

Engaging Older Workers in the Public Workforce System

Responses to Discussion Questions

1) Many employers are concerned that older workers are not able to use new technology and are not current on knowledge in their field. How do you eliminate this employer bias for older workers who are prepared, and how to you help older workers get up to speed when these concerns are true?

- **Wendy:** Our One Stop Center offers a monthly Computer Boot Camp, covering the basics, and then follow-up classes
- **Chris:** For SCSEP participants, digital inclusion is a big issue. We try to get access to tech through CSAs but that is not 100% reliable.
- **Cathy:** We provide keyboarding and software skills in today's workplace
- **Patty:** I work with the local staffing agencies by finding out their requirements to pass their computer/clerical tests and then we can provide that training by linking our participants to that specific skill
- **Mary:** Our PACL offers free workshops in computer literacy every Wednesday.
- **Marilyn:** We offer computer and job search classes or workshops
- **Sharon:** In our facility at WMC, we provide computer basic training for Microsoft Office Suite, and upgrade their skills in basic math and English to pass any assessment tests that an employer may have
- **Erica:** Free workshops in Word, Excel, intro to computers, etc. at our PACL
- **Michelle:** We encourage grant funded or free training available in the community for technology training.
- **Zandra:** Provide training and testing, than provide the certificates or test results with the employers.
- **Cindy:** Peer match with a more experienced computer user
- **Larry:** We offer all SCSEP participants 'Log on to Learn,' which is virtual computer training teaching Office suite programs
- **Ann:** Make sure there is Microsoft office training available through multiple agencies in the community, especially technical colleges or even continuing ed classes. Use WIA assessment funds to pay for it rather than enrolling them in training.
- **Frederic:** We refer our job seeker to www.gcflearnfree.org. Based on the computer or tech skill needed, this self-paced (free) resource is used as a task item for our Career Counselors to follow up for completion.
- **Margaret:** The employer should ask about worker use of technology in the hiring process. The One Stop can provide training to older workers who lack IT skills. Partnership with libraries to offer tech skills to older workers.
- **Wanda:** The older workers in our SCSEP program are coached to enroll in free workshops and classes. We also offer one-on-one lab sessions during job clubs.
- **Theresa Pallanti:** Lack of tech skills is an individual issue and is not age-specific. I have older customers who are very tech savvy and others in their 30s without an email account. I recommend free basic computer skills training at libraries and online at www.gcflearnfree.org and using the free trial period on www.lyndapro.com for more specific software needs.
- **Connie:** Free computer (and other) workshops and mentoring.
- **Ginny:** www.gcflearnfree.org offers tutorials.
- **Fran:** Have the older worker create a portfolio of the work they have accomplished: Excel spreadsheets, PowerPoints that have been created, etc.
- **Gloria:** Peer match training would be great, give those who are more reluctant an example of people in their age group who are tech savvy.
- **Heidi:** Give the worker a chance to proof that he is able to use new technology and for those who need more training give the tools by holding small classes.
- **Deborah Jackson:** Our local WFC offers beginning and intermediate computer classes. Many of the temp agencies offer tutorial-based classes.

- **Carla:** GFS learn free; Key Train; WOW (when we had it), our own free basic Word, Excel and PowerPoint classes; refer to Goodwill; partner with DVR for paid training or co-enroll to WIA to do the same.
- **Chris:** One idea is to have employers volunteer their time and/or resources to train SCSEP participants.
- **Suzanne:** We have an e-learning system where they test and print up the results to bring to the employer to prove their computer skills
- **Martina:** We also have an on-site Microsoft Office certified workshop facilitator teaching free workshops.
- **Barbara:** We introduce the availability of training funds through the limited WIA funds we have, as well as the use of FAFSA to obtain the Pell Grant to attend the local community college who offer a wide variety of vocational skills aimed at skill sets required to re-enter the workforce. We also address transferrable skills and how they help to make you eligible for a new career.
- **Susan:** In our area of Georgia, Goodwill Industries offers computer training and GED classes.
- **Patricia:** We operate a SCSEP program and we set aside 10% of the funds for specialized training, which is used for computers. We are in the process of working with a youth service learning program where they will teach our participants.
- **Robert:** We provide a series of free computer workshops with participants receiving certificates of completion.
- **Jacquelyn:** We offer a program called Metrix, a series of almost 6000 online courses.
- **Ginny:** When this is true, I recommend to older workers that they get training through their local Libraries, Senior Center classes, and community colleges that offer free courses to people over 60-65.
- **Douglas:** We offer week long trainings/certifications for the Microsoft Office suite
- **Jerry:** Partner with students in computer programs at community college to provide one-on-one tutoring
- **Deborah:** Make sure their resume reflects their abilities/knowledge with technology. If they do not have any or little, then connect them to online courses or courses offered in the community.
- **Ann:** Sell the soft skills of the older workers and their willingness to learn technology.
- **Julia:** Give computer workshops
- **Rocco:** Show employers myths and facts research on this subject.
- **Cindy:** Create a step by step flowchart for the older worker to the employers software program
- **Nancy:** Local libraries also offer free computer classes
- **Douglas :** We work daily at our customer resource center to assist older workers with limited computer skills
- **Dale:** Are the employers performing skills testing to ascertain if the prospective employees are knowledgeable?
- **Laura:** For those older workers that are prepared, they must include their skills on their resume. For those older workers that need to get up to speed, we should help them get involve in computer trainings.
- **Dina:** I counsel the older worker to bring it up and tell the employer that they are a balance which includes the new technology so that the employer doesn't have to ask or wonder.
- **Lisa:** GFC learning free computer workshops. A link on mt.gov.
- **Jean:** Experience Works provides the availability for participants to work in a program that allows for free training in updating their skills.
- **Michi:** We offer specific computer training for program participants which provides a certificate of completion for each course level. The certificates are presented to the employer as part of their resume.
- **Cindy:** Libraries have free training
- **Michi:** We also encourage Facebook as a means to stay connected to their family members.
- **Donna:** Free computer classes at our county library.

2) **We have record numbers of long-term unemployed workers today, and a large percentage of them are older workers. Are there special services that can be provided for these workers that will help them succeed in the labor market?**

- **Patricia:** How can we get lists of long term unemployed in our areas
- **Yvette:** Patricia, you might find out who is about to exhaust UI benefits
- **Michael:** My local One Stop doesn't seem to be very helpful for older workers, what can I do to help? Is there additional funding?
- **Lisa:** Talk to them about creating a program
- **Cindy:** Offer additional training through job coaching
- **Andrea:** Verify their skills through career readiness certificate and utilizing tapdance testing.
- **Martina:** If the job is an occupation in demand and the individual has a solid work experience, we offer an OJT to the employer to consider the individual.
- **Deborah:** Investing in training for incumbent workers as they age
- **Angela Rizzolo:** Since the issue appears to be pervasive perhaps we should work with upgrading older employees while they have the jobs.
- **Rosalyn Miller:** I market my talent as seasoned workers and outline their accomplishments in the work field. Many are not looking for high ticket salaries.
- **Cynthia:** Many state colleges will allow people 60 and over to attend classes free or at a greatly reduced rate - I would check with area two- and four-year colleges
- **Larry:** To help eliminate employer bias, perhaps a WIA internship. This allows the employer to "try before they buy."
- **Stephanie:** We offer employability skills centers to train these workers on whatever they may need. We also offer community ed courses and upon successful completion we provide a certificate of training.
- **Nancy:** We provide testing and updated classes and can provide certificates when completed to prospective employers
- **Nadine:** I encourage resume entries such as "mature work ethic," "work well independently, as a team leader, as a mentor," and include software familiarity.
- **Cindy:** Created an employer Silver Collar Award for hiring older workers.
- **Leah:** Paid internships -- 6 months or more -- related training, partnerships with groups like Experience Works, Human Resource Association Groups (local)
- **Barbara:** We participate in a supportive employment program placing the over 50 in non-profit sites, and then assist with their permanent placement at our centers through seminars, personal counseling, and a Hot Job Website that includes jobs we have developed with local employers.
- **Chris:** Question #2 - more funds for SCSEP as they people may be income eligible due to long term unemployment. SCSEP can help them refresh their job search skills as well as their employability skills via the paid training at a host agency.
- **Ginny:** Yes! Hearing aids provided to get or keep a job - FREE.
- **Barbara:** Yes, we have a wide variety of seminars we offer in our Michigan Works Centers some of which address employability skills needed for all groups but can be tailored to the needs of the 50 over group.
- **Nicky:** One of our sub-grantees assists participants with getting glasses. That has seemed to really help those in need and boost confidence.
- **Rebecca:** We run a job club to workshop resumes, encourage networking of peers in the job search, and do group review of application and interview experiences.
- **Stephanie:** We offer free classes to Plus 50 students.
- **Carla:** We run a hybrid workshop that utilizes a variety of strategies to empower the older worker. (1) An opportunity to network with other mature workers about your experience. (2) Orientation to our intensive services (training, OJTs intensive job search assistance). (3) Hands-on workshop on how to use on-line resources for their job search-- online job databases (Go2Worksource.com, Indeed.com etc.), assessments, interview techniques, community resources, using ESD website to access labor market research and find employers, using O*Net to research jobs and use the language for their own resumes

- **Theresa Pallanti:** Job developers connect workers directly to hiring managers and discuss OJT options.
- **Karen:** Connect older workers with senior employment services that place individuals for short term training on the job.
- **Cathy:** We provide internships so older workers can demonstrate they have the skills needed to compete in today's work force/ We also have Job clubs, training and mature worker job fairs and employer seminars and individual presentations to employers
- **Margaret:** Ensure the job matches older worker skills, case management. Identify employers who support older workers.
- **Cindy:** Mixed results working in labor market...still very tight in Maine.
- **Martina:** Our local community college offers free classes to students 50+
- **Ginny:** These are our participants. We offer training through SCSEP and job clubs once a month.
- **Michael:** Platform to Employment provides behavioral health services/group and one on one
- **Fran:** SCSEP is a great steep for workers who need to keep some income coming in while they learn new skills. Job search assistance is also offered.
- **Patty:** We are now providing sessions that deal with our SCSEP participants confidence levels, perseverance skills, etc.
- **Jacquelyn:** I give a two-hour workshop that touches on myths, stereotypes, realities, how resumes, etc. have changes and more....
- **Nadine:** Free job search workshops, personal one on one coaching, vocational counseling, free computer classes in town, free University classes for those over 66, MASST Mature Alaskans Seeking Skills Training for 55+, and a good labor market
- **Theresa Pallanti:** We're working on branding our work readiness skills series and really like the Prime Talent idea.
- **Cindy:** Older workers competing against federal minimum wage for training of \$4.25 per hour
- **Lisa:** Ditto what Carla does and other! Very personal service and reality checks
- **Mimi:** Currently partnering w/one stop to provide a "mature worker" job club
- **Nicky:** Encouraging volunteering - it helps develop skills, builds up resumes and boosts confidence.
- **Susan:** Georgia WIA has 2 mobile units available for large groups for GED classes and computer training.
- **Michelle:** In Spokane we have been very successful offering job clubs to strengthen and enhance job seeking skills, very interactive, collaboration. Young and old working together - also offer more intensive one to one when needed.
- **Cynthia:** Small group setting including some training on the culture of the modern workplace, how to complete applications, how to interview, resume assistance, etc.

3) Some older workers are also eligible for services and resources from other systems, such as vocational rehabilitation. Have you done any work to collaborate with other agencies with particular relevance for older workers?

- **Cathy:** Through Mass Rehab and Veteran rehabilitation we have received funding for computer skills training and intensive job search assistance
- **Patrice:** Our department is housed out of our Family Source center and those that are co-enrolled are able to have access to take part in our GED classes ESL classes, employment support, financial literacy, computer classes, parenting classes, and case management free of cost
- **Linda:** We referred clients to mature worker workshops, technical training through our "smart classrooms" and resume critiques to markets skills and qualifications better.
- **Deborah Jackson:** We are located in the same building as VRS, and share wrap around services.
- **Sharon:** First, we encourage a better attitude concerning their age issue and length of unemployment, we refer to voc rehab when appropriate
- **Cindy:** I provide voc rehab services directly
- **Nancy:** We all work together to assist
- **Michelle:** We do refer to voc rehab if appropriate to the older worker, as well as DVOPS

- **Patty:** Our SCSEP program also has a DVR Vendor component so we work closely with DVR staff
- **Michi:** Utilize or create a Business Advisory Council and incorporate it with a participant advisory council
- **Fran:** Lots of senior assistance companies out there looking for companions for seniors. These are great job opportunities.
- **Martina:** Collaborating with local AARP, National Able 55 and Better and Experience Works through our WorkOne centers
- **Karen:** Job shadowing and volunteering
- **Camille:** Partner with other agencies to address financial, health, and mental health issues.
- **Maurice:** Community based and faith based services and helping ensure government and corporate surplus is available to them
- **Martina:** If they are Veterans, we connect them with our DVOP and LVER's along with a career advisor.
- **Jacquelyn:** We have disability coordinators and vocational rehab counselors in our office
- **Frederic:** We also have access to supportive services via WIA
- **Rocco:** Aging and Disability Resource Centers
- **Julia:** Many older workers have disabilities and need special resources for being hiring.
- **Rosalyn Miller:** We have a rep that deals exclusively with those with a Schedule A letters. We also have several associations that we refer them to for more detailed training that is usually free.
- **Nadine:** Our DOL partner offers free classes downtown, on the bus line for access
- **Maurice:** Encourage partnerships with churches, community centers, etc. helping ensure that they receive surplus goods.
- **Michi:** ADRC are great partners
- **Dora Jo:** It's a matter of who walks through our doors. We refer to service providers that are able to train in areas of interest i.e. computer literacy, etc.
- **Cynthia:** I invited various state and local agencies to meetings and networked at meetings held by other agencies, and I would have speakers of relevant agencies speak at quarterly meetings
- **Douglas:** We work with state OVR workers in our one-stop where appropriate
- **Dora Jo:** SCSEP - The Older Workers Program is another partner that older workers can avail of
- **Nadine:** We are in a One Stop, Public Assistance is on the second floor, DVR on the third floor, we have a former DVOP (lost funding) who is always available to vets and the public, we have a vocational counselor on staff daily, Ticket to Work, and strong community support
- **Frederic:** We are the service delivery portion of the VA voc rehab program. After conducting a thorough assessment of the job seeker, if additional skills are needed, we can refer back to the VA for additional training, i.e. computer skills, etc.
- **Lisa:** Our community partners who roll out wrap around services very nicely.
- **Connie:** We have a VR rep in our office and work closely to provide services.
- **Laura:** WIA and TAA programs
- **Nancy:** We all refer to each other as needs arise-DVR, DVOP, WIA workshops as we are all under the One Stop Job Center
- **Carla:** Yes, we are one stop with ESD, DVR, WIA and VetRep all together. We share many customers and refer often.
- **Michi:** Partner with local partners in the community to address these barriers collectively - i.e. our job clubs include voc rehab, veterans reps, AAA
- **Theresa Pallanti:** We're doing program recruitment through local libraries, which serve as a resource for job seekers without home computers or internet access.
- **Crystal:** Collaborations with job developers from other nonprofits in the areas we serve who run workforce programs to leverage employer resources. Strength in numbers!
- **Martina:** People with associates or higher...we offer the NWI Professional Networking workshops through our Job Centers
- **Yvette:** The LA Fellows Program is an innovative partnership that includes many practices helpful to getting seasoned workers in the labor force and addressing employment gaps.
- **Beverly:** Local business donated large amount of money to pay for computer classes through our One Stop