporary, part-time position in a related field. Nearly all temporary positions are with RRHA and most are related to maintenance and cleaning. (RBEDC staff are working to expand the employer pool.) RBEDC staff monitor attendance, job performance, and attitude toward the job to ensure that the placements are successful and to gauge the readiness of participants to start their own businesses. Temporary placements are designed to last an average of 90 days, but can last as long as six months.

While working in the part-time temporary assignments, participants also attend an eight-week entrepreneurial training course offered by the SBDC. The course features a comprehensive approach to entrepreneurial training: marketing, business finance, accounting, taxes and insurance, and organization and management are all included. By the end of the course, participants are ready to prepare business plans, an effort that the RBEDC Project Manager oversees to ensure that the resulting plans can be presented to local banks for conventional financing. If a conventional loan is denied, participants can take their plans to a microbusiness loan program operated by the City of Richmond. In some cases, RBEDC accesses a \$10,000 grant from a local bank to make interest-free loans of up to \$1500 for start-up businesses. Examples of businesses started by RBEDC participants include janitorial services, house painting, in-home child care, and nail-care.

## Placement in Permanent Employment

The job developer works with participants seeking permanent employment on an individual basis to identify appropriate job placement opportunities. RBEDC is currently working with 15-20 private-sector employers for permanent job placements as well as with the RRHA, which hired six participants in 1998. RBEDC's placements are in entry-level positions such as maintenance, cleaning, office clerks, and painters. In addition to the RRHA, employers include retail grocery stores, hospitals, a pharmaceutical company, a commercial cleaning company, and the Richmond Federal Reserve Bank. Feedback from these employers indicates that when filling entry-level jobs, they look for candidates with "soft skills", i.e., a positive attitude, punctuality, reliability, appropriate dress, and willingness to learn new skills. Employers report willingness to train employees in the specific skills required for the positions.

RBEDC can also help participants obtain short-term vocational training through the local community college. For example, RBEDC can pay for tuition and books for data entry courses and Certified Nurses Assistant training.

One participant said:  
"I'm working with the roofing crew. I make sure that everyone knows where they will work that day, the next day, the following day. Finding a job and having a job, you know, it's a wonderful feeling. It feels great to be able to get up every morning and go out and know that I'm taking care of my child and don't have to depend on the state."

## Post-Placement Support and Job Retention

Once placement is achieved, RBEDC staff provide graduated case management follow-up. The RTS contacts each individual once a week for the first three to four weeks after placement and less often over the first three to six months. The RTS is available to provide advice and assistance when support services such as child care and transportation are needed. While no formal job retention services are presently available, RBEDC offers peer support and other services to help ensure that job placements are successful. Program staff have just recently begun to monitor job retention so figures are not available on the number of participants who remain employed.

The current caseload of working participants is 38 and another 10 are working with the job developer to locate appropriate placement opportunities. During the first five months of 1998, 17 people were placed in permanent, full-time, entry-level jobs with hourly wages that ranged from \$5.50-\$8.50/hour. Since the program began operations, more than 200 residents have been placed.

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# Neighborhood Networks (NN)

**Neighborhood Networks (NN)** is a community-based approach to establishing computer learning centers in FHA-insured and assisted multi-family developments. Neighborhood Networks computer learning centers give residents access to the job skills training, formal education, and community services needed for employment. The programs are operated in privately-owned HUD-insured and assisted housing, and local partners support the program through donations — used computers, educational and technical software, job training, business development, volunteers, capital funding, and linkages with schools and community colleges. While no specific funds are provided for Neighborhood Networks, assisted housing owners may use funds from a project's residual receipts account to pay for learning center development. Owners may also borrow funds from the replacement reserve account. Two examples are profiled: the La Grave Place Learning Center in Grand Forks, North Dakota and Villa D'Ames Neighborhood Networks Learning Center in suburban New Orleans.

EDUCATION

COMPUTER TRAINING

JOB SEARCH ASSISTANCE

## LAGRAVE PLACE NEIGHBORHOOD LEARNING CENTER

### Grand Forks, North Dakota

When severe flooding devastated them in the spring of 1997, people worked tirelessly to help each other and restore their town. But then Grand Forks is a place where people often join forces to achieve a goal.

The LaGrave Place Neighborhood Learning Center serves as a good example. Sponsored by Grand Forks Homes, Inc. a private, non-profit provider of affordable housing, and the Grand Forks Housing Authority (GFHA), the Learning Center is designed to help individuals and families make the transition from welfare to work. It offers computer instruction, job preparation services, classes in personal growth and parenting, and special programs for children and teens, and relies on numerous partnerships with public and private organizations to deliver services.

Grand Forks Homes, Inc., which has provided affordable housing for residents of Grand Forks since 1971, owns three assisted properties in the vicinity of the Learning Center—a multi-family property and two others for the elderly and disabled. While the Learning Center's program is open to all residents of Grand Forks, it is these residents of assisted housing and participants in the GFHA's



Family Self-Sufficiency Program, that are its primary focus. The GFHA manages both the properties and the Learning Center, staffing them with a Learning Center Coordinator, a Resident Services Coordinator, and an administrative assistant.

## Funding

The Center is owned by Grand Forks Homes, which is the primary funding source. Other contributors include the GFHA, which pays the salaries of Center staff, and the City of Grand Forks, other human service agencies, local and regional banks, service organizations, and a variety of local businesses, all of which donate both funds and in-kind services. For example, Insight Technologies, a local computer business, provides computer maintenance, technical support and volunteer instructors, and sponsors the Learning Center's web site. Norwest Bank donated a copier to the program, and has pledged to teach a class on homebuying in the future. A local furniture store donated desks and chairs to the center and US Bank donated a new van.



## Program Description

Clients learn about the Center through letters and flyers sent to their public housing developments or through program calendars mailed monthly to partner organization. They may hear about the Center through FSS, which requires all participants to attend.

Once at the Center, staff use a brief assessment to determine potential clients' computer skills before making class assignments. All other classes and programs are open without consideration to clients' backgrounds.

The Learning Center's emphasis is on computers and technology. Committed to providing access to up-to-date technological training opportunities, it offers several computer classes taught by volunteer instructors. Classes include introductory and advanced word processing, operating systems, spreadsheets, Internet, and Macintosh basics. The Center also offers open computer hours — times during which residents and other participants can use one of nine PCs for personal purposes, school work, or Internet access.

In addition to computer classes, the center offers job preparation services — including career counseling, resume preparation, job search assistance, and interview practice — as well as access to job listings through the North Dakota Job Service, the state's provider of employment and training services. Interested participants are trained to use the Job Service's automated jobs listing and to conduct job searches on the Internet. These services are coordinated by the Family Self-Sufficiency staff of the Grand Forks Housing Authority. Clients also learn to use "Choices", a career and employment planning software program.

North Dakota State University's (NDSU) County Extension office has been a partner since the beginning of the program and recently began offering classes at the learning center one day/week. Classes include personal budgeting, parenting (a regular monthly



class for parents and infants), tips for single parents, a session on divorce, and a session called “How to Talk So Your Kids Will Listen and How to Listen So Your Kids Will Talk.” NDSU’s extension office also offers classes on nutrition and stretching food dollars as well as an Internet master’s class.

The Educational Opportunities Center (EOC) of the University of North Dakota has also been a partner from the beginning. Initially offering on-site classes on how to go back to school during the first year, EOC now uses drop-in times at the center to meet with residents and others in the neighborhood to discuss financial aid options and help with Internet searches to identify local grants. The EOC contributed to a \$3,000 grant that was awarded this year to a resident of La Grave Place to attend the University of North Dakota.

There are many other notable partners. The Center recently received a grant from Altru Health systems, a local hospital clinic and rehabilitation center, and will work with the Grand Forks Public Health Department to provide on-site health care information and referrals. The Grand Forks Park District implements the housing authority’s Youth Center programs and provides after-school activities. The Grand Forks Fire Department has offered a babysitting safety workshop featuring fire prevention and first aid, and the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) designed and implemented computer classes for people over the age of 50.

Because many of the Learning Center’s clients receive TANF benefits, its programs are designed to help people transition off welfare. TANF recipients have been referred to the center for training by North Dakota Job Service, a contractor with North Dakota’s Department of Human Services (the TANF administering agency). During 1997, the Center designated one morning per week to respond to the needs of people referred in this manner.

In addition, the center hosts “Time to Discover,” a day-long program aimed at helping people decide whether to pursue further post-secondary education or employment that was developed by Northwest Technical College in East Grand Forks, Minnesota and the University of North Dakota.

## **Flood Recovery**

The Learning Center opened its doors in August 1996, only eight months before it sustained significant flood damage. But staff members perceive a silver lining — indicating that the flood recovery process strengthened links with existing partner organizations and fostered new partnerships. As the community came together to help one another, the Learning Center was the site of many flood recovery programs sponsored by the Grand Forks Disaster Outreach Team and by NDSU extension programs. In addition, when it donated space to the Grand Forks Public School District’s alternative middle school programming, which lost its space in the flood, the Learning Center initiated a new partnership which it hopes will lead to more opportunities for collaboration.

The following examples illustrate some of the success stories of the Learning Center.:

- Two former Learning Center students are now part-time computer class assistants and monitors, their salaries paid with a grant from the Lutheran Brotherhood Insurance Company. One of these individuals has already transitioned off TANF assistance and the other is very close to achieving self-sufficiency.
- One Learning Center participant, a participant in the FSS program, uses the Center programs to help her become a better employee. Working with her employer, Center staff helped her identify ways to improve her performance and advance her career. She recently left assisted housing and purchased a home using FSS escrow funds to help with closing costs.
- A Section 8 voucher participant used the Center's computer classes to learn skills that helped her adjust to new software in her job. She was able to train other workers at the company on the new software and was allowed to take classes at the center during paid working hours. She no longer receives public assistance of any kind.

## Staffing

With only two full-time staff (a Center Coordinator and a Resident Services Coordinator) and part-time secretarial support, the Center relies on volunteers (many from local computer firms) to teach classes. In addition, several local organizations contribute volunteers, supplies and equipment, and many of the partner groups host their own programs at the Center.

The Center enjoys strong support from local government, particularly the Office of Urban Development, the mayor's office, and the city council. The Center is overseen by a Steering Committee, comprised of representatives from the GFHA, Job Service, Head Start, the school district, Northwestern Technical College, two local computer firms, and a local bank. The Steering Committee provides feedback on the program, helps locate resources, and contributes to the design, development, and support of the program. Plans for the future include restructuring the steering committee to include agency staff involved in the implementation of programming, as well as agency administrators. The goal of the restructuring is to develop a group that will help with decision-making, program development, and implementation.

## Outcomes

Although there is no formal post-placement monitoring, many clients continue to participate in various programs. The Center tracks the total number of participants across a variety of program areas as well as the total number of participant contact hours. Over the months in which the Center was operational in 1997, an average of 203 participant contacts were recorded each month. An average of 279 contact hours were logged with the program per month during the same time period.

The Learning Center recently implemented a new method of tracking participation in which people attending classes log-in on the computer to indicate their attendance. These automated records will allow for more complete tracking of participation and outcomes for the program in the future.

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## Marrero, Louisiana

The Villa D'Ames Neighborhood Networks Learning Center engages participants in self-paced, computer-assisted learning activities designed to prepare them “for a lifetime of productive employment.” In a comprehensive, holistic approach, the program combines practical educational activities with employability training and linkages to community-based support services. In sharp contrast to previous efforts, Learning Center programs have enjoyed high levels of participation and generated significant employment and educational gains for a population often considered “hard to serve.”

### Program Description



The Neighborhood Networks Learning Center is based at the Villa D'Ames Apartments, a 200-unit assisted housing development in suburban New Orleans. With funding sources that range from the federal government to community groups, the Learning Center has been operational since May 1996. It offers morning, afternoon, and evening programs, flexible scheduling, classroom and individualized instruction, and its services are available to residents of Villa D'Ames and two other nearby multifamily developments.

Learning Center programs focus on adult basic education and GED, life-skills, computer fundamentals, and employability, and instruction is primarily based on a computer-centered curriculum developed by PAXEN, Inc. In addition to some vocational training, the Center offers instruction in entrepreneurship and an opportunity to work in the Print Shop, a microbusiness developed by the Learning Center. Supplementing these components, case management workers help participants develop individual educational plans and identify appropriate referrals to community providers. In its efforts to serve the entire family, the Learning Center also provides enrichment activities and workshops as well as recreational activities and an after school Homework Club for children.

Villa D'Ames is owned by Christopher Homes, the housing subsidiary of the Archdiocese of New Orleans and a primary force behind the Learning Center's development. To make sure the Center would meet community needs and reflect the trends in welfare reform, the Project Director and other staff began with a needs assessment. In addition to surveying residents, they also gathered information from community leaders, analyzed previous failures, and reviewed curriculum packages.

Their time was well-spent. The inclusive and comprehensive nature of the program, its individualized approach, the consideration given to resident needs, and the commitment of local partners who provide equipment, resources, and job leads are all cited as contributing factors in the Center's high participation rates and overall acceptance by the same previously-unresponsive residents.

Funding sources for Learning Center activities include JTPA, Department of Labor Welfare-to-Work grant, small contributions from community groups, and a modest income from the Print Shop. Christopher Homes has contributed space and equipment and has been an important conduit for political support, employment contacts, and volunteers. The Jefferson Parish School District pays the fees for GED testing, and other community partners provide additional sources of employment, volunteers, and assistance with educational programs. Other partners include Harvey Industrial Canal Association, YMCA Educational Services, Avondale Industries, local banks, and the Hotel Motel Association of New Orleans.

## Goals and Purpose

The overall goal of this Neighborhood Networks program is “to help high-risk families obtain full-time, unsubsidized employment or [enrollment in] college or vocational training programs that will allow them to transition off welfare for a lifetime.” The Learning Center helps families achieve their objectives by “meeting them where they are and bringing them to where they want to be.” Staff believe this happens most effectively when they consider the needs of the entire family rather than just those of the adults. In addition to increasing the education and skill levels of participants, the program attempts to instill the positive attitudes critical to maintaining employment.

## Staffing

Six staff work at the Learning Center. The Project Director oversees operations, secures funding, and develops the Center’s network of community partnerships. In addition to providing classroom and one-on-one instruction, a training coordinator and two instructors are also responsible for intake and assessment and for organizing workshops. One instructor doubles as the Center’s job developer and is responsible for establishing contacts with potential employers, coordinating job referrals, and conducting classes in business planning and development. The social service coordinator meets with families to define needs and goals, and identify community providers of support services. These staff are supported by an administrative assistant.

Residents are also involved in program operations. One is employed by the Center as a full-time administrative assistant. Another is a full-time computer instructor, three serve as volunteer tutors, and one co-leads the summer youth learning program.

## Program Components

In addition to educational programs, the Learning Center also offers job placement assistance, support service referrals, workshops, enrichment activities, and microenterprise training. Participants may take part in one or more tracks simultaneously.

### **Core Learning Program**

Designated as a GED service site by the Jefferson Parish School Department and a JTPA provider by the Private Industry Council, the Learning Center's *Core Learning Program* consists of adult basic education (ABE), GED preparation, life skills and employability training. By maintaining an open-entry/open-exit policy for these courses, the Center demonstrates its commitment to individual training and allows participants to enter at a level consistent with their abilities. Employability training spans a wide range of job readiness skills, including appropriate workplace behavior, resume writing, and interviewing skills. Instruction is self-paced and provided in both class and individual formats. Life skills training includes such topics as stress management, self-esteem, and personal budgeting and is offered every eight weeks.

### **Accelerated Program**

Computer literacy/office occupations courses are offered every eight weeks, while vocational training (an insulation maintenance provided by Avondale Industries) and entrepreneurship courses are offered less frequently. To enroll, participants must have completed the *Core Program* or have achieved satisfactory scores on their assessments.

### **Job Development/Placement**

Job placement and retention are important program goals. The job developer has established a network of potential employers, particularly in the hospitality and banking industries, and the Center receives weekly job postings.

The job developer identifies employment sources within the community and provides participants with referrals. While the participant is the one ultimately responsible for securing employment, it is most often the job developer who identifies the opening, contacts the employer, and arranges a referral. Participants and jobs are matched on skill levels, personal schedules, and transportation availability.

The Center maintains close contact with employers and tracks employee progress at intervals of 30, 60, 90, and 180 days as mandated by JTPA. The monitoring effort enables any necessary intervention and helps with future placements.

### **Supportive Services**

The Learning Center's social service coordinator helps to address various barriers to participation and employment. In addition to child care and transportation assistance for those employed, participants also benefit from referrals to community or public services for substance abuse and other health-related counseling, parenting workshops, and homeownership assistance.

### **Print Shop**

The Print Shop is a microenterprise owned by the Learning Center that evolved from the Center's business development and entrepreneurship classes. Currently employing seven participants, it produces business cards, T-shirts, greeting cards, and banners. Recently it was contracted by a local tourism marketing company to produce mailing labels and a data base

Through February 1998, after 21 months of operation, the program has served 480 participants. Of those, 158 have secured full-time employment and 75 percent have held those jobs for at least 90 days.

Other accomplishments include:

- 98 completed the *Core Learning Program*;
- 89 enrolled in GED;
- 6 received the GED;
- 58 completed the Computer Basics workshop;
- 33 enrolled in ABE;
- 28 enrolled in literacy classes;
- 142 received crisis assistance;

Participants are allowed to continue with program activities during and after becoming employed.

and was guaranteed a minimum order of 10,000 labels per month. With the Print Shop's income, the Center purchases additional computing equipment and other materials.

### Other Services

The program features several other supplementary activities:

- Enrichment trips to businesses and community sites;
- Voter drives and on-site immunization clinics;
- Programming of special seminars and programs through Narrowcasting from a local cable station which are used in conjunction with GED and life skills classes;
- Internet classes that train participants to locate information, develop web sites, and establish e-mail accounts;
- After school Homework Club that provides tutoring and computer classes; and
- Quarterly welfare reform information meetings.

## Participant Recruitment and Assessment

After two years of operation, the Learning Center is now well known to Villa D'Ames residents as well as residents of the other two nearby multifamily developments. Indications are that 80 percent of those who show interest actually enroll. Rather than relying solely on word-of-mouth, however, the program systematically distributes information to residents and other social service agencies through building captains, mailbox flyers, and a quarterly newsletter. The program has been featured in the local newspaper and special events have been publicized on local radio.

The enrollment process includes an application and brief interview, attendance at an introductory session and agreement to a commitment letter. Using the results from aptitude, interest, and value tests, participants then develop individual education plans. All testing is done at the computer, with assistance as needed, but participants are never screened out as a result of the assessments. In most cases, the application, assessment, and plan development processes are completed within a week.

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# Family Investment Centers (FIC)

**HUD's Family Investment Centers (FICs)** provide families living in public and Indian housing with access to education and employment opportunities by developing on-site or nearby facilities for training and support services. In 1994, HUD announced the (one-time) availability of \$75 million for competitive grants not to exceed \$1 million per authority and to be expended over a three to five year period. Public and Indian Housing Authorities could apply for two types of FIC grants: one type could be used for site acquisition or rehabilitation and supportive services, and the other could be only for supportive services. Two examples highlighted here (Macon, Georgia and Los Angeles, California) demonstrate the types of ongoing activities that can be initiated with site acquisition FIC grants. In addition, the Hartford Family Reunification Program, funded in part with FIC grant funds, is also included as an example of how several HUD-funded programs can operate together to serve a common clientele.

**EDUCATION**

**TRAINING**

**SUPPORT SERVICES**

## FAMILY INVESTMENT CENTER

### Los Angeles, California

When the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) received a three-year \$1 million grant to implement a Family Investment Center (FIC), staff members focused on education and training—not just the programs themselves but also all the surrounding support services to make them accessible.

During the first year, 24 residents from various public housing developments received vocational training in early childhood development conducted at the Ramona Gardens development. All of them completed the course and became teacher-aides in local child care centers.

During the second year, HACLA relocated the FIC to a centralized, more accessible location, and at the same time increased its target population to include all Section 8 Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) participants as well as public housing residents. The new facility, which the FIC shares with HACLA's Resident Relations department, has six classrooms, a computer lab with 30 computers and a learning center with 10 more. All classrooms are equipped with audio-visual equipment and comfortably seat 30 students each.

The FIC offers customized vocational English as a Second Language (ESL) training courses and basic education courses, including bilingual keyboarding and ESL



early childhood development training. The FIC coordinates transportation and supportive services for residents and maintains numerous partnerships with public agencies and private service providers throughout the Los Angeles community.

## Goals

The primary objective of HACLA's FIC is to make education and job opportunities more accessible. Specific goals include:

- developing training and support service facilities near public housing;
- mobilizing public and private resources to expand and improve the delivery of these services;
- providing funding for essential training and support services that cannot otherwise be funded; and
- improving the assessment process for identifying, providing and maintaining the training and service needs for client families.



## Program Description

Before applying for the FIC grant in 1994, HACLA's Resident Relations Department gathered extensive information from local service organizations. Representatives from Resident Advisory Panels, Resident Management Corporations, City Departments, Community Based Organizations, and the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) all participated in a series of meetings. The FIC program was modeled after HACLA's Community Service Centers (CSCs) that have been in operation since 1989 in five public housing developments. Each CSC serves residents from its particular development, providing referrals to educational and vocational training services.

The resulting FIC is a centralized facility providing on-site job training and education. To gain full advantage from these programs, residents often require an array of support services and for these, the FIC program relies on collaboration with community-based organizations, resident advisory councils, and public and private agencies. The FIC is connected to approximately 35 organizations outside of HACLA which provide social services, job placement, job development, job fairs, training, childcare, transportation, health, literacy, cultural awareness, conflict resolution training, immigrant and citizenship counseling, internships, and youth and family programs.

The FIC also offers many training opportunities on-site. Clients can receive vocational training in: Certified Nursing Assistant, Home Health Aide, Early Childhood Development Training, Family Day Care Provider, Security Guard, and Office Automation. Other courses are also offered, including Parenting, CPR, Emergency Disaster training, Substance Abuse training, and Entrepreneurial/Small Business Start-up. These programs are provided by outside agencies, whose contracts with HACLA stipulate that payment will be predicated on 65 percent of participants receiving jobs. Classes recently added include Computer Repairs, Infant and Toddler Care, and Animation.

## Funding

FIC programs are funded from multiple sources. Primary among these are a \$1 million FIC grant, a \$1 million HUD Youth Development Initiative grant, and a \$500,000 grant from HUD's Youth Entrepreneurial Demonstration Project. Like the FIC grant, the Youth Development Initiative and Youth Entrepreneurial Demonstration Project were one-time competitive grants. HACLA also received \$500,000 under the Family Investment Center's After-School Demonstration program to continue and expand after school activities for low income children. In fiscal year 1998, the FIC also received \$262,000 from the Department of Transportation and \$181,000 from the Los Angeles Unified School District-Metro Skill Center.

In addition, HACLA recently received a \$5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration's Welfare-to-Work Competitive Grant program which targets services to people considered long-term welfare dependent. The funds will be used to expand existing HACLA activities in JTPA, city's One Stop, HUD's JobsPlus demonstration program, as well as training activities operated by the FIC. HACLA will target the funds to serve non-custodial parents of children living in public or subsidized private housing who also receive TANF benefits.



## Staffing

Currently, the FIC has 22 staff members, 11 of whom are HACLA residents. The Project Director manages implementation and operational activities and develops collaborative opportunities with other departments, and within the private sector. The Special Program Coordinator handles implementation of the Child Care Unit and the research needs of other FIC program activities.

Seven case managers develop Individualized Service Plans (ISPs) with all the FIC participants, documents which provide a detailed account of the participant's background, mission, goals, barriers, and supportive service needs. Eight staff focus on youth, including Youth Program Assistants and Youth Service Academy interns. A Gang Prevention Coordinator deals with gang and substance abuse prevention and diversion, a Management Clerk/Transportation Coordinator provides the transportation assistance, and three staff handle administrative and office support.

While HACLA's Board of Commissioners currently oversees all programs, the FIC is establishing an Advisory School Board, comprised of FIC clients and representatives from educational institutions and community-based organizations, to help staff members design and implement programs.

## Services

After enrollment, case managers conduct assessments and work with clients to develop Individualized Service Plans (ISP) which include:

- Assessment of educational background;
- Assessment of work experience and skill;
- Personal barriers to employment;
- Identification of supportive service needs;
- Family assessment: size, income, member's educational background, and needs;
- Training needs (interest test); and
- Identification of individual and family goals.

To determine what they need, all FIC applicants take a battery of vocational and educational assessment tests as well as attitudinal and motivational tests, and the results help determine the most appropriate services. The FIC often works with other agencies to meet individual needs. For example, when participants want to pursue security-sensitive positions such as a teacher's aide or a security guard, HACLA's Police Department will assist with background checks. If the FIC cannot provide the resources or training programs to effectively meet resident needs, staff will refer them to other job training and educational opportunities.

Once the ISP has been completed, participants enroll in pre-employment training conducted by LAUSD certified teachers or by the County Office of Education, Family Service Life Skills workshops. Training includes help with job search techniques, resume-writing, and interviewing.

The next step is either vocational training or a job search, and participants register with the local Employment Development Department (EDD) office, CSC Job Developers, and the city's One Stop Centers.

CSCs' Job Development Unit and the FIC case managers refer participants to employment opportunities identified through the State of California's EDD database of existing job opportunities or through alliances with small businesses, corporations, private sector organizations, and public agencies. The FIC staff work with employers to demonstrate that HACLA's job referrals are a cost-effective means of recruiting qualified, committed employees, who are pre-screened for ability, motivation, and attitude for specific types of jobs.

After placement, FIC case managers provide ongoing services as requested by either participant or employer and monitor the working relationship between the two at 60 and 120-day intervals. To track progress, they request a verification of employment letter from the employer at these check-in times.

One participant has been a resident of the Dana Strand public housing development since 1996 and has received welfare benefits for the past five years. A single mother of two, she enrolled in the Family Investment Center in October 1996 in ESL Level I and keyboarding. While there, she advanced three levels in ESL and progressed to typing 45 words/minute. She subsequently completed the CNA/Home Health aide training and has now been employed for nearly a year as a Certified Nurse Assistant earning \$6.30/hour.

A mother of five has been a Section 8 participant since 1992. She is a native of Mexico and has been living in the United States for more than 30 years, working as a migrant worker in the fields and in a clothing warehouse. Two years ago, she came to the Family Investment Center and enrolled in ESL, keyboarding, computer applications and early childhood education classes. After completed all of these, she began working at a local child care center where she earns \$7.50/hour. She also sells Avon products for a second source of income.

Working FIC participants are offered post-placement services such as referrals for child care, transportation, medical care, and limited case management. They are also kept informed about new training that can supplement their existing training or interests. ESL classes, GED preparation and additional vocational training courses are offered as well. FIC provides limited follow-up after the first 180 days.

**Since inception, more than 200 residents have enrolled.**

**60 percent increased their educational level**

**while in an educational or vocational study course**

**Over 40 percent completed an educational or vocational study course**

**30 percent are currently continuing their educational and vocational training.**

**Of the 200 participants, 30 percent have been placed in jobs or have upgraded their employment status.**

**Approximately 40 percent of those placed in jobs were still employed at the 120-day check.**

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## **Macon, Georgia**

The Family Investment Center (FIC) in Macon, Georgia epitomizes the idea that more is better. Operated by the Macon Housing Authority (MHA) to help families make the transition from welfare-to-work, the FIC is a one stop service center offering residents an array of services from more than 20 different providers.



### **Program Description**

The MHA established their FIC in March 1997. Located next to the Davis Homes public housing development, it provides public housing residents, Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) participants and low-income families from the surrounding community with employment-related services. The MHA maintains partnerships with over 20 service agencies, each of which places a representative at the FIC. The resulting one stop center allows the MHA to maximize the number of services provided and reduce the duplication of effort.

### **Local Context**

Since January 1997, Georgia's welfare reform legislation has included two key requirements. It limits welfare receipt to a four-year lifetime eligibility and stipulates that all recipients with children older than one year must participate in eligible activities — job training, GED preparation, or employment — while receiving a welfare check.

Because approximately 70 percent of people using the FIC also receive TANF benefits, FIC staff have made concerted efforts to collaborate with the local TANF agency. During the program's initial design and implementation, they worked closely with the welfare agency to keep up-to-date on TANF requirements and ensure that FIC services would be helpful to TANF recipients. In fact, the local welfare agency, Bibb County Department of Family and Child Services, is one of the on-site partners at the FIC.

### **Funding**

The funding for the Center is based on a \$1 million HUD FIC grant. The bulk of this was used to renovate the FIC space, and the rest is primarily used to coordinate services and resident assessments, an activity that receives supplemental monies from Comprehensive Grant funds supplied by the MHA. To provide services, MHA partners with 22 local service providers, some of which include the Georgia Department of Labor, Georgia Department of Human Resources, Bibb County Department of Family and Child Services, Bibb County Board of Education, Goodwill Industries, Mercer University, Macon Technical Institute, University of Georgia-Small Business

Development Center, Macon-Bibb County Economic Opportunity Council, Right from the Start Medicaid Program, Medical Center of Central Georgia, Crisis Line, Inc., Macon Baptist Association, Boys and Girls Club of Central Georgia, and the River Edge Behavioral Center.

## Design and Implementation

In the early 1990s, the Housing Authority wanted to increase resident services and began approaching social service agencies and the local school district for assistance. Together they developed small-scale one stop service centers in several public housing developments that offered GED instruction, pre-school education, and access to case-workers from the Department of Family and Child Services. In 1992, MHA added an entrepreneurship training program and a Family Self-Sufficiency program. To supply support services such as childcare, transportation, and vocational training to FSS participants, MHA staff built relationships with local public and private service providers. The success of the entrepreneurial training program and the FSS program led MHA to create the FIC, a “one stop” location for services. This new approach enhances the employability of residents, and helps them accomplish their personal employment plans.

The FIC is located in a large, 10,000-square-foot Goodwill Industries warehouse. To create the FIC office, MHA determined the needs of residents, obtained commitments from local service providers, and worked with residents and partner organizations to develop the FIC space.

To build partnerships with the more than twenty public and private organizations that currently participate in the FIC, the MHA began by leveraging the relationships already formed to serve FSS participants. To reach new partners, the FIC coordinator conducted outreach to area organizations, giving presentations on the goals of the FIC as well as background information on MHA’s resident services. In addition, the coordinator convened group planning meetings with representatives of potential FIC partners, to share the goals of the program and begin to build relationships. As the MHA publicized the FIC, several agencies voiced a desire to be included. To facilitate the partnering process, the FIC coordinator worked to understand the goals and services of potential partners.

Participation in the FIC offers two important advantages to local service providers. On the one hand, it affords them access to potential participants and an efficient way to conduct outreach and recruitment. On the other, it also helps many of them meet grant conditions that require them to engage in collaborative efforts and avoid duplication of services.

The FIC received strong support from both the state and local government. The Mayor, a former Macon Housing Authority Commissioner, and the County Commissioner were present at open houses, and local officials have been able to tour the FIC facilities and gain information about the program.



## Staffing

There are three full-time FIC staff, two of whom are funded by the MHA. The FIC Coordinator is responsible for service planning and coordination, memoranda of understanding with partner organizations, assessments of participants, and building operations and security. The Case Manager assists the Coordinator in assessments and the coordination of services. The third position, administrative assistant/secretary, is funded by the local welfare agency.

General oversight for the FIC is provided by an Advisory Committee comprised of three public housing residents and a representative from each of the partnering agencies. The Advisory Committee meets quarterly to help ensure the smooth coordination of services and plan future development.

The FIC works closely with its partners. Staff members meet quarterly with agencies to discuss coordination, level of participation, and any additional needs, as well as monthly to discuss mutual clients and plan service and activity programs. Coordination between the FIC and its partner agencies is crucial to the program, and 90 percent of MHA's partners have representatives at the FIC on a daily basis.



## Recruitment, Client Assessment, and Service Provision

Outreach efforts include monthly newsletters to public housing residents, presentations at Resident Association meetings, flyers in public housing neighborhoods, open houses with television and radio coverage, and special mailings to FSS participants. All those who want to enroll are accepted as long as they are either public housing residents, FSS participants in the Section 8 program, or low-income families living in the Macon area.

To enroll, clients must visit the FIC and complete an application form, which an MHA caseworker then reviews with them. When applicants and the caseworker understand what services are being requested, the caseworker routes them to the appropriate agency.

An initial assessment is conducted by the partner agency receiving the intake form. If applicants need additional services, the FIC Coordinator conducts a general assessment. This assessment allows FIC staff to determine what clients need to prepare for employment. Based on this information, they are referred to counseling, vocational rehabilitation, an educational/skills-training program, or job readiness training.

In addition to educational and job readiness services, the FIC also provides: transportation; child care; application and certification for TANF, Food Stamps, Medicaid, and General Assistance; medical screening and education; drug and alcohol education and referral; immunizations for children; family planning counseling and referral; food and nutrition education; money management; parenting education; clothing and



food banks; mentoring program for children; youth development including educational, cultural, recreational, and pre-career programs; homeownership opportunities and education; and family crisis intervention.

Since the program began in March 1997, 4,082 individuals have used the FIC's services and accessed one or more of the 22 social service agencies located at the Center. A total of 269 participants have been placed in jobs with wages ranging from \$5.15-\$8.50/hour. Some of the more common employment areas include certified nursing, clerical work, child care/day care, and construction.

## Job Development/Placement

Clients receive job placement services from the training providers located at the FIC. The FIC Director or case manager handles follow-up and monitoring job placement. Potential jobs are identified through job listings from the Georgia Department of Labor, placement activities of partner agencies at the FIC, and networking. Individual case managers match client qualifications to potential jobs and make referrals. After placement, FSS case managers maintain contact with participants for 90 days. (They also maintain contact with the TANF case managers.) The FIC offers support groups for clients who gain employment.

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## **Hartford, Connecticut**

The Family Reunification and Employment Program is an innovative program that recognizes the absence of fathers as a primary cause of dependence and poverty in public-housing families. Conceived by the Hartford Housing Authority in the wake of the Million Man March in October 1995, the program's goal is to reunite families and foster self-sufficiency by encouraging fathers to assume responsibility for their children. In exchange for their commitment to help bear the financial responsibility for their children and to play a positive role in their lives, the program provides participating fathers with job readiness training, employment counseling, and job placement services, including Section 3 jobs, as well as a variety of other services. Mothers are also eligible for all services, which include parenting and money management training as well as regular medical checkups, self-esteem seminars, and substance abuse assistance. Services are offered through the Family Investment Center, the Family Self-Sufficiency Program, and the Campus of Learners, all of which are closely linked with the Family Reunification and Employment Program.

The program is staffed by the Human Services Division of the Housing Authority, which includes the Director and Assistant Director, the Section 3 Coordinator, and the Youth Services Coordinator, as well as contractors and outside coordinating agencies. It is funded through a combination of grants provided to other Hartford Housing Authority programs, including a \$790,000 Drug Elimination Program grant, a \$1 million Family Investment Center grant, and a \$350,000 Economic Development and Supportive Services grant. These funds are used to leverage private resources of service providers.

### **Design and Implementation**

Initially targeting 15 fathers, the program began as a pilot in March 1996 and was fully operational six months later. In return for a contractual promise to support their children financially and play a positive role in their lives, it provided participants with counseling and referrals to the Family Investment Center and Section 3 construction jobs.

The early phase revealed important challenges. While some fathers feared prosecution for failure to pay child support, some mothers worried that their welfare benefits would not be reinstated if the father failed to fulfill his obligations. To address these issues and ensure flexibility, the Housing Authority developed a strong relationship with the Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS). In fact, to facilitate closer coordination with the Housing Authority, DSS set up a satellite office at one of the public housing developments. Importantly, DSS effectively removed a major impediment to participation when it reduced the monthly child support payment to \$5 for participating fathers who move home with their families. In addition, the agency agreed to allow families to resume welfare benefits if the fathers did not meet their obligations. Also, welfare recipients making an effort to get training or employment can obtain a six-month extension to the mandatory 21-month time limit on welfare benefits.

The program has enjoyed tremendous support at the state, local, and national levels. In addition to support from Hartford's Mayor and the Court of Common Council, which

helped it to overcome its early challenges, the program has been recognized by the State Commissioner of DSS and key staff from the state HUD office. In fact, when the Secretary of HUD learned about the program, key staff members were invited to the White House.

Response from the public housing community has been generally positive. When mothers were disappointed that the efforts focused only on absentee fathers and did not offer any services to them, the Housing Authority responded by creating both a Mother's Program and a Father's Program.



## Recruitment and Screening

Initially, the program recruited participants with flyers posted at public housing developments and meeting sites, an effective approach since many of the fathers already frequented the developments. Now the program is well known and public housing residents do most of the recruiting themselves by word-of-mouth. In fact, there is currently a waiting list for participation.

Participating fathers sign a contract with the Housing Authority committing themselves to:

- financial support of the family;
- involvement in the children's school and other activities;
- active involvement in the tenant association and community;
- reporting of all income and payment of rent on time;
- abstention from involvement with drugs or individuals who sell or use drugs; and
- abstention from physical or mental abuse.

All participants must also agree to enroll in the Family Investment Center Program, which provides them with access to employment and educational services as well as social services such as counseling or training for communication skills enhancement, parenting, and life skills. Fathers and mothers must submit to a drug test, and anyone testing positive is referred to a six-week treatment program, after which the Housing Authority conducts a retest.

## Needs and Skills Assessment

A Needs and Skills Assessment indicates the individual's education, past work experience, and job skills, as well as his or her need for social services. The case manager and participant complete this form together and use its results to develop an Individual Training and Services Plan, essentially a road map to self-sufficiency and family reunification. Families then participate in an orientation program where they are directed to all available resources of the Campus of Learners, the Family Investment Center, outside cooperating agencies such as schools, training programs, job readiness courses, and social service agencies.

## Job Counseling, Training, and Placement

The program provides comprehensive job counseling, job readiness training, and job placement to both fathers and mothers. Participants who are not job-ready are referred to Workforce Training, a six-week course in life skills and job skills, such as how to write a resume, how to dress appropriately for work, and how to communicate in the workplace. This service is provided by a contractor through the Family Investment Center. Some people are eligible for on-the-job training from building contractors working for the Housing Authority, and trained participants can then do construction work directly for the contractor. Participants may also be referred to outside cooperating agencies such as schools, training programs, job readiness courses, and social service agencies.

Job-ready participants are referred directly to the Housing Authority Section 3 Specialist, who works to place them in temporary or permanent employment. Initially, when the program targeted only fathers, all of the Section 3 jobs were construction jobs under contractors working for the Housing Authority on public housing rehabilitation efforts. Now, largely due to the growing participation among mothers, the Section 3 Specialist also works with local temporary employment agencies, banks, insurance companies, and home improvement stores to place participants.

If both parents find employment, they can receive DSS vouchers and apply them toward day care when they are in training or when they begin employment. In addition, the Housing Authority provides extensive youth services, such as a YMCA camp and a computer lab, to occupy older children in the summer and after school when parents are working. Once participants are placed in jobs, Workforce Training staff meet with them monthly to monitor progress and foster job retention.

The Housing Authority cites several reasons for the program's success. In addition to developing effective linkages with other programs, staff members have also built strong working relationships with DSS. Finally, they point to themselves: all key program staff grew up in public housing and many are single parents — facts, they believe, that facilitate understanding by program administrators and trust by program participants.

## Outcomes

To date, the program has served 60 families and all have successfully transitioned off welfare. In about three-quarters of these, mothers have sought and found employment. About 30 people are currently on the program waiting list. Success is also demonstrated by the fact that companies now frequently call the Section 3 Specialist to announce job openings; in some cases, company representatives even come to the Housing Authority to conduct interviews. The Housing Authority believes another indicator of success is that the program is helping parents to become role models, allowing them to demonstrate the positive behavior that will influence their children away from street life and gangs.

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# Hope VI

The **HOPE VI** program awards competitive grants to PHAs for the comprehensive revitalization of severely distressed public housing developments. Unlike traditional modernization programs, HOPE VI requires HAs to focus on the economic and social needs of residents as well as the physical conditions of the development. Up to \$5,000 per household may be used for supportive services such as education, job training, employment, and day care assistance, and these resources are to be directed primarily to families moving off of public assistance. HAs are expected to partner with local TANF administering agencies to coordinate their efforts and leverage their funding and expertise to support mutual clients.

TRAINING

JOB PLACEMENT

CASE MANAGEMENT

SUPPORT SERVICES

## HOPE VI

### Milwaukee, Wisconsin

The HOPE VI program provides grants, typically \$25-\$50 million, to public housing agencies (PHAs) for the revitalization of distressed public housing developments. In Wisconsin, the Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee (HACM) is combining HOPE VI resources with other policies and programs to help Hillside Terrace residents transition from welfare to work.

### Local Context

The state of Wisconsin began moving toward “work first” welfare policies well before recent federal reforms. In the early 1990s, Wisconsin applied for and obtained waivers under the federal JOBS program (the work program for AFDC recipients) to allow tougher requirements for participation and work, and to emphasize employment over education and training. For example, the Work Not Welfare initiative, implemented as a pilot in two counties in 1995, not only required AFDC recipients to “earn” their benefits through participation in approved activities, but also limited their cash aid to two years.

At the time the state reforms were being implemented, fewer than 25 percent of HACM’s public housing families were working, and 57 percent relied on public assistance for all or part of their household income. At Hillside

Terrace, the 596-unit family development targeted for revitalization under HOPE VI, only 17 percent of residents were working prior to redevelopment and 90 percent were receiving welfare benefits.

Knowing that reform was coming, HACM management began concentrating their efforts on helping public housing residents who were receiving public assistance, both by providing agency-funded services and by advocating on their behalf for outside services and employment. In addition, the agency recognized the need to reinforce the idea that work is important and implemented a funding strategy mandating that all programs run by partner agencies and organizations contribute to the economic uplift of residents through one of three goals:

- Academic excellence and daily school attendance by all school-age youth;
- Graduation from high school prepared for post-secondary schooling; or graduation from high school prepared to enter the work force job-ready; or
- Economic self-sufficiency of families through employment for all adults residing within the household.

## Encouraging Resident Employment at Hillside Terrace

In 1993, HACM received a \$45.7 million HOPE VI grant to revitalize Hillside Terrace. The physical redevelopment included reducing the size of the development to 377 renovated units clustered in a dozen mini-neighborhoods. Roughly \$3 million supported a variety of self-sufficiency-related activities, including construction of physical facilities to house service providers, funding for direct services, and creation of employment opportunities. In addition, occupancy policies to encourage and reward employment for Hillside Terrace residents were established.

All Hillside Terrace residents were eligible for services, including those choosing to “opt out” of returning to the development. Even when they relocated to other public housing developments or received Section 8 assistance, they still qualified for assistance in seeking and finding employment. Staff stayed in communication with all Hillside residents (including those who relocated elsewhere) through Resident Council meetings, direct mail, and information included in rent statements.

## Physical Facilities to Support Self Sufficiency

A Family Resource Center constructed on the Hillside Terrace site hosts a full range of community services. For children there is a Boys and Girls Club, a child care center, and a Head Start program. The Black Health Coalition operates a health clinic in the building, providing primary care as well as the physical exams required by employers. Milwaukee Area Technical College has established a computer learning center where residents can take advantage of self-directed computer learning software. TANF case managers also have offices in the building, making themselves easily accessible to residents. A “Wall of Work” features photographs of residents on the job, offering positive reinforcement for employment and showing residents the kinds of work their neighbors are doing.

HUD encourages HOPE VI grantees to build performance criteria into their service agreements, and HACM has developed lease incentives tying rents for the on-site service agencies to the proportion of residents served.

## **Direct Services for Hillside Terrace Residents**

Already well-connected with Milwaukee-area service providers, HACM has tried to avoid duplication. The emphasis at Hillside Terrace is on individualized case management to help link residents with available resources. The agency also funds “fill-the-gap” services that may not be readily available—driver’s license testing fees, transportation costs, and clothing purchases.

## **Employment Opportunities**

HOPE VI has generated employment opportunities for Hillside Terrace residents in many ways. While Section 3 language incorporated into bid documents required contractors to establish resident hiring and contracting goals, residents were also referred to temporary employment agencies to obtain work experience. In addition, residents were encouraged to develop their own businesses and, with technical assistance from the Wisconsin Women’s Business Initiative, some residents are developing business plans for a cleaning service, moving business, and a painting business.

## **Occupancy Policies**

To establish the concept of self-sufficiency from the beginning, Hillside Terrace mandates that every adult complete an employability plan as a condition for occupancy. These plans are tailored to individual needs and include the specific steps—education, parenting classes, etc.—necessary to find or keep a job; families can be asked to leave Hillside Terrace if any adult household member fails to comply.

To ensure their commitment to self-sufficiency and community building, all incoming tenants are strictly screened. On the other hand, Hillside Terrace residents are rewarded for their efforts with HACM’s agency-wide ceiling rents and income exclusion policies.

## **Organization and Staffing**

Managing the HOPE VI self-sufficiency activities is a team effort: a full-time resident services coordinator, the HOPE VI coordinator, Community Services staff, and the Hillside Terrace site manager are all involved. Additional staff support is provided by two newly-hired Resident Employment Coordinators (whose role is described below.) HOPE VI staff are funded by the HOPE VI grant while HA operating funds help pay for supplemental HA staff.



HACM reports that the proportion of Hillside Terrace families receiving TANF benefits has fallen from 90 percent to 50 percent, a \$400,000 savings. The proportion of working families increased from 17 percent to 55 percent; between January 1995 and December 1997, total household income grew by 47 percent, wages increased by 235 percent, and public assistance income fell by 61 percent. According to HACM staff, roughly three-quarters of Hillside's families participated in some way in self-sufficiency activities.

## Other HACM Policies Supporting Resident Self-Sufficiency

Besides policies and programs developed specifically for the Hillside Terrace revitalization, numerous other agency-wide efforts have been designed to encourage and reward working families in all HACM developments.

## Resident Services

For example, all HACM public housing residents have access to **resident employment coordinators** (RECs) who provide job counseling and advocacy and make referrals for training, jobs, services, and follow-up. RECs are supported by development managers who identify residents needing assistance, although residents may always contact them directly.

The RECs also serve as job developers, visiting area employers to find out about open positions and educate them about the labor pool of public housing residents. They also contact temporary help agencies, targeting them as a source of flexible employment where public housing residents with limited work histories can gain skills and experience.

On-Site Workshops give residents an opportunity to practice interviewing techniques, and employers attend the workshops to describe job openings and interview interested residents. A quarterly newsletter, *Job Hotlines*, provides information about work and training opportunities and the latest developments on the state's welfare reform plan.

HACM staff often **collaborate with outside agencies**. For example, the employment coordinators have worked with the local TANF agency to negotiate exceptions to the "work first" requirement so that some residents have been able to pursue certified nurses assistant and pharmacy assistant training. In addition, HACM has agreements with the local Private Industry Council to provide customized training based on needs identified by employers.

The annual cost of HACM's agency-wide resident services programs was roughly \$110,000 in 1997, funded from the agency's operating budget. The major program costs are the salaries and benefits for the two RECs, totaling \$100,000. HACM also established a \$5,000 fund for emergency services such as bus tickets, work-related physical exams, safety shoes and goggles, and other expenses needed to help residents obtain or sustain employment. Computer and office supplies accounted for the remaining \$5,000.

## Income/Rent Calculation Policies

In general, public housing residents pay 30 percent of their household income for rent. As income increases, so does rent and this may discourage potential workers from accepting low-wage employment. For those who do go to work, rent may approach or even exceed market prices, leading families to move out of public housing rather than pay a rent above what their unit is considered to be worth.

There are two ways housing authorities can encourage employment and retain more working families. One way is to exclude some or all of the household's income from the rent calculation. In February 1998, HACM implemented such an **income exclusion** policy under which 50 percent of new earned income (e.g., after the implementation of the policy ) is excluded from the rent calculation.<sup>6</sup>

A second strategy involves setting **ceiling rents**, a maximum rent allowable for a given unit size, regardless of family income. This has been HACM's strategy and, as of August 1998, almost 150 families agency-wide were paying ceiling rents for their units. Many of these families might otherwise have left public housing because they would have had to pay more to live in public housing than they would to rent a conventional apartment.

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<sup>6</sup> The housing authority absorbs the loss in rental income; that is, the HA does not receive more operating subsidy to offset the decreased rental income. However, HUD has implemented an incentive that allows PHAs to recoup some of the losses in operating subsidy that might result from increased resident incomes. The incentive was implemented on April 3, 1996 (Notice PIH 96-24) and by interim rule on September 30, 1996 (and further clarified by Notice PIH 97-31, issued on June 25, 1997).

The Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 that was recently passed will require all public housing agencies to exclude increased income due to employment from rent calculations for a period of 12 months after employment begins and to phase-in rent increases after the 12-month period.



# Campus of Learners (COL)

**The Campus of Learners (COL)** is a HUD initiative whose purpose is to change public housing developments into campuses where residents can pursue educational opportunities and access job training and employment possibilities. No specific funds are provided for Campus of Learners. Using HOPE VI, Comprehensive Grant Program (CGP), or Public Housing Development funds to physically reconfigure public housing developments, PHAs can create COL facilities by leveraging additional resources from local schools, universities, businesses and other private-sector partners. These organizations provide internships, job training and employment opportunities, mentoring, telecommunication resources, apprenticeships, and training positions to residents. Examples from Seattle, Washington and Denver, Colorado are profiled here.

JOB PLACEMENT

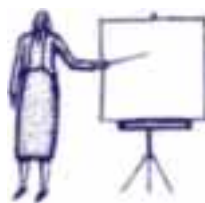
SUPPORT SERVICES

REFERRALS

## HOLLY PARK CAMPUS OF LEARNERS

### Seattle, Washington

The Holly Park Campus of Learners in Seattle is designed to help residents achieve self-sufficiency through education, job training, employment opportunities, and supportive services. Part of a larger HOPE VI redevelopment effort by the Seattle Housing Authority (SHA), the program makes extensive use of partnering arrangements, developing formal and informal agreements that enlist services from many organizations.



### Program Description

Holly Park is one of 25 public housing developments around the country that has been designated as a Campus of Learners. Like the overall HOPE VI redevelopment effort that is demolishing Holly Park's 893 units and replacing them with 1,200<sup>5</sup> units of mixed-income housing, the Holly Park Campus of Learners program seeks resident self-sufficiency and empowerment.

The program provides vocational assessments, basic education, English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL), computer skills training, employment training, job search assistance, and job placement. It also offers a variety of supportive services such as child care, youth programs, and counseling. All residents of Holly Park are expected to participate in COL activities, which are designed to accommodate the needs of the ethnically and culturally diverse community.

<sup>5</sup> The 1200 units will range from rentals for low-income families to market-rate homes. Four hundred units are to be reserved for households earning less than \$16,000 per year.

By virtue of a lease addendum implemented in April 1998, all able-bodied residents aged 18-65 must complete a needs and skills assessment. Nearly half the residents at Holly Park receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and the addendum also requires them to be in compliance with TANF's Work First requirements as a condition of tenancy.

During the first year, the Seattle King County Private Industry Council (PIC) coordinated the overall program. In the second year of the program, SHA has contracted with two lead agencies to coordinate COL services. The PIC will continue to coordinate employment, education, training, and school-to-work services while Atlantic Street Center will coordinate family support and human services. Funded by HOPE VI, the contract totaled \$1,018,453 in the first year and PIC provided a \$529,160 match. The seven-year budget for community and supportive services is \$8,336,942.

The Career Development Center (CDC), which is located at Holly Park and administered by PIC, is the focal point for all employment-related activities. CDC offers career counseling, pre-employment training, coaching and interview preparation, help with applications and paperwork, translation services, vocational training, job placement, follow-up, and supportive services such as child care arrangements. The Center also offers job listings and information about youth employment and school-to-work programs and activities. In addition, CDC operates a Hot Line for parents and children, maintains a calendar of all COL events and activities, and publishes a directory of all COL services offered by partner organizations. The Center is the primary point of contact for residents of all ages who need assistance, including referrals to other partners or outside agencies.

The Atlantic Street Service Center is the lead organization for Human Services for children, adults, and seniors. It provides an on-site Family Center offering youth and family counseling, case management and other support services for adolescents, education and support groups for parents, U.S. citizenship classes, family activities, and workshops on money management, health and nutrition, and cooking.

The following organizations provide services through subcontracting arrangements with PIC:

- The South Seattle Community College offers free on-site ESL courses, Adult Basic Education, General Equivalency Diploma (GED), vocational skills training, and computer training. It has received grant funding to open a Continuing Education Center to provide expanded individual, group, and classroom educational opportunities, including computer-assisted instruction.
- Powerful Schools provides after-school and evening classes for children of all ages and their parents. Classes include computer courses, resume preparation and job application classes, reading improvement, art classes, and many others.
- The Refugee Federation Service Center (RFSC) implements the Washington State WorkFirst Program for limited English TANF recipients. The RFSC staff work jointly with CDC staff to coordinate WorkFirst plans to maximize support for residents receiving TANF and cost effective use of resources.

- Seattle Public Schools provides intervention assistance to improve student attendance and achievement through the Technology Innovations Challenge Grant. A School/Family Liaison position was created to foster parents' involvement in their children's education and to coordinate services on site. Computer training also is provided to children and families through this grant.

Over 30 additional organizations and agencies are COL partners through memoranda of understanding. For example:

- The Holly Park Community Council, a resident advocacy and support organization, provides youth services, counseling and moving services, home ownership education, and a shuttle service. The shuttle service provides transportation to City bus lines, the Holly Park Management Office, Emerald City Child Care, all the Campus of Learners programs, and by special arrangement through the CDC, to the work sites of residents for whom appropriate public or private transportation arrangements cannot be made.
- Catholic Community Services offers a youth tutoring program that assists with homework, reading and math skills, computer usage, college entrance exams, and career information.
- Neighborhood House provides the Early Head Start Program which includes pre-natal and early childhood home visits by a team that includes a public health nurse and a special needs coordinator. This organization also offers a Head Start program for pre-school children.
- Emerald City Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) provides a low-income early childhood education and assistance program that includes before- and after-school programs and child care services.

Targeted for completion in 1999, the future Campus of Learners building will be a 17,732-square-foot facility housing the CDC, a branch campus of South Seattle Community College, a City of Seattle Public Library branch, the Catholic Community Services' youth tutoring program, and Holly Park Enterprises, the for-profit economic development arm of the Holly Park Community Council. The facility will include computer labs, classrooms, conference rooms, a drop-in child care area, multi-purpose rooms, a resource library, a reception area, and staff offices. An additional facility will house the Holly Park Community Council, Holly Park Ethnic Associations, the Family Center, Head Start and pre-Head Start programs, and Emerald City Early Childhood Development Center's child care programs.

## Local Context

In a city with a rich history of collaboration among public and private organizations, the Campus of Learners program operates amidst an ambitious effort to revitalize public housing in Seattle's South End. Currently, the city is actively involved in several efforts that focus on connecting low-income populations to living-wage employment opportunities. The Seattle Jobs Initiative (funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation) and the Mayor's Office of Economic Development Ready-to-Earn Program, developed in response to welfare reform, are both based on strong collaboration-between the Mayor's Office of Economic Development, the State Employment Security Department,

and the State Department of Social and Health Services, the Seattle Housing Authority, educational institutions, and numerous community-based organizations. In another example, the Career Development Center has worked closely with the Department of Social and Health Services to ensure that assessments, plans, and strategies used in the COL program support the local TANF program and comply with Work First requirements.

## Design and Implementation

The Campus of Learners program in the Holly Park development began operations in June 1997, the same time that demolition began for the HOPE VI redevelopment project. During the first year of operations, substantial time was devoted to planning and assessments. Before designing services, the COL program surveyed all able-bodied, residents aged 18-65 at Holly Park and extracted information from labor market studies, workforce development system assessments, and community resident surveys already being conducted as part of the Seattle Jobs Initiative and the Ready to Earn Program. Combined, this data provided COL with an in-depth understanding of the job-related assets, challenges and needs of both employers in the region and residents of the community surrounding Holly Park. The assessments also pointed out gaps in the workforce development system and training needs of residents and employers.

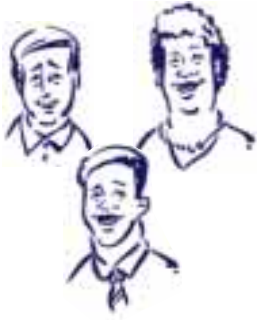
In addition, SHA contracted with Child Care Resources, Inc. to develop a comprehensive Child Care Plan for Holly Park. The study included a capacity inventory of existing on- and off-site child care facilities, interviews with residents regarding child care preferences, identification of available child care subsidies, and potential expansion of affordable child care as residents move from welfare to work.

## Staffing

The Career Development Center is staffed by PIC employees: a coordinator, an administrative assistant, a receptionist, a planner, three full-time and two part-time case managers, an office assistant and a job developer. One of the case managers focuses on youth services and has worked with the Youth Apprenticeship Program. The job developer works with local employers to secure jobs.

The multi-cultural, multi-lingual staff at CDC reflect resident diversity and are knowledgeable in Vietnamese, East African languages, Russian, and Spanish, as well as English. To meet the needs of Cambodian and Laotian residents, CDC has contracted with a part-time case manager fluent in those languages. The CDC also maintains a register of residents who are translators who are hired on an as needed basis for written and oral translation for Campus of Learners classes and activities.





One particular success story involves a married couple with two small children who received TANF benefits at the time of their assessment. Neither parent was working. The CDC staff helped with training and job placement services and arranged for the mother to take a four-month child care training program that included an internship. When she still had trouble finding a suitable position, CDC helped her to find a temporary job doing bindery work for \$6.50/hour until she could locate something else. Ultimately she found a permanent job in electronics assembly earning \$7.50/hour. Meanwhile, her husband drove one of the Holly Park buses part-time before finding permanent employment with a landscaping firm, earning \$11.45/hour. The family no longer receives TANF benefits and is pursuing home-ownership at Holly

## Recruitment

Once they obtained HOPE VI funding, SHA staff members informed all existing Holly Park residents about the redevelopment and the Campus of Learners Program. While anyone choosing not to remain at Holly Park was offered Section 8 certificates or housing at one of Seattle's other public housing developments, all those opting to stay did so with the understanding that they would be required to participate in COL activities. Remaining residents were enrolled in the COL program in 1997.

## Assessment and Job-Seeking Skills Training

The resident assessments help determine the individual's education, past work experience, and job skills, as well as his or her need for social services. Because 86 percent of Holly Park residents speak a language other than English as their first language, language skills are a critical part of the assessment. Other specific areas include: basic skills, computer skills, vocational skills, financial management capabilities, child care needs, citizenship, interest in home ownership, youth services, parenting support, counseling for domestic violence protection, mental health counseling, and services for seniors or disabled residents. By the end of June 1998, a total of 329 residents from 240 households had been assessed.

Based on assessment results, the case manager refers residents to education, training, or job placement services as appropriate, as well as to any needed social services. Participants who are not job-ready are referred to adult basic education, ESL courses, and/or job skills training. The program provides computer skills training and vocational training for the following types of jobs: van driver, clerical, asbestos worker, child care provider, vehicle operator, proof technician, and nursing assistant. As of April 1998, 31 residents had received vocational skills training.

## Job Development/Placement

The job placement component of the COL program combines continuous outreach to local employers to identify jobs and an ongoing information dissemination program to notify Holly Park residents of available jobs.

Working directly with local employers, CDC staff place residents as construction workers, landscapers, van drivers, carpenters, metal workers, packager/assemblers, asbestos abatement workers, maintenance technicians, painters, bakers, janitors, office assistants, data entry clerks, home care aides, child care providers, and case managers. As of July 1998, 94 residents had been placed and 77 were still working, including 30 in redevelopment-related jobs.

One innovative job placement effort is the "job of the month," a concerted effort by CDC to link residents with limited English skills to entry-level jobs. Staff work with employers to identify appropriate "job of the month" positions and promote them through targeted literature and orientation meetings at Holly Park. At the orienta-

tion meetings, employer representatives provide information about the job, answer residents' questions, and interview potential employees. Often, interested residents are invited to tour the company. One month, staff delivered letters to 43 targeted residents; six attended the orientation meeting and two were placed in jobs. The next month, 186 residents were invited to an orientation meeting for a position at a local food manufacturing company; 16 attended the meeting, 12 went on the tour, and five were placed with starting wages of \$6/ hour.

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## **Denver, Colorado**

The desire for a public housing community with a strong emphasis on self-sufficiency was the motivation behind the North Lincoln Homes Campus of Learners Program. With support and collaboration from numerous other funding sources and organizations, the North Lincoln Homes Campus of Learners (COL) development became the site of a residential community for public housing residents committed to achieving self-sufficiency and moving out within five years.

### **Program Context**

Before DHA revitalized it, North Lincoln Homes had been a 400-unit family housing development. With funding from the Comprehensive Grant Program (CGP), DHA reduced the density to 131 three- and four-bedroom family homes and 75 units of elderly housing. In addition, DHA staff established a Community Learning Center, housing program staff offices, community meeting space, and two computer labs. The combination of newly renovated housing and the abundant array of on-site services is used to attract applicants to the new community.

### **Screening and Selection**

To ensure that participating families are willing to meet the rigorous program requirements and community rules, the screening and selection process for new households is intentionally demanding. In addition to having a strong rental history, prospective residents must attend three orientation meetings prior to admission. Once enrolled, all households must agree to a lease addendum specifying that they may live in the development for four years with an optional fifth transition year as needed. Other lease requirements mandate that they participate in monthly meetings with a case manager and attend at least three life skills workshops per month; live by the community's rules and participate in two hours of community service per month; be working and/or in school; and have all children in school.

Initially, program recruitment was conducted exclusively among then-current public housing residents who moved to Lincoln Homes to participate in the program. According to program staff, roughly 200 people expressed some interest in the program, although approximately one-quarter of these did not complete the screening and admission process. Some decided the program was inappropriate for their families and others were concerned about their household's ability to become self-sufficient within five years. Some simply did not want to move from their current housing. (In particular, teen-age children were reluctant to leave their existing neighborhoods.)

Current recruitment efforts have now been expanded to include families coming into public housing from the DHA waiting list as well as transfers from other developments.

## Services and Activities

Once enrolled in the COL program, families meet with case managers to assess their current status, their strengths and interests, and their goals-information that case managers use in making referrals to DHA and other programs.

Families seeking education opportunities are typically referred to the Community College of Denver. For employment possibilities, DHA offers some construction jobs through the agency's Section 3 initiatives, but more often refers people to the nearby One Stop Center or to Mi Casa for job search and placement assistance. According to DHA program staff, staff at these agencies are well qualified and well connected to help people find jobs. Also, DHA case managers use their monthly case management meetings to track each household's activities and help first-time job-holders maintain their new employment.

Families may also take advantage of on-site homeownership preparation classes, and children and youth can participate in a variety of activities, some offered on-site through the Public Housing Drug Elimination Program and others at a nearby city recreation facility.

The majority of North Lincoln's families enter the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program, giving them the opportunity to save money through an escrow account.



## Staffing and Partnerships

Staffing and support for the program are shared by the Denver Housing Authority and a number of other organizations.

The Manager of Resident and Community Services oversees the RCS Program Manager at the central office. An on-site COL program coordinator handles administrative responsibilities and serves as a part-time case manager, while the coordinator's assistant works as a full-time case manager. In addition, a number of housing authority program staff spend time at the site operating specific programs such as a store-front youth program at the community learning center and a home ownership preparation program.

Numerous other agencies and organizations also support the COL community with on- and off-site programs and activities. Most prominently, the Community College of Denver (CCD), located just across the street from the development, has supplied hardware and software for two computer classrooms as well as additional computers for use in other parts of the development. All 30 computers are linked to the Community College's network, providing users with Internet access, e-mail, and other network services. In addition, with help from the local telecommunications company, TCI, the college has installed the necessary cables to make all units "computer-ready," and staff members are currently seeking foundation funding to help provide computers for the apartments. In addition to the college's technological support, North Lincoln residents also benefit from on-site classes and student support services. DHA staff say the part-

nership is working extremely well, with DHA enjoying the college's services and resources and the college increasing its community involvement and improving its access to potential students.

Two city agencies also provide important support. Through its One Stop Center, which is located just down the street from North Lincoln Homes and features a Job Service Center, the Mayor's Office of Employment and Training is a key source of employment referrals and support. Also, DHA has been working closely with the Denver Office of the Department of Social Services (DSS) to make sure DHA policies are consistent with TANF requirements. DHA and DSS case workers communicate regularly about employability plans for public housing families. The two agencies are also developing a memorandum of understanding to supplement case management services for public housing residents (this agreement is not specific to the COL program). Under the proposed terms of the agreement, DHA would provide case management services at certain public housing developments and DSS would provide on-site case management at others. The arrangement is currently being tested at DHA's HOPE VI development at Quigg Newton Homes and will likely be expanded to other locations such as North Lincoln Homes.

Several other agencies and organizations are also associated with the COL program. One example is the Denver public school system, a DHA partner since the concept was first developed. The system provided conference space at local schools for community meetings prior to the completion of the Community Learning Center and anticipates increasing its involvement during the next school year. Another example is Mi Casa, a local community-based organization that supplies small business/entrepreneurial skills training, employment referrals and other services.

## Community Characteristics

The program has started in phases. New families began moving in as renovations were completed in April 1997 and full occupancy was achieved in July 1997. Until the Community Learning Center building was finished in May 1998, program staff operated out of two vacant apartments. Staff members noted that while this arrangement was cramped, it may have accelerated the adjustment process for residents who seemed to like working with staff in office space that looked just like their own apartments.

After one year of operations, residents have built a strong community and are committed to making North Lincoln Homes different from the stereotypical public housing development. The Community Learning Center is starting to be valued as a community resource, attracting people and organizations from the surrounding community who might not previously have become involved in a public housing program. Staff members view this outside involvement as highly beneficial for the program's long-term sustainability. Turnover has been relatively low, particularly given the size of the development.

Although some residents have had difficulty maintaining employment, some North Lincoln households are doing extremely well and, in fact, three have purchased homes. Roughly 60 percent of households have some earned income and about 50 percent have full-time workers in the household.

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# HUD's Supportive Housing Program (SHP)

**HUD's Supportive Housing Program (SHP)** is a competitive grant program that helps a range of grantees develop housing and related supportive services for people moving from homelessness to independent living. The program is part of the Continuum of Care, HUD's overall approach to breaking the cycle of homelessness. The Continuum of Care model features a coordinated community-based process of identifying needs and building a system to address them. The SHP funds transitional housing, permanent housing for homeless people with disabilities, supportive services for homeless people not living in supportive housing, and other types of innovative supportive housing for homeless people. Supportive services include employment assistance, child care, outpatient health services, case management, help in getting permanent housing, nutritional counseling, and security arrangements. Congress allocates funding for Supportive Housing Programs through a Homeless Assistance Grant category. Eligible applicants include states, local governments, PHAs, tribes, private non-profits, and non-profit community mental health associations. Examples profiled here are from New York City, New York and Birmingham, Alabama.

HOUSING

CASE MANAGEMENT

JOB PLACEMENT

SUPPORT SERVICES

## THE TIMES SQUARE JOBS PROGRAM

### New York, New York

The Times Square Jobs Program (Jobs Program) emphasizes choice. The Jobs Program is a partnership between the Times Square Jobs Training Corporation (TSJTC) and the Center for Urban Community Services (CUCS), a non-profit social service provider. Operating as an affiliate of Common Ground Community, a non-profit housing and development agency, TSJTC manages all of Common Ground's economic development initiatives including workforce development, job training and placement, and business development. The Times Square Jobs Program offers training opportunities in one of several businesses owned by TSJTC and at job sites within Common Ground and CUCS operations. Having control over a variety of ventures allows TSJTC to develop innovative vocational services. Currently, some of the businesses managed and owned by TSJTC are a Ben & Jerry's Partnership, sanitation and maintenance service, Top of the Times Catering and Special Events Facility, and a database business.



TSJTC's affiliate, Common Ground, owns and operates the Times Square Hotel, a building with 652 single-room units for low-income individuals, the working poor, and formerly homeless individuals, and 50 efficiency apartments for homeless persons with HIV or AIDS. Residents receive employment and training services, comprehensive social services, and medical attention.

## Goals and Objectives

Funded by HUD and available to the formerly homeless and disabled residents of the Times Square Hotel as well as the formerly homeless and disabled tenants from 45 other supportive housing buildings around the city of New York, the Jobs Program aims to place people in jobs that pay more than the minimum wage and include health benefits.

TSJTC works collaboratively with area employers, ensuring that residents are trained in skills that meet local need and providing a supportive environment for housing residents. In addition, TSJTC also aims to strengthen post-training job options, obtaining employer agreements to pay participants a regular wage no lower than \$7/hour and provide a full benefits package. The program anticipates that participants will have permanent jobs by the end of the six-to-nine-month training period and expects them to use earned income rather than public benefits for rent payments.

## Funding

TSJTC received a three-year, \$650,000 Supportive Housing Program grant in 1997. Grant funds are used for training, curriculum development and supervising trainees within businesses. These funds are split among four areas of focus and based on the FY 1998 budget:

- TSJTC's businesses and services receive approximately one-quarter of annual Supportive Housing grant funds. Each business opportunity revolves around training residents and generating a self-supporting revenue stream within three to four years of operation. Businesses receiving these funds include Ben & Jerry's, Top of the Times, Madison Square Partnership, Times Square Technologies, and a bakery business under development.
- TSJTC's industry-specific training receives approximately one-quarter of the annual grant. Currently, TSJTC is developing a security-training program in partnership with The Gap and a customer service/retail partnership with Home Depot. TSJTC is also a partner with the Marriott Pathways to Independence program to train individuals in the hospitality industry.
- TSJTC's general training receives approximately twenty percent of the annual grant. This area focuses on curriculum development and implementation, corporate partnership development and implementation, training and workshop sessions (e.g., how to interview for a job), and job placement services.

- TSJTC's administration and development division receives approximately thirty percent of the annual grant which is used for strategic and annual planning and reporting, research and development, management, evaluation, and administration.

TSJTC also receives grants from several private foundations and non-profit organizations. In addition, the company generates revenue from its businesses and contracts and receives rental income from Starbucks and Daily Soup which operate on-site.

## Training

All trainees participate in a six-month program, beginning with a vocational aptitude evaluation, skill assessment and career plan development administered by CUCS. A vocational counselor provides job coaching and individual and group counseling. A series of job-readiness workshops are facilitated by job developers and vocational counselors.

### Application Process

TSJTC staff recruit potential participants using information sessions and referrals from case managers at supportive housing residences. Case managers assist interested applicants to complete an application and submit it to a CUCS's vocational counselors.

### Intake Assessments

CUCS' vocational counselors conduct intake assessment covering educational level, vocational skills, communication skills, work history, motivation, computer proficiency, and mental health status.

### Job Readiness Workshops

After intake, participants are placed in part-time, time-limited paid positions in one of the Times Square Jobs Program businesses or job sites. At the same time, they attend a sequence of two job-readiness workshops.

#### *Soft Skills*

All participants must attend soft skills classes, conducted once a week for five weeks, where the primary emphasis is on appropriate job behavior. The course covers etiquette, self-improvement, stress, time management, communication skills, and conflict resolution.

#### *Job Skills*

Seven weekly classes teach resume development, interviewing skills, writing thank-you notes, and follow-through.

Both courses provide useful techniques for someone either new to the workforce or returning after a long absence. In addition to learning rudimentary survival skills for functioning professionally in the workplace, participants benefit from sharing job-related issues with the other supportive housing tenants.

## On-the-Job Training

The on-the-job training jobs range from 12-21 hours per week, and participants are evaluated monthly. During this period, trainees are exposed to a variety of job-related responsibilities: working with the public, practicing customer service skills, and attaining technical proficiency in a chosen specialty. Each tenant-trainee is evaluated monthly by the site supervisor, and a feedback process allows both individuals to air issues and review the transition process together. The evaluation helps make practical use of the twelve-week skills development workshops.

The Jobs Program trains participants in a variety of positions including administrative, clerical, retail, maintenance, and food preparation and service. The job sites include:

<i>Business</i>	<i>Training Positions</i>
Ben & Jerry's Scoop Shop	Assistant Managers, Shift Leaders, Scoopers, Cake Makers, and Delivery persons
Top of the Times Catering	Prep Cooks, Utility Cooks, and Catering
Building Maintenance	Handymen, Housekeepers, and Landscapers
The Times Square Newsletter	Reporters and Photographers
Common Ground Community and CUCS	Office Assistants, Building Security, and Front Desk Hotel Managers
Times Square Technologies	Data entry clerks
Madison Square Partnership	Outdoor maintenance
Times Square Delivers (CUCS)	Drivers
Sugar Hill Thrift Shop (CUCS)	Retail assistants

## Certification

Once trainees complete their programs, the Jobs Program certifies them in their chosen field and they can enter the workforce with new self-confidence and skills. Vocational counselors continue to support graduates with six months of intensive follow-up and two years of monitoring.

## Placement

After graduation, participants meet with a job developer to identify permanent employment opportunities. Graduates have received positions with Marriott International Inc., Pitney Bowes Management Services, The Gap, MailBoxes Etc., Starbucks Coffee Company, and Times Square Business Improvement District (BID). Employers reportedly hire Jobs Program graduates because they are reliable, productive, and customer-oriented.

A total of 115 residents have been placed in competitive employment, 20 percent of them in full-time positions. The retention rate after six months is approximately 73 percent.

Graduates from the Marriott International, Inc. pre-employment program are now all employed full-time, earning wages ranging from \$6.49–\$12.53/hour plus tips and receiving benefits. More than 90 percent of those who enrolled in this program have graduated, and 90 percent of those placed in jobs were still employed after six months.

As a result of TSJTC's partnership with Sciame Construction, the Building Trades Council, and Non-traditional Employment for Women, 12 supportive housing residents are now employed as union apprentices.

TSJTC's partnership with Nilsen Security, The Gap, and American Red Cross prepares residents for employment in the security field. To date, seven residents have graduated from the pilot training program and four have found jobs in the private market.

All graduates receive recommendation letters citing their skills and evaluating their job performance. Jobs Program staff evaluate the performance of each trainee prior to placement. Because of this evaluation process, TSJTC feels confident about the ability of each trainee and can safely recommend productive and fully-trained employees. (Any trainees not yet ready to join the workforce are not placed outside of internal work sites.)

## Responsiveness to Employers

While all training jobsites are located on-site, other off-site opportunities have also been developed. In developing off-site training opportunities, TSJTC's Manager of Corporate Partnerships works with private companies to implement programs tailored to employer needs. For example, TSJTC partnered with Marriott International, Inc. to bring its welfare-to-work program to New York City. This program offers supportive housing residents the opportunity to participate in a six-week pre-employment training course with a guarantee of employment upon successful completion. Another example is the Project Rebuild Construction and Security Transitional Employment program.

## Organization and Staffing

TSJTC staff work in two divisions. The Business Development division develops in-house and community businesses and oversees those that are in-house. For instance, at the top of the Times Square Hotel, TSJTC has established a catering operation and special event facility called the Top of the Times. Workforce Development encompasses recruitment, training, placement and corporate partnership development as well as the link to CUCS intake and vocational counselors. This division also forges new partnerships with the economic players in the city, allowing for a diverse selection of quality job opportunities for trainees.

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## **Birmingham, Alabama**

The question is difficult. A female substance abuser has just completed a recovery program. She is homeless and she either has children or she is pregnant. What is the best way to help her become self-sufficient?

In Birmingham, Alabama, the answer is the Aletheia House, a non-profit, two-stage program designed specifically to serve this population. The first stage is a three-month inpatient recovery program. The second stage is Aletheia House Supportive Housing, a program that provides housing, supportive services and job placement assistance to clients who have successfully completed the recovery program.

### **Transition into Supportive Housing**

Aletheia House is a supportive living community providing a range of services and resources to homeless women in recovery who either have children or are pregnant. In addition to helping them maintain addiction-free lives, it assists them with proper prenatal care for healthy babies, and helps them find jobs.

While the Treatment Center has operated for 20 years, the Supportive Housing program opened only three years ago. Before moving into one of the 69 single-family homes owned by Aletheia House Supportive Housing, clients must either have completed 90 days in the 31-bed Treatment Center or have been referred by another substance abuse treatment facility. Approximately 60 percent of Aletheia's Supportive Housing clients come from its own treatment program. Most spend approximately one year in supportive housing after completing their three-month treatment for drug or alcohol abuse.

The Aletheia House receives HUD Supportive Housing funding (\$791,400) for program operation. In addition, client fees (\$50,000) and federal substance abuse block grant funds (\$535,000) are used to operate the program and to provide substance abuse treatment.

### **Program Components**

To help clients become self-sufficient, Aletheia House begins working with them at the Treatment Center. In addition to helping them detoxify, the Treatment Center program reassures clients they will have a place to go with their families at the end of the treatment period. Supportive housing services are then provided for clients who graduate from drug treatment and opt to participate in Aletheia House's program. Program components include the following:

- Aletheia House provides on-the-job training to all clients. An integral part of job-readiness preparation begins at the treatment facility, and each client participates in job readiness training for six weeks during that 90-day period. After the six-week job readiness training, clients work in on-the-job training positions during the day and attend counseling sessions in the evening. The clients work for Aletheia House as childcare aides, cooks, landscapers, house cleaners,

and clerical workers. They work in a safe environment with on-the-spot guidance and counseling and their self-esteem improves. The on-the-job training lasts six weeks.

- The job readiness and on-the-job training received during the treatment program allows clients to enter the supportive housing program well prepared for permanent employment.
- Each client is provided with a single-family dwelling, owned by Aletheia House, that is located in one of Birmingham's safe neighborhoods and is near employment and social services.
- A case manager is assigned to each client for job placement and job retention assistance.
- Mothers are provided with childcare assistance through Head Start or childcare vouchers. Substance abuse treatment is also provided on an individual basis.
- To compensate for limited public transportation, clients are provided with transportation services to pursue suburban job opportunities, and to meet child care needs.

## Staffing

A program director oversees daily operations, and three case managers coordinate social services for all households, identifying and taking advantage of available community resources to help clients become self-sufficient. The program also has two maintenance employees, three drivers, and one support staff person.



## Recruitment

Potential clients are referred by Aletheia House's treatment center staff or by other substance abuse treatment centers, homeless service providers, the Department of Human Resources, or past clients.

Over 80 percent of the women recruited actually enroll in the program, and those who decline usually want to receive rent subsidies in the private sector without fulfilling a work requirement. Individuals who are screened out during the client assessment stage are referred to other appropriate community resources.

Before they commit to entering the program, applicants are shown the house and neighborhood where they will live. Then, if they are still interested and committed to the program objectives (maintaining sobriety, maintaining employment, and obtaining permanent housing), the case manager collects financial information to determine the program's fees.

The average participant pays \$140 per month, which includes all social services, utilities, case management, treatment, housing, transportation, and access to a supportive community. HUD subsidizes the rest of the cost; approximately \$950-\$1,000 per month per household.

## Joining the Workforce

One of three case managers works with each client, assessing job interests, skill level, employment history, and educational background. (A GED is not required for program participation.) Once the client identifies a career goal, the case manager determines job sites that match the area of interest.

Case managers talk to employers about the benefits of hiring Aletheia House clients. Clients are drug-free and have completed six weeks of on-the-job training at the Aletheia House. They are ready and willing to work and in addition to insuring their transportation to and from work, Aletheia House will be there with career guidance to resolve issues that might otherwise jeopardize employment. Aletheia House's case managers try to find employers who can hire several clients at the same time, and they encourage employers to make long-term commitments to the program. Placements are generally in entry-level jobs such as housekeeping, clothing or hardware retail sales, fast food workers, clerical support, and manual labor.

Case managers stay in contact with Aletheia House clients after job placement and throughout their stay in the supportive housing program. They visit clients on-site to demonstrate support and to increase the likelihood that employers will hire additional clients in the future. Case managers also make weekly home visits to provide advice and support as needed.

One successful program graduate came to the program while pregnant, homeless, and receiving welfare benefits. She had a spotty work history and difficulty holding a job. The supportive housing, counseling, and employment assistance offered by Aletheia House proved very helpful; she is now living in permanent housing, working steadily at a job she has held for 16 months, and is reunited with her children who previously lived in foster care.

## Outcomes

Since the program began, 140 women have participated. A total of 75 have left the program, 55 of whom have moved into permanent housing, and the remaining 65 are still living in supportive housing. For those who have moved into permanent housing, the average stay in supportive housing was one year. The program has placed 133 clients in jobs. The average wage for those placed has been \$6.50/hour. Six months after leaving the program, 68 percent of participants are drug-free and employed.

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# Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)

**Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)** provide flexible funding to cities and counties for the development of viable communities by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment and expanding economic opportunities, principally for low- and moderate-income persons. In addition to generating construction jobs through projects such as housing rehabilitation and public facility construction, CDBG funds can be used to provide permanent jobs through economic development projects. CDBG funds are also used to provide job training and supportive services that help low-income persons seek and retain employment. Up to 15 percent of each community's CDBG allocation may be used for services, and much of that can be spent on job training and related areas. CDBG funding is allocated primarily through entitlement communities (metropolitan cities and urban counties) and through state and small city programs. Entitlement communities conduct their own programs, while states allocate funds to nonentitlement communities at the state and small city level. Park Woods Transitional Housing program in Bangor, Maine and Raleigh's Construction Trades Program illustrate the variety of activities that are being undertaken with CDBG funds.

TRAINING

CASE MANAGEMENT

SUPPORT SERVICES

## PARK WOODS TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PROGRAM

### Bangor, Maine

When city officials in Bangor, Maine saw an opportunity to obtain vacant housing, they generated the political support to combine the federal, state and local resources needed to create transitional housing units for homeless individuals and families. The resulting Park Woods Transitional Housing program, which welcomed its first tenants in March 1995, relies on intensive counseling and individual case management to help tenants make the transition to self-sufficiency.



### Program Description

In 1994, 114 units of surplus military housing became available and, with help from Senator William Cohen's office, the city acquired 60 of these under the McKinney Act process of property disposal.

With funding from the Community Development Block Grant program (CDBG) and the Maine State Housing Authority, city officials rehabilitated the buildings and grounds, preparing 42 units for transitional housing and the remaining 18 for use by a family learning center and other non-profit programs for the homeless. Park Woods is operated by the City of Bangor with annual funding support from CDBG. A total of \$65,000 in CDBG funds are used each year for Park Woods staff salaries.

Initial resistance to Park Woods was strong. It is located within a large residential area and local residents were opposed to having the development's tenants as neighbors. Political support, however, was also strong. The City Manager viewed the program as a potential model for welfare reform and after being convinced by the city's Housing Department staff that the development could work, City Council members in turn worked to allay the concerns of neighborhood residents. Now, three years after the first tenants moved in, Park Woods has been accepted by its neighbors and enjoys a reputation of being well-maintained.

During the first year of operation, the development was managed and maintained by a private property management company. Dissatisfied with its performance, the City turned the management and maintenance functions over to the Bangor Housing Authority in 1996. The Housing Authority has proven effective at managing the development and the City staff have been able to focus on providing human services.

There are a number of people and organizations who make the development work. Park Woods itself has a three-member paid staff: a full-time case manager, a full-time case-worker who specializes in substance abuse counseling, and a secretary. In addition, literacy volunteers provide educational services at the family learning center and the local JTPA program, Aspire, is available for training and job-placement services.

## Goals and Purpose

The goal at Park Woods is to provide for the needs of the growing homeless population in Maine-to help people get off the street and become self-sufficient. The key to Park Woods is that it is transitional-residents may only live there for two years. The program's case manager works with each tenant to develop a detailed plan for achieving self-sufficiency, a plan that describes each individual step in the transition. During their two years at Park Woods, tenants are obligated to remain sober and to take full advantage of the personal, educational, and employment-related services available. Anyone who does not meet these requirements is asked to leave.



## Recruitment and Services

To be eligible for a unit at Park Woods, applicants must be not only homeless but also motivated to become self-sufficient. The program relies on word-of-mouth and its growing reputation to attract interested tenants, and it currently has a waiting list of more than 600.

The first step for people interested in Park Woods is to have an intake interview with the case manager, a process that includes completing application forms and talking

about their particular circumstances, goals, and motivation. Then, together with the case manager, applicants develop their plans for making the transition to self-sufficiency. If applicants have barriers to self-sufficiency that are beyond Park Woods' capacity, such as a serious illness, they are referred to other services.

All eligible applicants are then placed on a waiting list and asked to keep in touch. When a unit becomes available, the Park Woods case manager contacts the applicant to arrange a move-in date and review the prospective resident's plan for self-sufficiency.

There are several resident services available at Park Woods and all of them are focused on helping residents achieve self-sufficiency. The on-site presence of the case manager and case worker offers tenants ready access to counseling, referrals, and support. And working in close proximity to the tenants allows the case manager and her staff to identify residents' needs quickly. In addition to job search and job placement assistance, some also need family counseling, parenting classes, and housekeeping training. Child care and transportation assistance are also available, as are 12-step support groups for recovering substance abusers. The development plans to open an on-site child care center within the next year.

The Park Woods program also includes an on-site Family Learning Center that is staffed by literacy volunteers. In addition to classes for adults and tutoring programs for both adults and children, the Center also offers employment-related services, such as resume assistance and interview practice, and recreational group activities for parents and children.

Park Woods coordinates its efforts with the Aspire program and refers tenants there for job search assistance and placement services. The Park Woods case manager reinforces these services by offering individual assistance with budgeting, job readiness, and maintaining employment while still meeting family obligations. She also does some job development on her own, contacting employers and setting up job interviews. (For example, as a result of her efforts, several tenants were hired by the Census Bureau earlier this year.)

After 18 months at Park Woods, residents meet with the case manager to begin looking for new housing. While many move from the development to public or other subsidized housing, some purchase their own homes.

Of the 165 households that have lived at Park Woods since the program began in March, 1995, 70 completed their self-sufficiency plans and 63 individuals obtained employment in areas such as nursing, manufacturing, lumber, recreation, retail sales, and auto mechanics. Program staff aim for job placements paying at least \$7-\$9/hour, a wage generally considered capable of leading to self-sufficiency.

After leaving her abusive husband, one participant accepted the self-sufficiency challenges when applying for housing at Park Woods. Less than a year later, she is working part-time and developing needed skills. New friends in this supportive environment, all of whom are succeeding for the first time in their lives, help her believe that self-sufficiency and personal fulfillment are possible.

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## **Raleigh, North Carolina**

The situation has all the ingredients for a win-win-win situation — the construction industry needs more skilled labor to meet demand, welfare recipients want jobs and training, and city officials would like to develop more affordable housing. In a program that addresses all of these needs, the City of Raleigh is working with the North Carolina Home Builders Association (NCHBA) and North Carolina Housing Finance Agency (NCHFA) to provide construction training to its unemployed and underemployed city residents. Together they have designed a job training and construction trades program to provide trainees with marketable skills and employment opportunities, expand the pool of qualified workers, and supply the workforce needed to increase the city's affordable housing stock.

Now in its third year of operation, the Construction Trades Training program evolved from a similar vocational training program run by the Home Builders Institute and the U.S. Department of Labor which operated from 1989 to 1995. The current program draws funds (\$76,000) from the city's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to pay for the classroom instruction portion of the program. NCHFA provides matching funds to cover the cost of building materials, and NCHBA staff train participants and coordinate job placement.

Staffed by a program coordinator and an instructor, the program runs three seven-week sessions per year (with about 10 participants per session), each of which features equal amounts of classroom instruction and hands-on experience. Classes are held in various locations such as community centers, community colleges, church basements, or vacant city properties, and cover an array of subjects: math, safety, use of tools, work ethic, and various construction skills such as framing techniques and roofing. Supplied with hand tools, participants work on small projects, such as building their own tool boxes and doing mock-up framing, at their class sites. Off-site, they construct decks and storage sheds, repair and renovate affordable houses, or work on a specific city-selected project. At this point, trainees do not yet work on public housing developments, but program staff intend to add this to future training.

Staff members recruit throughout Raleigh's low income areas, distributing flyers to bus depots, homeless shelters, unemployment offices, and churches, placing public service announcements on local radio and television (including cable access) stations, and advertising in local newspapers.

Enrollment is open to unemployed or underemployed city residents with incomes lower than 50 percent of the area median. While the program's coordinator interviews all applicants to determine their career goals and appropriateness for the program, few are turned away. Approximately 10 percent of participants are women, most of whom receive TANF benefits. The training program meets the requirements of North Carolina's TANF program, WorkFirst, in which welfare recipients must either start working or begin short-term job training within twelve weeks of welfare receipt.

Completion rates for the program have been high. In the first year, 25 of 31 participants completed training, 21 were placed in jobs with wages ranging from \$6.50-\$7.00/hour, and one started his own maintenance and landscaping company. (Two of those not completing the training left to take jobs.) In the first two classes of the second year, 13 of 20 completed the program, and 12 were placed in jobs. As in the first year, two of those not completing the program left to take jobs and another entered a formal apprenticeship program. Altogether, seventeen area employers have hired graduates.

One successful graduate found a job at a local construction company, earning \$9/hour with the prospect of a raise after 90 days. He credits his success to the skills learned in the program and the efforts of the instructor.

Although no supportive services are provided, program staff assist participants in their job searches and can help identify outside sources of support, such as transportation assistance. Participants are encouraged to begin looking for jobs during the training course, and staff members provide them with contacts and sometimes call employers to arrange for interviews. Staff continue to assist with job placement after graduation but do not follow-up once placement has occurred.

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## Section 3

**Section 3** of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968, as amended in 1992, requires housing and community development agencies to ensure that low- and very-low income people benefit from economic opportunities—such as jobs, training, and construction contracts — generated by HUD funds. The 1994 interim regulations went further — setting specific goals for recipients and contractors. The interim regulations also identify priority target groups for new hiring, stipulating the order in which employment, training, and contracting opportunities should be provided to beneficiaries. Responding to these changes, innovative housing authorities are using their construction programs (including Comprehensive Grant Program and HOPE VI funding) to reinforce Section 3 goals. Language in their bid documents specifies hiring goals as well as any reporting or other requirements contractors must meet. In addition to enforceable bid document language, a successful Section 3 initiative also requires that mechanisms be in place to ensure that a workforce of eligible Section 3 candidates are available as training, employment, and contracting opportunities arise. The strategies in place in Baltimore Maryland, and Columbus, Ohio are profiled.

TRAINING

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

SUPPORT SERVICES

### SECTION 3

## Baltimore, Maryland

In several cities, innovative housing officials are successfully adapting Section 3 of the 1968 Housing and Urban Development Act to generate employment and training opportunities to help public housing residents make the transition from welfare to work.

In addition to bid document language requiring contractors to meet resident hiring goals, at the Housing Authority of Baltimore City (HABC), officials also provide training opportunities that prepare residents for employment, resident business development opportunities, and systems for monitoring employee/trainee performance and contractor compliance. The Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FH&EO) is responsible for implementing and monitoring HABC's Section 3 Program. The Step-Up program, profiled here, also supports Section 3. Additional Section 3 initiatives are implemented through the HABC's Resident Initiatives Division.



One of the original businesses conceived under this project, the Universal/Direct security firm is led by a 20-year resident of Lafayette Courts. Formed to provide security guard services, the company's initial job has been to protect the Lafayette Courts construction site after-hours from unlawful entry, vandalism, and theft. After five months of operation, the firm employs 18 full-time staff and six part-time. It has generated significant profits and the partners expect it to grow beyond this initial contract.

Another successful entrepreneur is a single mother of eight who lived in public housing for nearly 30 years. With over 10 years of work experience as a packer, food server and janitor, she decided to start her own janitorial business. After completing 26 weeks of training in janitorial trades and entrepreneurial skills at HABC, she now has three ongoing contracts to clean several public housing properties. In addition to full-time employment for herself, the company also provides part-time work for four employees. In her own words, "I have always wanted to own my own business; CEBO [the Council for Economic and Business Opportunity, Inc.] provided the opportunity and I ran with it."

## Preparing Residents for Employment

HABC offers access to a wide variety of training initiatives, coordinated primarily by their Division of Resident Initiatives with funding from the agency's Comprehensive Grant Program and the resources of various partner agencies. The Resident Initiatives Division helps identify qualified applicants for employment and training opportunities and prescreens them for interest and availability. A few examples of the Resident Initiatives Divisions' programs that support HABC's Section 3 efforts are described below.

### Business Development Program

Operated by the Council for Economic and Business Opportunity (a contractor to the housing authority), this program provides residents with business planning and operations training within a business incubator facility. During the program's first two-month phase, residents learn to develop a business plan and start-up strategy. During the second phase, they receive hands-on training in marketing and operations. The eight businesses currently operating in the incubator building share administrative services, office space, and conference rooms. So far, those eight firms have hired 69 residents and have secured approximately \$500,000 in housing authority contracts. The goal is to enroll 100 residents in the program and develop 50 businesses.

The program's current businesses include three (janitorial services, a messenger service, and a post-construction cleaning service) that were started to support HABC's HOPE VI revitalization effort at Lafayette Courts. As such, they have received additional technical assistance from the Lafayette Courts developer as part of the firm's commitment to support the creation of resident businesses through the HOPE VI program. (In the HOPE VI effort over all, Section 3 eligible businesses represented 32 percent of the total contract dollars. A total of 221 employment opportunities were created, of which 93 were filled by former Lafayette Courts residents.)

### Groundskeeping Program

In cooperation with the local DSS office, which is the local TANF administering agency, public housing residents who are TANF recipients take responsibility for maintaining the grounds at family developments. In addition to creating jobs, this initiative also frees the HABC staff to spend more time on unit maintenance. Residents are paid \$6.50/hour for a minimum 24-hour week. For participants in the DSS grant diversion program, part of the TANF grant is diverted to the employer (HABC) to help cover the wages. As of August 1998, more than 60 TANF recipients were participating in the program.

## Step-Up

The Step-Up Program also supports HABC's Section 3 implementation. The Step-Up program began in 1994 and has trained 142 participants to date; 30 participants are currently enrolled. The six-phase construction training program includes:

- Outreach and recruitment;
- Screening for threshold eligibility criteria (eight-grade reading and math level, being named on the lease, and passing a drug test);
- A one-month pre-orientation to the trades featuring worksite visits and an introduction to 17 trades as well as workplace socialization,
- Refresher courses in math and English, and case management and referral services as needed;
- A one-year construction training phase, including a minimum of 144 hours of classroom training; and
- Post-program placement and follow-up.

Employment opportunities for Step-Up graduates include working with HABCO, a housing authority-owned construction firm established in part to provide them with a year of transitional employment. According to HA staff, HABCO can provide employment in periods when private sector opportunities are limited and can ease the transition to private-sector employment. HABCO workers have skills in masonry, carpentry, cement working, and roofing. The firm pays competitive wage rates and has some contracts with other public agencies, such as the city's Department of Public Works.

Step-Up graduates may also be referred to private construction contractors working for the housing authority, helping the contractors meet their resident hiring goals. The agency is also working to develop a partnership with the Maryland/District of Columbia Minority Suppliers Development Council to obtain commitments from the Council's members to hire public housing residents. The housing authority would provide job match and placement services as well as any pre-employment training. The housing authority is also working to obtain commitments for additional opportunities in the hospitality field.

Given the high proportion of female participants, the Step-Up coordinator is reasonably pleased with the placement rate in an industry that has historically been male-dominated. A total of 43 participants have become employed, 22 of them in union construction trades, at an average hourly wage of \$8.28. HABC's Step-Up coordinator reported that he has done some tracking of Step-Up participants to see whether they continue to receive TANF benefits. (HABC's Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Social Services allows the housing authority to confirm TANF receipt.) According to his analysis of an early class of Step-Up graduates, the state had saved \$89,000 in welfare assistance one year after the end of their program; two years later, the state's savings for the same group had increased to \$120,000.

## Program Monitoring

Two staff members of HABC's Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity office implement and monitor the contracting component of the Section 3 initiative, reviewing RFPs for appropriate Section 3 language and helping contractors develop Section 3 plans. In addition, staff members are responsible for monitoring contractor and employee/trainee performance.

FHEO staff also believe that resident councils play a key role in monitoring performance by sending representatives to the contractors' construction progress meetings. These meetings provide an opportunity to determine what progress is being made toward hiring goals and to learn about any problems that may have occurred. Often, because they may know the people involved, residents are able to mediate disputes between contractors and resident/employees.

HABC staff try to monitor program employment outcomes. As mentioned above, HABC has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Social Services that allows the housing authority to verify whether families are receiving TANF. Most programs also use periodic surveys of past program participants to determine whether they are working, but response to these surveys is not always good. Concerned about possible rent increases, some respondents are wary of inquiries about household income. In addition, it is difficult to track participants for more than a year because families may move.

Job retention has been somewhat neglected in past programs and will be a key component of the agency's new People Accessing Continued Employment (PACE) program. PACE is an expansion of HABC's Employment Opportunities program, a collaborative effort with Baltimore City Community College to prepare public housing residents for entry-level employment in fields such as computer specialist, geriatric nursing assistant, and hotel/hospitality positions. PACE will expand the program to five of HABC's computer learning centers, and will increase the enrollment target to 600 residents. In addition, the new program will involve the city's Office of Employment Development to add an employment retention component. In addition to monitoring job placements, officials will also help residents find new jobs if they lose existing ones.

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## **Columbus, Ohio**

When the former Windsor Terrace public housing development needed revitalization, the Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA) used its HOPE VI contracting process to establish employment opportunities and a construction training program. In the housing development now known as Rosewind, roughly 90 percent of new construction jobs were filled by local residents, either through the training program or through general recruitment in the community. Overall, the project employed a total of 82 Section 3-eligible people.

### **Construction Training and Employment**

The concept for a construction training program for Section 3-eligible residents of the Windsor Terrace community was developed by the Sherman R. Smoot Company in response to the CMHA's request for proposals for HOPE VI construction management services. Upon winning the contract, Smoot enhanced the program's design, and from June 1996 until November 1997 the Rosewind On-the-Job Training Program recruited and trained residents for employment in construction trades, including carpentry, masonry, electrical, plumbing, and heating/ventilation/air conditioning.

To identify interested applicants, the program conducted outreach activities throughout the housing development and the surrounding community. Program staff describe the recruitment philosophy as "come as you are." Rather than screening participants on the basis of prior work experience, construction trade skills, or motivation, they looked for willingness to enter the program and complete the orientation. During a two-week orientation phase, they conducted drug testing and safety training as well as academic skills testing to determine math and reading skills. (The public school system provided remedial assistance to participants whose skills were below the sixth-grade level.)

Designed to be self-paced, the program took participants anywhere from six weeks to six months to complete. With staff members helping them to develop training plans tailored to their individual skill levels and interests, participants documented their career goals and identified the intermediate milestones necessary to achieve them. They then reported to the work site daily for their assignments and spent the day working in small groups with one or two trainers.

Trainees were responsible for building five of the new units at the Rosewind site. They were provided with basic construction equipment and had access to supportive services through community service providers—services such as drug/alcohol/mental health counseling, credit and debt management, and child care and transportation assistance.

In two rounds of training, 45 individuals received certificates documenting the competencies they had gained during the program. All participants received certificates, regardless of how long they spent in the program. The competencies are those developed by the Ohio Department of Vocational Education for use in all construction training programs throughout the state.

In addition to hands-on training, the curriculum for the second group of participants included a two-week classroom component which focused on how the various parts of the construction process fit together. The classroom portion was taught by a retired vocational school instructor who then monitored trainees on the job site to make sure they were using what they had learned.

The program was staffed with two managers (a coordinator and an assistant), two full-time trainers and an additional 8-10 part-time trainers (all Smoot employees), and the retired vocational school instructor. After completing the orientation, participants were paid an hourly wage which ranged from \$7.50-\$11.00/hour, depending on the trade.

At the conclusion of the training, the program coordinator helped graduates find permanent jobs with the contractors at the HOPE VI site, prescreening them for the necessary skills and referring them to contractors as appropriate. Staff members have used mail surveys to track participants' job retention rates since completing the program, but response has been low. However, of the graduates known to have left the program for employment, most have taken jobs at what are considered to be good wages. One masonry trainee, for example, moved from making \$9/ hour in the program to \$18/ hour with a private contractor, and is now one of only two female masons in the region.

The cost of the program was \$300,000, including the wages paid to trainers and trainees, materials and equipment, classroom training and on-site monitoring, safety training, drug screening, and academic assessments. These costs were all considered part of direct construction costs and were covered by the HOPE VI construction management contract.

The program coordinator believes the Columbus program is replicable "if time and budget allow." Indicating that construction trainees typically need at least six weeks of training, she suggested that an agency would need construction projects of at least that duration or several smaller projects running concurrently. In addition, she noted that the Columbus program's "come as you are" recruitment philosophy meant that some participants required significant support to stay in the program, necessitating intensive staff support and a strong network of community service providers.

## Other Training and Employment Opportunities Created Through HOPE VI

In addition to construction site work, Smoot also provided other types of training and employment opportunities. For example, Smoot taught some residents to manage payroll for the training program, and trained three residents to help manage office and field work at the site and contracted with others for office maintenance and custodial services. Twenty-five people interested in starting their own businesses attended a self-employment training class developed by Smoot and, as of August

Although the program did not specifically target services to people receiving TANF, some were included in each training segment. In those instances, the coordinator worked with the Department of Social Services (the TANF administering agency) to ensure that program met all requirements of the TANF program.

One of Rosewind's success stories involves a single parent of school-aged children who had dropped out of high school and had only limited employment skills. She did have some work experience in low-wage temporary clerical jobs and in home day care, but was looking for training that would lead her to higher-wage employment. She found it right in her back yard, in the Rosewind On-the-Job Training Program. The training program offered marketable skills training with the added benefit of allowing her to be home when her children returned from school.

She participated in masonry training at the Rosewind site while also completing her GED. She learned quickly and was hired, even before the ten-week training officially ended, by the Smoot Company to work on a masonry project for a nearby school district. She entered the union as an apprentice and has been working virtually continuously since completing the program in the fall of 1997. She lives with her children in the revitalized Rosewind development and hopes to purchase a home in the future. With steady employment at \$18/hour, program staff are confident she will reach her goal.

1998, most have either already opened businesses in the community or are in the process of obtaining permits, leasing space, and preparing for start-up. (A revolving loan fund is available to assist these new businesses.)

Smoot is now managing all of CMHA's construction programs and is applying Section 3 broadly across all construction-related activities in the agency's 23 developments. Under the new contract, the staff member who managed the training program has broadened her responsibilities to include all community programs that support CMHA's construction projects. She works with resident leadership and the family services staff to identify residents' skills and interests and match them with employment opportunities. In addition to helping CMHA meet its Section 3 goals, Smoot views these efforts as critical to developing its future workforce.

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# Step-Up

**Step-Up** provides a framework for preparing public housing residents for employment in the construction trades. Local partnerships between housing agencies, labor organizations, employers, and supportive service providers offer two to three months of pre-employment training and 12 months of paid on-the-job experience to public housing residents. There is no specific funding for Step-Up, but agencies can use funds from existing programs such as Comprehensive Grants, HOPE VI, and Economic Development and Supportive Services. In addition to the Baltimore Step-Up program profiled earlier, we also present an example from Joliet, Illinois.

CONSTRUCTION TRADES

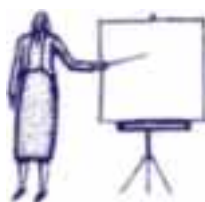
TRAINING

JOB PLACEMENT

## STEP-UP PROGRAM

### Joliet, Illinois

The Step-Up Program at the Housing Authority of Joliet is an apprentice-based program that offers participants the chance to earn a living wage while they develop skills in maintenance, construction, and other areas. Through a combination of classroom and on-the-job training, participants learn trades such as carpentry, painting, and electrical work while working as Housing Authority (HA) employees. At the end of the program, they are placed in full-time jobs with local trade unions, the Housing Authority, or other employers.



### Program Description

Step-Up is a HUD program that promotes self-sufficiency by linking low-income individuals with living-wage jobs tied to apprentice-based skills training. With billions of dollars in federal funding being spent to build and maintain public housing, the program aims to direct some of the resulting jobs to low-income area residents.

Begun in early 1995, the Joliet Step-Up Program offers classroom instruction and on-the-job training in a host of trades. Apprentices work side-by-side with construction journey workers on Housing Authority construction projects and have access to a full range of supportive services, including child care, transportation, and various types of counseling. All local public housing residents and Section 8 recipients 18 or older are eligible, and participants without high school degrees can earn GEDs through Joliet Junior College, a program partner.

Like many Step-Up programs, and unlike the traditional apprenticeship model which focuses on a single trade, the Joliet program allows apprentices to experience a variety of trades. After a year of on-the-job training in all the building trades, apprentices select a single trade for concentration.

Step-Up is funded with approximately \$350,000 from the Comprehensive Grant Program and \$60,000 from the City of Joliet. Joliet's Housing Authority is responsible for administration and operations, and various local organizations serve as program partners through memoranda of understanding. For example:

- Joliet Junior College provides in-kind contributions such as GED classes, job placement services, and various types of counseling through its social work degree program.
- Local unions representing the painting, carpentry, electrical, plumbing, roofing, and other trades provide jobs to program graduates and supply the construction journey workers to do on-the-job training.
- The Private Industry Council helps pay apprentice wages and assists with job placement.
- Life Works provides substance abuse counseling.
- Illinois' Department of Public Aid allows food stamp and/or welfare recipients to continue collecting benefits while enrolled in the program.

## Staffing

The program is housed in the Modernization and Development Department of the Housing Authority and is staffed by a full-time Step-Up Coordinator and Construction Supervisor, the Resident Initiatives Coordinator, the Comprehensive Grant Manager, the Director of Modernization, and the Executive Director. While the Step-Up Coordinator manages day-to-day operations, the Construction Supervisor ensures that training objectives are within the production and budgetary constraints of the construction project. Both sit on the Step-Up Committee, which also includes the Director of Housing, the Section 8 Coordinator, and the Chairman of the Board. The Executive Director, who was the force behind the program's inception, provides instrumental leadership support.

## Design and Implementation

The HA's Executive Director began creating the Step-Up Program in 1993. Once HUD approved his plan, he hired and directed staff to launch the program while he focused on cultivating program partners and garnering the necessary political support. At the same time, he also worked with the unions to develop program requirements that met their standards for skills and education.

Meanwhile, staff members began recruiting the first participants, distributing flyers and publicizing the program via newspapers and radio. One hundred people applied and 13 were selected. The Step-Up Committee reviewed applications, awarding points based on whether the applicant was a high school graduate, a resident of public housing, or a Section 8 recipient. While the program originally targeted all unemployed or underemployed Will County residents, the HA now limits eligibility to public housing and Section 8 residents and makes a total of 10 apprenticeships available at any given time.

Interested residents go to the Housing Authority to fill out an application and the Step-Up Coordinator then calls them for interviews. The program currently receives about 50 applications per year. Promising applicants also interview with the Construction Supervisor and later with the Step-Up Committee. After this process, applicants submit to a drug test and a background check and those who pass then take a skills assessment.

The Housing Authority acts as its own contractor and directly hires both the skilled journey workers and the Step-Up apprentices. These force account crews are then dispatched to specific construction projects where apprentices gain on-the-job experience working side-by-side with the journey workers.

## Training and Job Placement

Based on assessment results, participants are assigned to classes for eight weeks of paid classroom training earning minimum wage. Courses include training in the various trades, blueprint reading, and maintenance and repair, as well as remedial education, GED, and life skills. After the course work, apprentices receive a year of paid on-the-job training, working with construction journey workers in a variety of building trades on public housing construction projects. Hourly wages are \$6.15 during the on-the-job training.

At the end of the first year, apprentices undergo a two-week evaluation and then choose a single trade for concentration. During the second year, they receive paid, specialized on-the-job training in their trade of choice, earning up to \$9.00 per hour. By the end of this time they are ready for a permanent job, either as a union apprentice or as an employee with the HA or another employer. Program staff work with the unions and other employers to ensure that Step-Up apprentices are placed in good positions with benefits, advancement potential, and competitive wages. In the third year, staff follow-up with apprentices to monitor progress in their new jobs.

## Outcomes

All 13 participants in the first class have been placed in jobs. A second group of apprentices has finished the first year of the program, and a third group is just beginning. Currently, the Housing Authority is planning to expand the program to include non-construction jobs, such as child development, nursing, and office systems.

Cynthia is a single mother living in Joliet public housing. Unemployed and receiving welfare benefits, she set two goals for herself when she enrolled in Step-Up: to finish the program and to move out of public housing. After successfully completing the program, she was accepted into the Plumber's Union apprenticeship program and currently works in a union position during the day and while taking classes at night. She no longer receives welfare and is saving money to achieve her second goal and move out of public housing.

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# Youthbuild

HUD's **Youthbuild** initiative carries out the statutory objective of expanding the supply of affordable housing by providing educational opportunities and on-site training to economically disadvantaged young adults. It also fosters the development of leadership skills and commitment to community service in these youth. Program participants spend half their time in on-site training in affordable housing construction and rehabilitation and the other half in classroom educational activities. Youthbuild grants are awarded on a competitive basis and can be obtained by community-based organizations, community development corporations, and any other entities eligible to provide education and employment training under other Federal employment training programs. The YouthBuild St. Louis AmeriCorps program (YBSLA) is profiled.

EDUCATION

TRAINING

LEADERSHIP SKILLS

JOB PLACEMENT

## YOUTHBUILD

### St. Louis, Missouri

The YouthBuild St. Louis AmeriCorps (YBSLA) program gives disadvantaged youths in St. Louis the opportunity to learn the construction trades and help their community gain rehabilitated or new housing at the same time. In addition to on-site job training, the Youthbuild program's holistic approach also features classes in basic education, life skills, and career skills. Everyone must also participate in leadership development activities.



### Program Description

The program is sponsored by Youth Education and Health in Soulard (YEHS), a non-profit community-based corporation which has sponsored youth education, training and affordable housing programs for 26 years. YEHS began its Youthbuild program in 1992, and after receiving a HUD Youthbuild Implementation Grant, introduced its first fully comprehensive program in 1994.

As part of a national network of Youthbuild programs all committed to a common philosophy, common design, and common performance standards, YBSLA is one of many local Youthbuild agencies that receives funds from an AmeriCorps grant.

Because of YBSLA's partnership with the local AmeriCorps program, participants can earn part-time education awards from AmeriCorps and use them up to seven years after completing their community service. YBSLA staff encourage graduates to continue their education through college or technical schools and help them obtain financial aid.

The Youthbuild model provides on-site construction training with educational, vocational, and leadership training. After passing a strict screening process, participants are taught the skills necessary to get and keep jobs. Leadership development and community service are cornerstones of the program, and YBSLA maintains a relationship with participants after graduation through its Graduate Program and Alumni Association.

## Local Context

The YBSLA program is located in the Soulard and Bohemian Hill neighborhoods in St. Louis. The Bohemian Hill neighborhood is included in the St. Louis Enterprise Community that encompasses some of the most economically distressed areas in the city. The neighborhoods are also adjacent to the Darst/Webbe public housing development, which is currently being revitalized through a HOPE VI grant. YBSLA's new construction and rehabilitation work in the Soulard and Bohemian Hill neighborhoods is a key piece to the revitalization of these communities and the Darst/Webbe community. Its location allows it to be a feeder-site for contractors to recruit apprentices. Construction is one of the top three growth industries in St. Louis, and local construction contractors and labor leaders indicate that the current labor pool is insufficient to meet demand.

## Staffing

Staffing for YBSLA includes a Program Director, Construction Manager, Counselor, Job Developer/Career Counselor, two Adult Basic Education Teachers, two Worksite Instructors, and a Classroom Vocational Instructor. There is also a Program Advisor to oversee the AmeriCorps Community Service Program and a Program Coordinator to oversee daily program operations.

## Funding

YBSLA has multiple funding sources. These include HUD's Youthbuild grant which is used for youth stipends; a share of the national AmeriCorps funding which pays for several staff positions as well as work-site materials; U.S. Department of Labor's Welfare-to-Work grant which is used for social services; and YEHS' funds which pay for the use of work sites. Other funding sources include the Missouri Department of Conservation; the St. Louis Public Schools Adult Basic Education; and the Missouri Department of Economic Development. Financial contributions are augmented by in-kind contributions. For example, the Contractors Assistance Program offers counseling for YBSLA students pursuing business ownership and the St. Louis Agency on Training Employment contributes vocational assessment and training tuition.



In addition to general outreach activities, YBSLA relies on a special Welfare-to-Work grant from the Department of Labor to target young women whose public assistance benefits will soon expire. State and local agencies contribute referral assistance, and the Missouri Division of Family Services' FUTURES program provides child care, transportation, and other support services. The availability of child care is stressed in all YBSLA literature. These efforts have generated a steady increase in the number of women in the program, 42 percent in the most recent graduating class compared to 17 percent in 1992.

## Recruitment

YBSLA's program is open to school drop-outs 16-24 years old. They must be St. Louis residents from low-income or very low-income families (families with incomes not exceeding 50 percent of the area's median income). They must be drug-free and physically capable of construction work, and they must test at a minimum sixth-grade level in reading and math. Those testing between fourth- and sixth-grade levels are referred to a Pre-Youthbuild Remedial Education/Tutoring program. Those not selected are counseled and referred to other appropriate programs.

YBSLA uses a number of methods to inform potential participants about the programs. Recruitment flyers are distributed to various organizations and posted throughout the city. Press releases and public service announcements are provided to the local media and ads run in the major and minority neighborhood papers and on radio stations popular with youth. In addition, YBSLA has established a Recruitment Network composed of current YBSLA members and graduates and representatives from the media and other organizations. Recruitment is an on-going activity, and YBSLA maintains an open waiting list. Even so, three months prior to the start of each program cycle, a concentrated recruitment drive is scheduled.

Outreach activities usually produce about 500 potential participants who are invited to information sessions. Candidates meeting the eligibility requirements are interviewed, and those showing interest in the construction trades, punctuality at the information and interview sessions, and a commitment to completing the program are referred for a physical and drug test. Those who pass enter a three-week orientation/trial period where staff and participants decide if Youthbuild is a good fit.

The orientation/trial period involves a number of different elements. Participants sample the regular YBSLA schedule, receive mental toughness training, tour the neighborhoods and rehabilitated housing completed by previous classes, and attend support groups. Throughout this period, participants are introduced to the program's standards of behavior and the Code of Conduct. Final participants are chosen on their interaction with others, dependability, ability to complete assignments, construction aptitude, and sincerity about completing the program. In the last two years, approximately 75 percent of those selected finished the program.

## Services

Lasting from 37 to 41 weeks, the program offers participants a wide array of daily activities. They spend half of their time in classroom training and the other half at the construction site. During a two-week period, they spend 35 hours at the work site and another 35 in conservation training, classroom activities, education and vocational instruction, and leadership development. In addition, counseling support, advocacy, and guidance are available to all participants. Participants receive a weekly stipend for their classroom and on-site activities.

The classroom training combines traditional education with vocational and construction curricula. Educational activities include GED preparatory classes, reading and writing classes, computer literacy classes, newspaper/current events discussions, and



conservation instruction. (The latter is taught by the Missouri Department of Conservation in field-trip format.) Vocational activities include free vocational assessments from trained YBSLA staff, classes in entrepreneurial education, driver's education and safety, and sessions with members of the construction trades who present the skills needed to enter their field. Specific construction classes, which reinforce on-site construction activities, include architectural and preservation history (taught by the Landmarks Association), construction theory, blueprints, and building codes.

The on-site construction training involves gut rehabilitation and new construction. Participants are tested on a monthly basis to monitor their progress on specific construction goals. These goals include good work habits, construction site safety practices, basic skills, planning for construction, preparing work sites for renovation, energy efficiency standards, cost/production efficiency, and historical rehabilitation guidelines. Participants must demonstrate satisfactory achievement in each of these to graduate.

The Youthbuild program partners with local agencies to provide additional services: day care, medical care, crisis counseling, mental health counseling, alcohol and drug abuse counseling, legal services, and career counseling and mentoring.

Youthbuild also offers opportunities for leadership development, an activity fostered by the partnership that develops between staff and participants and that is a distinguishing feature of the national program. Leadership opportunities include participating on the Youth Caucus, the Policy Committee, or at Community meeting, attending leadership training and retreats, and attending career/life/leadership classes. In addition, as members of AmeriCorps, Youthbuild participants are active in the community and must develop their own service projects to graduate.

## **Job Development/Placement**

Job placement is one of the program's primary goals. Participants are encouraged to develop and implement a phased plan for achieving their education and vocational goals, and the Job Developer/Career Counselor focuses on developing placement opportunities. Job development activities include contractor career panels held by professionals in the field, tours of YBSLA sites for employers, interview workshops, direct mail, and phone calls to potential employers. When all graduation requirements are complete, participants begin their job search. After placement, regular contact with the graduate is maintained and YBSLA staff check with employers for feedback on the graduate's performance. Youthbuild can also provide assistance to graduates pursuing their own construction businesses.

YBSLA maintains a strong commitment to its graduates' long-term success. Besides providing both job placement and educational placement services, YBSLA has creat-

ed a Graduate Program and Alumni Association which offers placement and career counseling, supportive services, social activities, leadership and community service opportunities, and educational and financial assistance. By continuing its relationship with alumni, YBSLA encourages their continued growth and their success in the workforce.



## Outcomes

In the past six years, more than 1,800 youths have expressed interest and/or applied for the program and, as of July 1998, five classes had graduated. There have been 160 participants, 128 have graduated, and 110 have been placed in jobs or have gone on to college. Approximately 73 percent of graduates obtained a GED or high school diploma, and 25 percent continued with their education either in college or technical school.

YBSLA also tracks job placement and retention data. A majority of graduates are employed in the construction business. Fifteen percent are enrolled full-time in school and 20 percent work outside of construction. Non-construction jobs range from working with an organization similar to Youthbuild to entering an entirely new industry, such as manufacturing. YBSLA placed 90 percent of its graduates in unsubsidized employment with pay ranging from \$7-\$12/hour. Tracked for a six-month period following graduation, the job retention rate has been 90 percent.

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# Internet Information Resources

For more information about the HUD programs profiled here, contact HUD's Internet homepage at <http://www.hud.gov>. In addition, <http://www.hud.gov/wlfremtr.html> gives general information regarding HUD's employment and training programs

**Information about specific programs can be found at the following locations:**

## **Section 3**

<http://www.hud.gov/progdescr/emp-lowr.html>

## **Step-Up**

<http://www.hud.gov/progdescr/stepup.html>

## **Comprehensive Grant Program**

<http://www.hud.gov/progdescr/pihcgp.html>

## **Campus of Learners**

<http://www.hud.gov/progdescr/campus.html>

## **Family Investment Center**

<http://www.hud.gov/pih/programs/pihfic.html>

## **HOPE VI**

<http://www.hud.gov/progdescr/hopevia.html>

## **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)**

<http://www.hud.gov/progdescr/cdbgent.html>

<http://www.hud.gov/progdescr/cdbg-st.html>

## **Empowerment Zones/Enterprise Community**

<http://www.hud.gov/progdescr/ezec.html>

## **Youthbuild**

<http://www.hud.gov/progdescr/youthb.html>

## **Supportive Housing Program**

<http://www.hud.gov/progdescr/shp.html>

## **Neighborhood Networks**

<http://www.hud.gov/progdesc/neighbors.html>

For more information about the US Department of Labor's Welfare-to-Work Grants, contact: <http://www.doleta.gov>

This website also provides links to many websites featuring information about welfare reform including information about state TANF plans. In particular, <http://www.welfareinfo.org> provides an wealth of information regarding welfare reform issues.

The Administration for Children and Families at the Department of Health and Human Services administers the TANF program. Its website is located at <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov>

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