

NEW YORK STATE ADULT LITERACY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT GRANT

EMPLOYMENT/CAREER HANDS-ON-HELP

THE PLAINEDGE LIBRARY/TOWN OF OYSTER BAY WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIP

Final Report

Summary

The primary goal of our project was to form a partnership with the Town of Oyster Bay Workforce Center to facilitate and extend access to effective resources and services to employment and career information, help with developing computer skills/typing skills needed for business and assistance with on-line and print employment applications. Since the Town of Oyster Bay Workforce Center has limited hours and the Library has evenings and weekend hours job seekers and others were given a greater opportunity to successfully access needed resources and information.

Outputs (Activities)

- Publicity was central and most important for the success of the project. Bookmarks, posters and flyers publicizing the available resources and services were distributed at the Library and the TOB Workforce Center,
- Information on the project was included in the Library newsletter.
- The Library Homepage was redesigned to prominently display information about the partnership and the available employment resources and services at both sites.
- Two of the public access computers were reserved exclusively for employment/career information, job sites, and online preparation for tests and tutorials for building computer skills.
- The Library Director periodically consulted with the staff at the TOB Workforce Center to discuss the progress of the project and possible improvements to ensure that the services and resources were effectively meeting the needs of job seekers now and in the future.

- At the suggestion of the TOB Workforce staff, a Skype system was installed on one of the employment computers for virtual interviewing. Job seekers unable to pay the cost of traveling to an interview were now given the opportunity to do so digitally at the Library.
- The Reference Department of the Library assisted job seekers in submitting on-line applications, searching job sites, and creating effective resumes.
- Basic instruction was provided in using the on-line business software tutorials
- Print and E-Books were purchased on all aspects of successful job searching.

Outcomes of Project

- The TOB Workforce did refer those searching for employment/career information to the Library. During evenings and Saturday afternoons (the hours when the TOB Workforce Center was closed) was the time when the resources and services were most often used. It is estimated that approximately four persons came to use the resources in the evening hours each week. Saturday mornings was the least busy time with an average of three persons using the employment computers in the afternoon.
- The Library purchased updated print books for the collection on resumes, interviewing, job searching, and careers. These books were prominently displayed in the Library's Employment/Career Center and most did circulate at least one time with many of the titles sent out on Library inter-loan. The titles with the most circulation were the National Learning Corporation Civil Service Guides.
- E-Books with information on job searching were purchased for the Digital Doorway and made available to all Nassau County residents.
- The Librarian's reported that the most requested information was on acquiring computer skills with business applications. Many job seekers returning to work were persons who had been absent from the workforce for quite some time and lacked computer skills.
- Very few of the new print books on career transition circulated. However, a few requests were received for inter-loans from other Libraries for print books.
- The Reference Librarians assisted job seekers in submitting on-line applications, searching for job opportunities, and creating effective resumes. There was also a request for help with NYS Unemployment application. Basic instruction was also provided in using the available employment resources and services.
- The use of the "Brain Fuse," a subscription, employment data base increased from 42 to 111 users in five months.

- Each Summer the Library sponsors volunteers from the Plainedge High School to each instruct residents in basic computer skills. The Librarian did sign up a few of the job seekers with no or limited computer skills for one-on-one instruction.

Unforeseen Problems

- One of the most unexpected problems with the partnership involved the amount of instruction needed by many job seekers at the Library. Many of those in need of help totally lacked a basic knowledge of computers. Much time was also needed in giving instructions in using the job search links.
- Lack of typing skills presented a problem for many job seekers. We did have typing tutorials on one of the employment computers and a few persons did practice. A number did require extended help in submitting on-line applications due to a lack of typing skills..
- The amount of time devoted to each person had to be limited. The Librarians were providing basic reference services at the same time there were requests for instruction in use of the materials and services in the employment center. The Librarians could not provide detailed computer instruction and were limited to basic instruction.
- There were numerous requests for help in filling out employment applications both on-line and in print. Unfortunately, these applicants had to be asked to return at a later time when the Reference Department was not busy and could provide needed help.
- We did have a form evaluating the services and resources in the Library Employment/Career Center. Although requested to fill out the form most job seekers simply used the services without completing the evaluation form.
- It was difficult to keep a count of the exact number of persons using our resources and services. Initially, first time users requested help, and thereafter simply used the resources making it impossible to ascertain the exact number. Others just came in and used our resources without asking for help.
- There were very few requests for career information.

Future Improvements

- Much time was needed for instruction for persons with no or very little computer or typing skills. In the future a special time will be scheduled with a librarian for one-on-one instruction with no interruptions.
- A printer should be devoted exclusively for use with the employment computers as much printing was done for job opportunities, employment applications and resumes.
- Tutorials for business software must be continually reviewed as some are ineffective

Overview of Project

The Employment/Career Hands-On-Help Project was a success. Although very few evaluation forms were completed, we did receive many positive comments from persons using the various resources and services in the Employment/Career Center. The most used resource was the job search computers along with requests for help in filling out and submitting online job applications. Two job seekers did report back that they had found employment using the Library job links. Also used and appreciated was the virtual, on-line interviewing at the Library. Three persons reported using this service that was unavailable at the TOB Workforce Center. Also used were the on-line resume maker and the computer tutorials. Help was also provided by the Librarians in applying for NYS unemployment benefits. It is estimated that 40 persons were referred to the Library by the staff at the Town of Oyster Workforce Center while others simply came to use the resources and services because of publicity, Due to ongoing publicity there was an increase in the use of the Library's subscription databases.

Continuation Of The Workforce Partnership

As indicated by the large number of requests for those seeking employment and career information there is definitely a growing need for this service. A large number of persons who came to the Library asking for help were underemployed, while others were totally unemployed and some lacked the computer and typing skill necessary for success. There is a possibility that there may be a cut to funding for the Town Workforce Center. Due to the continuing need for employment services it is absolutely imperative that Libraries provide the resources and services to meet this need. Funds from the annual Plainedge Public Library Operating budget will be set aside each year to ensure that this project will continue and expand into the future with additional resources and services as needed.

**New York State Adult Literacy Workforce Development
Grant**

Project Expenses

Skype Computer Equipment for virtual interviewing	\$ 180.29
Computer head phones	11.90
Printing Plus Brochures, Bookmarks, Poster	450.00
WinWay Resume Deluxe Resume Maker 5 Workstation	159.00
National Learning Corporation Civil Service Test Study Guide	432.91
Over Drive market Place (E-Bok for Digital Doorway Knockem Dead Job Interview	9.99
Job Hunting and Career Change	29.99
Welcome to the Real Work	16.99
Job Hunting Essentials	<u>7.48</u>

Total Spent by Library for Workforce Grant: \$1,298.55

Funds received from Grant: \$728.35