



# Frontline Focus Flyer

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR WORKFORCE PROFESSIONALS



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### Mission

The Frontline Focus Training Institute delivers trainings and resources to help frontline workforce professionals build their capacity to better meet the employment needs of disadvantaged job seekers, low-income workers and employers. We currently offer eight different trainings in three programmatic areas.

### Thank You . . .

to our funders! With the generous support of the Grand Victoria Foundation and the JPMorgan Chase Foundation, CJC is able to keep fees for training courses affordable for our Frontline Focus participants.



## Behind the Frontline . . .

This summer, Frontline Focus graduated 17 job developers from our *Working with Job Seekers with Criminal Records* course. Over the course of three days, participants explored the legal remedies and barriers facing individuals with criminal records, how to address their own biases in working with ex-offenders, and how to best communicate with employers to create meaningful job matches. Thanks to CJC Policy Associate, Liz Bomgaars, who attended the three week Offender Workforce Development Specialist training, this course was significantly revamped to better share best practices with Illinois' job developers.

With summer officially over, Frontline Focus is gearing up for a busy fall season. Over the next three months, we'll offer six trainings, including our popular courses on communicating with employers and our newest curriculum on retention. In this multi-session course, which is being offered as a follow-up to our flagship *Skills & Strategies for Working with Employers*, participants will discuss how to keep job-seekers motivated to stay in their programs, stick with their jobs, and think about their long-term career paths. We look forward to seeing you at that class in December!

As Frontline Focus continues to grow, we are thinking very strategically about how to improve our training offerings to the workforce development field. To help us with this, Alberto Ortega, a former Frontline Focus alum and current content facilitator for our trainings, will be serving as our intern for the next year. In particular he will be researching the possibility of offering certification for our trainings and creating a Chicago based job developer collaborative for frontline providers to share best practices and job leads. Stay tuned for more on that front!



Summer 2009 Criminal Records course graduates

## Quick Definition:

Urban agriculture is the growing of plants and raising of animals within and around cities.<sup>1</sup>

## More Information:

Urban agriculture uses urban resources like organic waste as compost and wastewater for irrigation.<sup>2</sup>

Urban agriculture can be used as a strategy to reduce urban poverty and food insecurity in poorer sectors of the population. It contributes to local economic development, social inclusion of the urban poor and women in particular, the greening of the city, and productive reuse of urban wastes.<sup>3</sup>

If you want to become a member of CJC . . .

Please visit [cjc.net/membership/](http://cjc.net/membership/)

Or contact Cheryl Hester at: [cheryl@cjc.net](mailto:cheryl@cjc.net)  
312.252.0460 x108

As a CJC member, you will have the opportunity to:

- Receive discounted rates on Frontline Focus trainings
- Attend CJC's Member Meetings free of charge
- Promote your services through CJC's online Member Directory
- Vote on members of CJC's Board of Directors
- Post job openings at your organization on CJC's website

Become a fan of CJC on FACEBOOK!



# American Recovery and Reinvestment Act: Community Gardens/Local Foods Summer Youth Program



City Farms, another youth provider  
Photo by Janet Dzieszinski

Last quarter we highlighted the Youth Ready Chicago program, which used 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds to provide employment for youth during the summer in a wide range of fields. The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) expanded on these efforts by funding programs that created opportunities for WIA-eligible youth to participate in urban agriculture. Across the state, 13 different providers were given ARRA funds through DCEO to run programs that operated at least one sustainable community garden. These programs provided a venue for young people to learn about agriculture and urban farming while making a positive impact in their local communities. Once the food is harvested, it will be distributed to low-income individuals in the community.

In Chicago, After School Matters, Back of the Yards, La Casa Norte, and ABJ Community Service Center were chosen to receive funding. The Chicago Botanic Garden, in collaboration with the Cook County Boot Camp, also received funding from DCEO to support their Green Youth Farm program. Here are some highlights from a few of these programs:

## Back of the Yards

A wide variety of activities were coordinated for 57 youths (both in and out-of-school) this summer in Back of the Yards' summer youth program. Participants converted two vacant lots into community gardens, planted crops for fall harvest (all to be donated to a local food pantry), and attended classes through the University of Illinois Extensions. This classroom component gave the participants the opportunity to learn about gardening, Agribusiness, and food distribution, including a field trip to a local, organic food distributor.

## ABJ Community Services

During this eight week program, twelve youth between the ages of 16 and 22 worked to build and maintain a community garden around 97th and Marquette. Cooking classes were also offered to the participants at the Washburne Culinary Institute, a program of Kennedy-King College. Along with cooking classes, the youth went on field trips to local grocery stores that sold organic food and also accepted Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards.

## Green Youth Farm

While the North Chicago Green Youth Farm, a program of the Chicago Botanic Garden, has been working with youth in all seasons since 2003, this summer they teamed up with DCEO to provide opportunities for individuals currently in the Cook County Boot Camp to plant and maintain beds in their garden. Participants received a stipend for their work, which could be used to pay for a horticulture certification program. Approximately 20 youths took part in the program this summer.

## 2009 Frontline Focus Alumni Reunion

Last year, Frontline Focus graduated 431 job developers from our training courses. In order to celebrate the work of these alumni, we are hosting a reunion party! So, if you graduated from any of CJC's training courses in the past year, please plan to join us:

**WHEN:** Thursday, November 5 from 4:00-7:00pm.  
**WHERE:** Midtown Kitchen & Bar (203 N. LaSalle St.)

Appetizers will be provided by CJC and a cash bar will be available. A short program, with guest speaker Jesus "Chuy" Garcia will commence at 5:30pm.

Please email your name and contact info to [rsvp@cjc.net](mailto:rsvp@cjc.net) by October 30.



**FRONTLINE FOCUS**  
THE CHICAGO JOBS COUNCIL  
TRAINING INSTITUTE

1 Resource Centres on Urban Agriculture & Food Security, <http://www.ruaf.org/node/513>

2 *Ibid.*

3 *Ibid.*

# Upcoming Events

Office Closed

Working Group Meeting  
9:30 - 11:30am

October 2009						
S	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

November 2009						
S	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

December 2009						
S	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

**Skills & Strategies for Working with Employers**  
9:00am-4:00pm

**2009 Frontline Focus Alumni Reunion**  
4:00-7:00pm

**Pitch Clinic**  
9:00am-12:00pm

**Job Developer Orientation**  
9:00am-4:00pm

**Job Seeker Retention: Keeping Clients in Your Program and On the Job**  
9:00am-4:00pm

**Introduction to the Workforce Investment Act**  
9:00am-12:30pm

**Job Developer Orientation**  
9:00am-4:00pm

## Course Descriptions

### Skills & Strategies for Working with Employers

(\$315 members/\$450 non-members)

This multi-session training is designed for entry-level job developers. During this hands-on, interactive course, participants learn practical skills and strategies for reaching out to employers and making effective placements. The course focuses on how to build and maintain relationships with employers, how to make good job matches, and how to work most effectively as a job developer.

### Job Developer Orientation

(\$75 members/\$115 non-members)

This full-day workshop is designed for new workforce development staff who work directly with employers to create opportunities for job seekers. Participants will be introduced to key skills, strategies and concepts for reaching out to employers, making good placements, and working effectively in their new role as job developers.

### Pitch Clinic

(\$50 members/\$75 non-members)

This half-day workshop allows job developers to work in small groups with employer "coaches" to craft, practice and refine their marketing pitch. Specifically, participants learn how to make a professional business impression and get practical, constructive feedback on their approach.

### Job Seeker Retention

(\$190 members/\$275 non-members)

This multi-session course is designed for seasoned workforce development professionals who have already completed CJC's *Skills & Strategies for Working with Employers* course. Participants will explore ways they can keep job seekers engaged in their programs, motivated to think about long-term career goals, and supported throughout the transition into work. Through case studies, role plays, large and small group discussion, and panel presentations, participants will have the opportunity to learn strategies for enhancing program and post-placement retention.

### Intro to WIA

(\$50 member/\$75 non-member)

This half day workshop focuses on raising awareness and understanding of the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and providers' role in the workforce development system. Topics covered include: the five goals of the federal legislation; mandated one stop partners and services; state and local governance including allocation processes; definitions and examples of types of customers and services provided through WIA; and information about performance measures.

### Working Group

(free)

This group meets the second Tuesday of every month. Through discussion of local, state and federal workforce and economic development, as well as education and welfare policies, the group works to influence policy creation and implementation and monitor local experiences to effect change. This group is free and open to all workforce development professionals. Please contact Liz Bomgaars at [liz@cjc.net](mailto:liz@cjc.net) for more information.



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