

ON THE JOB TRAINING

EASTERN WASHINGTON PARTNERSHIP

<http://www.washingtonworkforce.org>

Renewed Focus on OJT

The Eastern Washington Partnership Workforce Development Council (WDC) believed that a renewed focus on the OJT program was a worthwhile endeavor to meet increased demand for service resulting from the Great Recession. An initial and critical step in the WDC's OJT initiative was securing some targeted funding. It was a partner in the state's successful application for a National Emergency Grant. The WDC was also successful in securing some funding from the Governor's WIA discretionary fund. Both were important since the ARRA funding was basically spent and much of the WDC's formula funding for FY 2010 was already obligated.

With funding in hand, service providers identified specific staff members that were charged with conducting the employer outreach that was necessary to market the program. They are members of the WorkSource Business Services team that develops specific strategies for each of the nine counties the WDC serves. One strategy was to communicate with the region's Associate Development Organizations' (ADOs) staff about the increased OJT emphasis and in some instances to actually make joint presentations to employers. This effort also helped to market the WDC's incumbent worker program. Employers have been very receptive to this approach.



The impact of the OJT marketing effort has been an increase in the number of employers who have either begun to use the program for new hires or who have an interest in doing so when they are ready to add new employees. The outreach work has also raised the profile of WorkSource in the employer community. Employers are now more aware of the variety of services that they can access by working with the business services team. And, the number of long-term employed people who are interested in OJT as a training option for themselves has increased.

The most significant change that occurred as a result of the OJT initiative is the integrated approach that the business services team has taken to the outreach effort. The Eastern Washington Partnership's service delivery area is vast. It includes nine rural counties that stretch from the Canadian border to the Oregon border. With the limited funding that is available, it is important that service providers do not duplicate outreach efforts. It is too time consuming and expensive to do so. Ongoing communication among the team members makes their efforts more efficient.

CRITICAL PARTNERS

WIA Adult & Dislocated Worker Staff
Wagner-Peyser
WorkFirst
Associate Development Organizations
Department of Vocational Rehabilitation
WorkSource

RESULTS

(As of July 2011)

150 personal contacts with employers
20 signed OJT contracts with providers
In addition, there are some who have expressed an interest in using the program in the future and others who have actually hired new employees through WorkSource without using the program.

CHALLENGES

The greatest challenge for the OJT program in Eastern's area continues to be the state of the regional economy. Employers remain very cautious about expanding their workforce at this time.
The other concern is the significant reduction in WIA formula funding that has occurred since 2006. This will be a limiting factor as the economy begins to improve and demand for the program increases.