

For Immediate Release

Evaluation shows Job Training and Economic Development Program graduates earn more than non-participants

Chicago (February 13, 2006) – Graduates of the state-funded Job Training and Economic Development (JTED) program are 33% more likely to be employed one year after completing the program than comparable job seekers who did not receive training, according to *Partnerships for Job Training and Economic Development: An Evaluation of Illinois' JTED Program*, a report released by the Chicago Jobs Council (CJC). Additionally, these individuals increased their annual earnings by \$2,500 to \$3,200 relative to similar job seekers who did not participate.

Jack Lavin, Director of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, underscores the importance of these findings, stating, “our greatest asset is our people, which is why we must continue investing in programs like JTED that give our hardworking men and women the skills and the confidence they need to not only find their next jobs, but the right jobs. This analysis confirms that linking workforce development with economic development is an extremely successful way of helping people get better jobs and helping businesses grow.”

This program, administered by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, is the only one that uses state general revenue funds to foster community-business partnerships in order to prepare low-skilled job seekers and incumbent workers to fill high-demand employer vacancies.

Alex Prentzas, Director of Workforce Development for OAI, a Chicago based training provider that receives JTED funding, says, “what sets JTED apart is its focus not only on the job seeker, but also on the employer. This makes the program much more appealing to both parties, as the job seeker receives training for a specific occupation, and the employer knows they are hiring employees with the necessary skills.” Through its JTED program, OAI has established partnerships with numerous employers, including Jewel Osco, Advocate Trinity Hospital, and IKON.

Mik Erwin, former Regional Recruitment Trainer for IKON fully supports the JTED program, stating, “previously, to find 10 hireable candidates, I’d have to evaluate about 100 resumes, conduct 50 phone screenings, and do 20 face to face interviews, which is about a week’s worth of work. Since partnering with OAI to develop and implement the document technician program, this time commitment has been cut down to an afternoon of evaluating applicants as they enter the program, knowing that if they complete it, they

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will be qualified for entry-level positions. This leaves me free to pursue other activities that are core to IKON's business plans."

The Chicago Jobs Council is a city-wide coalition of community-based training organizations, advocacy groups, businesses, and individuals that works to ensure employment and career advancement opportunities for people living in poverty. More information, including this evaluation, is available at www.cjc.net.

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