



Frontline Focus Flyer

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR WORKFORCE PROFESSIONALS



CJC Staff at our Fall BBQ

this issue

Behind the Frontline P.1

CJC Economic Impact Survey P.2

The WIRE P.2

Calendar & Upcoming Events P.3

Mission

The Frontline Focus Training Institute delivers trainings and resources to help front-line 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 four programmatic areas.

Thank You . . . to our funders!

- Alphawood Foundation
- Chicago Tribune Charities, a Fund of the McCormick Foundation
- Fry Foundation
- JPMorgan Chase
- Polk Bros. Foundation

With this generous operational support, CJC is able to keep fees for training courses affordable for Frontline Focus participants.

Behind the Frontline . . .

As we welcome the start of a new year and a new decade, the Frontline Focus Training Institute has much to celebrate. In October, we piloted the five week version of our popular course, *Skills & Strategies for Working with Employers*. Our graduates were incredibly engaged and their participation made the weeks fly by. We're looking forward to offering this five week format again in March 2010. As the weather turned colder this fall, we also offered our standard *Pitch Clinic*, *Job Developer Orientation* and *Introduction to the Workforce Investment Act* courses. These trainings filled up fairly quickly which gave us hope that some of the tough financial times that have befallen workforce development agencies across the state are improving slightly.

We were very excited to roll out our newest curriculum this December: *Job Seeker Retention*. Many of our past participants have indicated that retention is a topic they would like more training in. The class, which is offered one day a week for three weeks is intended for experienced professionals who have already completed CJC's foundational *Skills & Strategies for Working with Employers* course. The class focuses on both how to keep job seekers engaged and motivated to stay in training programs and how to help job holders think about their career paths. We celebrated the graduation of our inaugural class on December 16, 2009. Please look for this class to be offered again in the Fall of 2010. Information about all our upcoming trainings, including a new leadership and management course for supervisors, can be found at www.cjc.net/frontline.

We also hosted our Second Annual Frontline Focus Alumni Reunion on November 5. Alums attended to listen to Jesus "Chuy" Garcia's inspirational message and reconnect with old classmates. We raffled off a few different prizes including free tuition to our Job Seeker Retention course. We're looking forward to strengthening our alumni network in the coming year so, stay tuned for more information!



Fall 2009 *Skills & Strategies for Working with Employers* graduates

Quick Survey Stats:

- 228 organizations (non-profit, for-profit, government and community colleges) were surveyed yielding a total of 43 responses (19% response rate)
- More than half the respondents (23) have received ARRA funding. These providers were divided in their perception of how useful these funds will be in off-setting cuts.
- 37% of respondents reported no change in organizational resources for training; 13% reported an increase in available resources for training.

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

Please visit cjc.net/membership/

Or contact Cheryl Hester at: 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!



CJC Surveys Impact of Economic Climate on Chicago's Employment & Training Providers*

In September 2009, the Chicago Jobs Council (CJC) conducted a survey of employment and training service providers to understand how such organizations are being affected by the current economic environment, and to understand what the service delivery landscape may look like after one-time American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds are expended.

Three key themes emerged from survey responses:

1) The current funding environment is extremely volatile.

The vast majority of respondents are facing reductions in State and private foundation funding, as well as from other sources such as individual donors and members. Long delays in payments from the State also complicate the current economic challenges for these agencies. Providers report that both funding cuts and instability are resulting in staff reductions, program closures, cutbacks in client services and numbers of clients served, as well as negatively impacting organizational operations and infrastructure.

2) Increased funding can mean additional capacity challenges for organizations.

The programming and administrative demands of ARRA funding can be challenging to the internal capacity of some organizations. Over 70% of survey respondents receiving ARRA funds (related to employment and training) have needed to increase staff and/or staff-time (both paid and unpaid) in response. For most of these providers, ARRA funding has meant implementing new programs and initiatives, most of which are time-limited. While some providers are well positioned for the launch and expansion of programming, others lack existing program models, agency partners, experienced staff, administrative support and other internal infrastructure to manage requirements attached to ARRA funding.

3) Organizations are responding to current challenges and opportunities with creativity.

Some examples of approaches that surveyed organizations are adopting are below:

- restructuring existing programs and creating new ones to take advantage of funding opportunities and better respond to the shifting needs of clients (both job seekers and employers)
- creating new joint ventures and collaborations to leverage opportunities and fill gaps
- restructuring staff (in addition to lay-offs, shifting job descriptions and using more volunteers) and cutting operational costs (subleasing office space, relying on donated supplies) to get by on less
- generating program related earned income from social ventures to rely less on government and private foundation funding

*The full Executive Summary and Summary of Survey Responses can be found at: www.cjc.net/wire

CJC Launches Workforce Information & Resource Exchange (WIRE)

Frontline providers can now take advantage of CJC's new WIRE resource on our website www.cjc.net/wire! The WIRE (Workforce Information & Resource Exchange) is an on-line portal to timely data and information in workforce development and closely-related fields, designed specifically to centralize relevant information for providers and other stakeholders working to ensure that disadvantaged job seekers and low wage workers have access to employment and career advancement opportunities. Look here for information such as workforce development publications and research reports, data on publicly funded workforce development programs, and directories of training programs.

The WIRE is a dynamic resource, so check back often for continuously updated data, new additions in information and features, and on-going improvements based on the feedback of users. CJC is also currently in the process of designing a more comprehensive WIRE website to host related on-line information tools and interactive databases.

Please contact Megan Winzeler, Director of Programs, at megan@cjc.net with any questions, comments or suggestions regarding the WIRE.

wire
Workforce Information and Resource Exchange

Upcoming Events

Office Closed

Working Group Meeting
9:30 - 11:30am

January 2010						
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						

February 2010						
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						

March 2010						
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			

Working with Job Seekers with Criminal Records
9:00am-4:00pm

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

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

Course Descriptions

Working with Job Seekers with Criminal Records

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

This multi-session course focuses on specific information, resources and strategies that help job developers work more effectively with clients who have criminal records. Topics covered include: barriers ex-offenders face when reentering the workforce; understanding employment discrimination and navigating the public benefits, rights, and legal services available to ex-offenders; dealing with expungement and sealing of records; and addressing employer concerns about hiring candidates with criminal records.

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.

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@cjcn.net for more information.

We still have seats available for our *Skills & Strategies for Working with Job Seekers with Criminal Records* course!

Visit

www.cjc.net/frontline/criminal_background.php to download the application form!



Chicago Jobs Council
29 E Madison St., Suite 1700
Chicago, IL 60602
p: 312.252.0460 f: 312.252.0099
w: www.cjc.net

Program Team

Megan Winzeler
Director of Programs
megan@cjcn.net
312.252.0460 x305

Ellen Johnson
Senior Program Associate
ellen@cjcn.net
312.252.0460 x310

Cheryl Hester
Program Assistant
cheryl@cjcn.net
312.252.0460 x108

Jacob Morrison
Research Assistant
jacob@cjcn.net
312.252.0460 x116