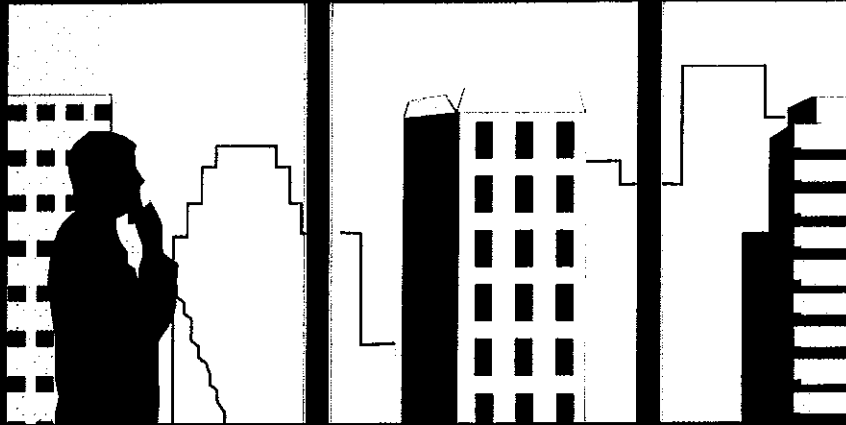


WELFARE REFORM IN THE ST. LOUIS REGION



BUSINESS AS PARTNER

A CITIZENS' TASK FORCE HANDBOOK

FOCUS ST. LOUIS

OCTOBER 1997

WELFARE REFORM IN THE ST. LOUIS REGION BUSINESS AS PARTNER

Welfare reform provides one of the greatest opportunities for businesses to influence the skill of the labor pool in many years. At the same time, welfare reform will not be successful until businesses become active partners in the welfare-to-work process. The Peirce Report identified a well-trained workforce as being a vital part of any urban revitalization; welfare-to-work is an important component in that effort.

This is a handbook for businesses which suggests ways to profitably engage in welfare reform. It provides useful tools and ideas to make your business involvement work. These include:

- Creative solutions to typical problems.
- Resource contacts.
- Forms and questionnaires.
- Ideas for implementation.

FOCUS St. Louis considers successful welfare-to-work to be a vital part of our regional economy and hopes this report will assist businesses in a meaningful and profitable engagement.

THE FOCUS ST. LOUIS TASK FORCE: FILLING A GAP

In the Spring of 1997, a poll of FOCUS St. Louis' membership identified economic development as one of the most pressing issues in the region. These same members, representing a broad and diverse cross section of the community, felt that the region cannot excel in economic development if its labor supply isn't developed to its fullest potential.

Welfare reform, if done properly, can lead to a new supply of qualified labor for the region and add fuel to the regional economy. However, if welfare reform fails, it will be devastating both for people dependent on public assistance and for the larger regional economy.

FOCUS St. Louis concluded that the local welfare reform structure is disjointed, with at least one significant gap—there is no defined role for the involvement of businesses. The FOCUS St. Louis Board of Directors authorized a task force of business owners, employers, educators and trainers to address this gap. The charge to the task force was two-fold:

- To define a public-private partnership role for business in welfare reform, especially as it relates to adult education.
- To recommend ways in which business can engage itself in welfare reform meaningfully and profitably.

This handbook presents the task force's defined roles for businesses, with recommendations for involvement.¹

¹ Because of its generic nature, the recommendations and tools herein should serve only as models. If legal advice or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional should be sought.

BUSINESSES AS PARTNERS IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Before recipients can be employed, each must be employable. Educational and training institutions are equally important in making welfare reform a success. This means that potential employees must have both technical and non-technical abilities. Technical abilities are rather easily addressed. There are some very competent and successful training institutions serving the St. Louis region, and others are emerging. Provided that this training is kept relevant and meets the needs of the region's employers, this is beneficial. In many cases, businesses are willing to provide the necessary technical training for employees on-the-job.



Non-technical training is a much more difficult task. Social and economic challenges have prevented a portion of this region's population from achieving some very basic tenets necessary for learning and employment.

Popularly referred to as "life skills," these include both simple challenges, such as dress, appearance,

and self-discipline issues; and more complex challenges, such as attitude, behavior, and value issues. This level of training cannot be expected of businesses and it generally falls outside of traditional educational and training programs. For those who need it, non-technical training is essential to employment. Although it may be required for only a portion of the welfare population, it is a genuine need which must be satisfied if welfare reform is to be successful. It is unclear exactly where non-technical training should occur, and it is beyond the charge of this task force to define the role of educators and trainers, but it is very clear to the task force that **this responsibility will not be shouldered by businesses.**

POTENTIAL ROLES OF BUSINESS

"A systematic, clear-eyed regional approach to preparing an appropriately trained workforce is the single most powerful thing the St. Louis area could do to ensure its economic future."

The Peirce Report

The FOCUS St. Louis task force began its study by defining the entire welfare-to-work process, and then determining where businesses might have a role or responsibility. The task force identified a four-step process by which welfare recipients enter the work force. A careful analysis of this process indicates that businesses can and should play a key role in two of the four steps. This handbook describes those roles in detail and provides specific recommendations and suggested tools that businesses can use to make welfare-to-work succeed, both for them and for potential employees.

A The first step in the process is best described as career planning. Welfare recipients preparing to enter the labor market begin by doing a personal skills assessment, employment needs/interests, and the creation of personal milestones. Businesses have no role here, the task force concluded, because this role is better suited to service providers and government agencies.

B The second step is education and training. Based on the assessment of the client, appropriate education and training are required to prepare the client for entry into the workforce. Although the primary players here are educational and training institutions, businesses do have a responsibility to help set job training standards. If standards do not meet the needs of employers, then it will be very difficult to maintain any type of productive partnership.

C The third step is job placement. At some point, employee and employer must meet. Businesses are key players here, and the task force has several recommendations to help businesses fulfill this role.

D The fourth step is career success. Ideally, the new employee will advance either with the initial employer or through other employers to a sustainable career. Certainly, the greatest responsibility for career success lies with the employee. The employer has certain obligations to employees, but these were not definable within the context of the task force charge. (It was agreed that if the other roles are properly executed, there is no real role for businesses left in this last step. Proper training and proper placement should adequately position the worker for career success.)

Role 1

PARTNER WITH EDUCATORS AND TRAINERS

Businesses should be partners with educators and trainers to develop curricula which will prepare welfare recipients to enter the regional workforce. This partnership would be characterized by a dialog in which businesses (as customers of the education and training institutions) help these institutions define skills to be taught, standards to be met, and learning objectives.

ISSUE: HOW TO APPLY SCARCE TRAINING RESOURCES EFFECTIVELY

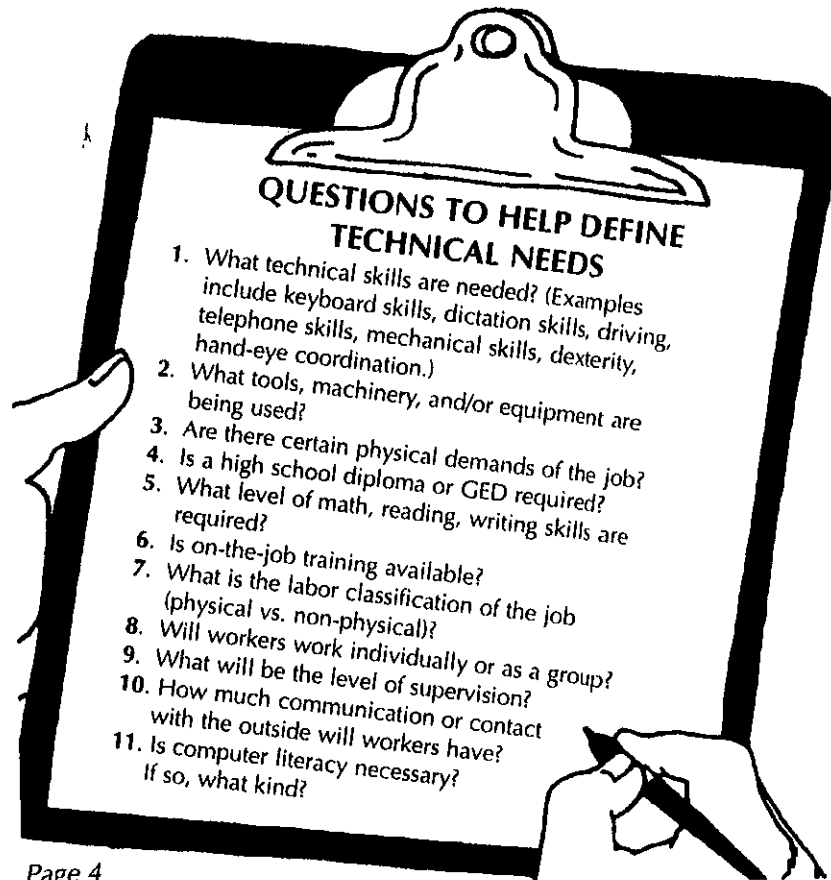
Keeping scarce training resources effectively applied is a critical first consideration for businesses. Jobs and technology are constantly changing; technical education and training must keep pace.

RECOMMENDATION

Employers should regularly define the technical skills that applicants must possess in order to be hired, and share this information with job trainers.

TOOL

The following questions will help employers define their technical needs. As you answer, identify those needs which are **actually necessary** to perform the job.



Role 1

PARTNER WITH EDUCATORS AND TRAINERS

ISSUE: HOW TO OVERCOME CHALLENGES THAT PREVENT WELFARE RECIPIENTS FROM SUCCEEDING

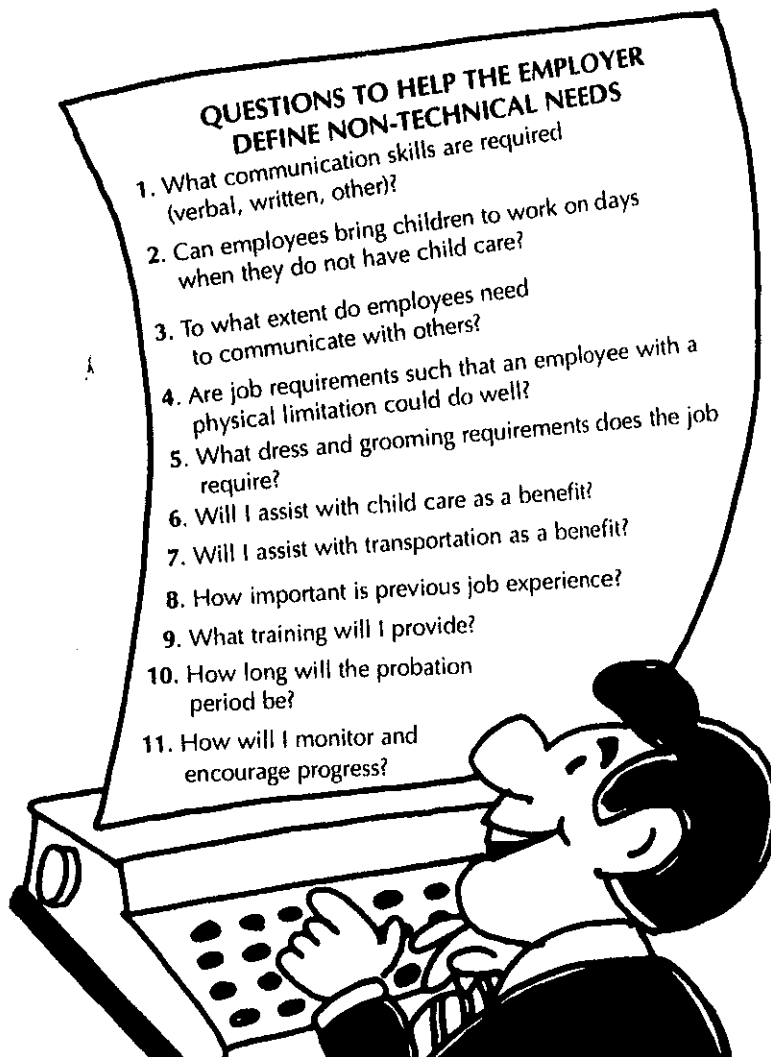
There are certain behavioral or value-based challenges which may prevent some welfare recipients from succeeding at the job. Often, these challenges arise from a lack of exposure to or experience in a business environment.

RECOMMENDATION

Employers should regularly define non-technical attributes that applicants must have in order to be hired.

TOOL

The following worksheet can be used to help employers define non-technical needs. As you answer, identify those needs which are **actually necessary** to perform the job.



BUSINESSES AS PARTNERS IN JOB PLACEMENT

Effective job placement benefits everyone.



- ✓ Employers want the best candidates; those who will stay with the job, and contribute to the profitability of the enterprise.
- ✓ Employees want jobs with competitive salaries and a measure of stability.
- ✓ If candidates and employers are properly matched, everyone is a winner.
- ✓ A central database of job information and job candidates is needed. Ideally, there would be a central database to which all employers could contribute job listings and from which all applicants could be referred. This is clearly not available today, and this void is a barrier to employment.
- ✓ Do not make distinctions. Once hired, welfare recipients are employees. Entry-level workers should be treated equally. Guidance programs, incentives, and salary structures should apply to all entry-level employees. Employers should not distinguish between welfare-to-work hires and other employees.

Role 2

PARTNER WITH JOB PLACEMENT SPECIALISTS

Businesses should partner with employment agencies which have access to welfare recipients by listing jobs with these agencies and accepting referrals from them. This process would be repeated each time a position needs to be filled (though the information may remain consistent).

ISSUE: JOB APPLICANTS NEED A GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF JOB REQUIREMENTS AND THE INTERVIEW PROCESS.

The current lack of knowledge in these areas results in unqualified and unprepared applicants. This adds both time and costs to the hiring process, and discourages employers from participating in welfare-to-work initiatives.

RECOMMENDATION

Provide employment agencies with the following for each open job:

- A detailed job description (including overtime or holiday requirements)
- Technical and non-technical expectations (defined in Role One)
- Information on the application process (e.g., time, location, required documentation)

TOOL

The following worksheet will help businesses identify expectations and needs.

IDENTIFYING EXPECTATIONS AND NEEDS

1. How often will the employee be required to work weekends and holidays? _____
2. Is overtime available or expected? Yes No
3. Does the job require shift work? Yes No
4. What benefits am I willing to provide? _____
5. Is flextime available? Yes No
6. Is day care available? Yes No
7. Is job site accessible by public transportation? Yes No
8. What career development opportunities exist? _____
9. Do I need pre-trained workers? Yes No
10. Can work hours be split? Yes No
11. What negative aspects of the job exist (odors, noise levels, etc.)? _____
12. Is travel required? Yes No
13. Is the work part-time or full-time? Part-time Full-time
14. Is this position permanent or temporary? Permanent Temporary
15. Do people need to be on-call? Yes No
16. Are uniforms required? Yes No
If so, are they provided? Yes No
17. What hours are entailed? _____
18. What wage will be paid? \$ _____
19. What benefits will be offered? _____
20. What further training will be provided? _____
21. What documents should applicants bring?
 Diploma/GED Drug screen
 Police check Other: _____

Role 2

PARTNER WITH JOB PLACEMENT SPECIALISTS

ISSUE: AVAILABLE JOBS ARE NOT ALWAYS VISIBLE TO WELFARE RECIPIENTS.

Jobs are generally not located near the welfare population, and localized job advertising (help wanted signs, marquis postings, neighborhood advertising) is not reaching this new labor source.

RECOMMENDATION

Disseminate job information strategically to reach the welfare population (utilize employment agencies, places of worship, shelters, or social organizations).

TOOL

A reference of programs which will allow employers to tap this new labor source.

TAPPING THE NEW LABOR SOURCE

The St. Louis region already has several organizations and programs helping to make welfare-to-work a success. Many of these have opportunities for businesses to be involved and can provide more information about the benefits offered.

THE ST. LOUIS REGIONAL JOBS INITIATIVE

The St. Louis Regional Jobs Initiative is a sustained, eight-year, public/private partnership designed to bring together businesses offering career-track, living-wage jobs with urban core job-seekers. In the short term, the Regional Jobs Initiative's goal is to link job-seekers with companies offering family supporting work by investing in a wide range of innovative projects. These projects are market-oriented to specific industries, customer-focused to meet designated needs, networked with agencies, integrated with services and funding streams, outcome-based using performance targets, sustainable, and empowering for job-seekers seeking self-sufficiency. The long-term goal is to effect positive changes in policies and protocols that impact the regional labor market. The Regional Jobs Initiative is governed by an Investors' Group made up of several state and regional public and private partners. (East-West Gateway Coordinating Council 314/421-4220)

Role 2

PARTNER WITH JOB PLACEMENT SPECIALISTS

TAPPING THE NEW LABOR SOURCE

WORKABLE ST. LOUIS

WorkABLE St. Louis is the newly established regional "St. Louis Work Keys Alliance of Business, Labor and Education," a partnership designed to utilize the national Work Keys system for profiling, assessing, and teaching critical workplace skills. Developed by ACT, the college testing group, Work Keys provides a much-needed "common language" between classrooms and the workplace. Just as educational skills can be matched between students and potential colleges, workplace skills can be matched between workers and employers. WorkABLE St. Louis, established in November 1996, is Missouri's first Work Keys Service Center. (St. Louis Regional Commerce and Growth Association 314/231-5555)

THE CORNERSTONE PARTNERSHIP

The Cornerstone Partnership provides an opportunity for motivated urban youth and laid-off workers to obtain high-skill training, employment and continuous career development by learning computer skills and manufacturing technologies that maximize each individual's potential and enhances the global competitiveness of St. Louis industry. It is located at the former Wagner Electric site in Wellston across from the Wellston Metrolink stop, and is administered by an "industry-led" board of directors. (St. Louis County Economic Council 314/889-7663)

MID.TEC

Mid.Tec operates a "teaching factory" in a 51,000 square foot building near downtown St. Louis to prepare the chronically unemployed and underemployed for manufacturing jobs with small and mid-size businesses. Since November of 1994, Mid.Tec has attracted over 300 member businesses and provides over 175 training courses on a variety of technical topics, including customized topics for specific businesses. (The Midwest Manufacturing Technology Corp. of St. Louis 314/621-5005)

Role 2

PARTNER WITH JOB PLACEMENT SPECIALISTS

TAPPING THE NEW LABOR SOURCE

THE ST. LOUIS COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

The St. Louis Community Partnership was established in 1997 as part of the ongoing human service reforms in Missouri. The Partnership pursues six core results (working parents, safe families, prepared students, healthy children, student success, and workforce preparedness) through five key functions (ensuring sound fiscal management and service coordination, monitoring outcomes, collecting data to guide decisions, involving stakeholders in resource allocation, and serving as custodian of the community and state vision to improve outcomes for children and families). The Partnership can provide a wealth of information regarding available welfare-to-work programs and incentives, including those at the state level. (314/531-1630)

THE WELFARE-TO-WORK PARTNERSHIP

The Welfare-to-Work Partnership is a national network of businesses committed to the employment of welfare recipients. St. Louis-based Monsanto was one of the founding companies, as were four other firms mentioned in the President's 1997 State of the Union address. Based in Washington D.C., this partnership works at the national level to encourage business participation in welfare reform. (Please see the "More Information is Available" section following the conclusion for publication information available from the Welfare-to-Work Partnership. 1-888-USA-JOBS1)

Because welfare reform programs differ from state to state, employers will want to check their options in Missouri and Illinois.

In Illinois, contact the Workforce Development Board (618/692-7040). This board is moving toward "one-stop shopping" for welfare-to-work employment issues.

In Missouri, there is a possibility of the state providing a wage supplement to businesses for welfare-to-work hires. Call the Missouri Futures Program (314/429-8290).

Role 2

PARTNER WITH JOB PLACEMENT SPECIALISTS

ISSUE: CERTAIN BARRIERS TEND TO EXIST WITHIN THE WELFARE-TO-WORK POPULATION WHICH CAN CREATE FUTURE EMPLOYMENT PROBLEMS

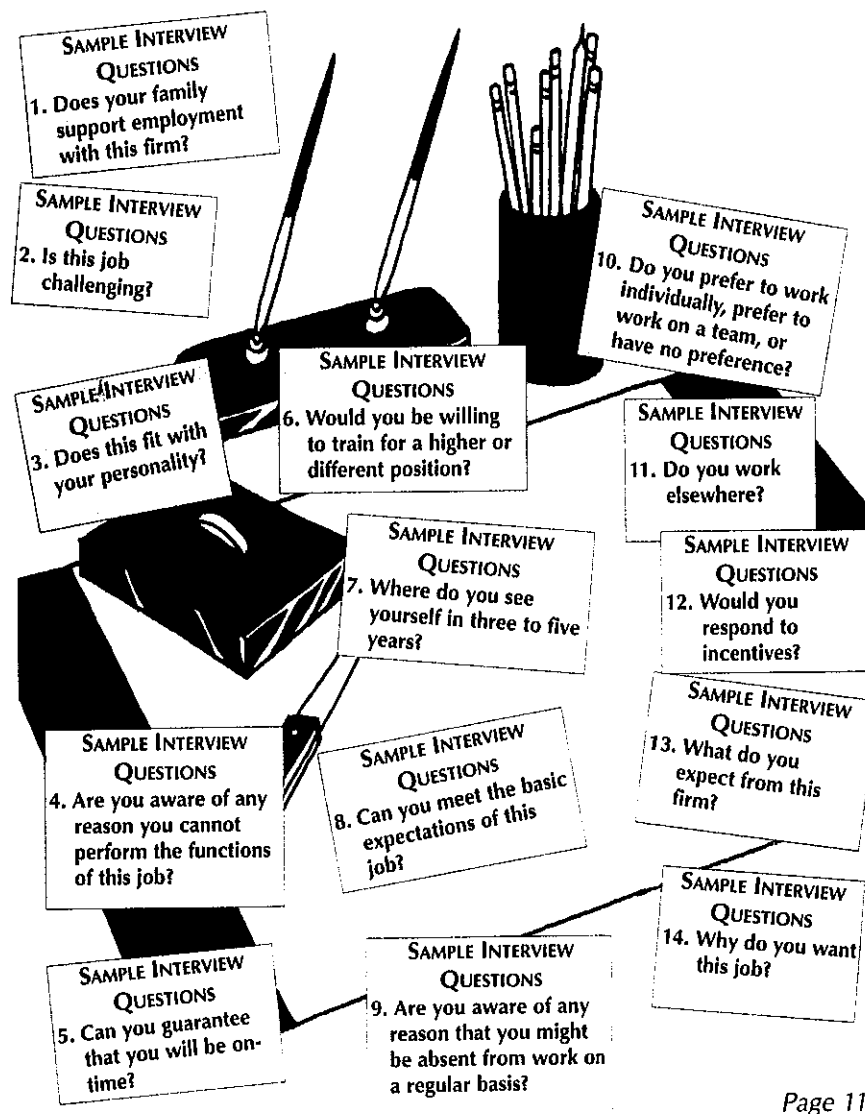
A common problem is chronic absenteeism resulting from transportation and child care dilemmas.

RECOMMENDATION

Include questions in your interview which will surface these potential barriers. A work-around solution can often be identified to prevent problems from arising.

TOOL

The sample interview questions shown below are designed to surface barriers so that solutions can be developed.



Role 2

PARTNER WITH JOB PLACEMENT SPECIALISTS

ISSUE: MANY ENTRY-LEVEL POSITIONS HAVE HIGH TURNOVER RATES WHICH COME AT HIGH COST TO BUSINESS.

RECOMMENDATION

Implement a retention strategy for entry-level employees. This can include mentoring programs and financial incentives which are more cost-effective than the expenses occurred in worker replacement.

TOOL

A sampling of creative solutions already in use by businesses in St. Louis and other areas.

CREATIVE SOLUTIONS TO ALLEVIATE TURNOVER 16 EXAMPLES FROM THE ST. LOUIS BUSINESS COMMUNITY

EXAMPLE 1.....A mentor program for new hires. A mentor program provides two significant benefits. First, it provides training through the "buddy system," which helps build employee confidence and make the new work environment a bit friendlier. Second, it gives the new hire someone to turn to with problems and concerns without having to go to management.

EXAMPLE 2.....Provide frequent small raises. Instead of providing a larger wage during a training or probation period, work a raise in gradually as an incentive to stay on board. For example, instead of starting a new hire at \$7.50 an hour, start at \$7.00 an hour and give five 10-cent raises for each month the employee remains on the job up to \$7.50.

EXAMPLE 3.....Put recognition in writing. A certificate when training is completed or a letter of commendation from management is very meaningful to the employee and prospective employers.

EXAMPLE 4.....Assist in solving childcare, transportation and legal problems. While it is not necessarily the employer's responsibility to correct these problems, the employer can do some small gestures which can potentially prevent absenteeism or morale problems. Provide a listing of available day care near the facility, have a taxicab contract for alternative transportation, and consider having your company attorney write a letter or make a simple phone call to avert a legal problem.

EXAMPLE 5.....Provide a regular review process for new hires. Regular meetings with new hires can be effectively used to praise good efforts while discouraging poor practices before they become problematic.

EXAMPLE 6.....Specify all expected skills and attitudes up front. No one likes surprises; make expectations known and enforce them across the board. This will help make the best match between job and employee.

Role 2

PARTNER WITH JOB PLACEMENT SPECIALISTS

EXAMPLE 7.....Promote from within and help plan a career path. Give opportunities for advancement from within. It is a way to benefit from your training investment and is an incentive for employees to stay with a job and to excel. The opening entry-level work can be filled with more welfare-to-work recipients. Help employees focus on a future of growth and progress, and have opportunities for training on new skills.

EXAMPLE 8.....Provide a bonus structure. Consider providing a bonus system for mentors or trainers as well. Give the trainer a small bonus for every month a new hire stays on board, up to the end of the training period. It gives the mentor or trainer an incentive to keep the new hire happy and to help resolve problems.

EXAMPLE 9.....Provide a reward structure. Reward good behavior like attendance. Employees with no accidents or absences can be eligible for a special bonus award. It could be a small reward for everyone or a regular drawing of a larger reward.

EXAMPLE 10.....Provide a healthy work environment. No one wants to work in conditions that are threatening. A safe and healthy work environment with good morale promotes productivity and loyalty among employees.

EXAMPLE 11.....Set high but reasonable expectations. Work should be challenging yet achievable. Help set challenging goals, help employees meet those goals, and commend them when they satisfy high expectations.

EXAMPLE 12.....Set up a culture of support and back-up new hires. Stand behind new hires when a mistake is made. Mistakes should be opportunities to learn and improve; not be a reason for instant dismissal. Some infractions require strong discipline, but for those that do not employers should be supportive and encourage improvement. Train supervisors to work with diversity. It will improve your bottom line.

EXAMPLE 13.....Provide regular interaction (team building). Bosses can also be coaches. Provide opportunity for regular interaction. An open-door policy is an important part of this.

EXAMPLE 14.....Pay for ongoing education. Where appropriate, assist in improving the employee's education and training. This can be done in a variety of ways, either through reimbursement or with time commitment conditions.

EXAMPLE 15.....Establish a support group of new employees. Allow new hires to get together (perhaps with their mentors or trainers) to discuss concerns and problems about the job. It will put employee concerns at ease or surface real problems of which management should be aware.

EXAMPLE 16.....Invite family members to see the facility. Have an open house for employees' families. Families will be more supportive of work efforts if they understand the work environment.

PROACTIVELY ADDRESSING THE KEY OBSTACLES

DAY CARE AND TRANSPORTATION

Resolving day care and transportation issues is absolutely critical to the success of the welfare-to-work process. Each needs its own response within the welfare reform context. Coordination of the efforts needs to be better. Businesses alone cannot be expected to solve these problems, but there are steps that can be taken by employers to facilitate solutions. This report touches only lightly on these very important issues because other groups (such as the United Way) are doing valuable research on needs and capacity.

"Transportation and day care always come up as the top two obstacles to work," identified a Michigan Family Independence Agency official. It's as true in St. Louis as anywhere. Second or third shift work poses the most pressing problem, since public transportation and day care options are significantly less after business hours than during. There are solutions, though.

DAY CARE OPTIONS

It would be ideal if businesses could provide day care facilities for employees. However, employer-sponsored day care is sometimes difficult to provide, due to insurance costs, legal liabilities and strict regulations. Until these issues are addressed, it is unrealistic to expect that many businesses will start their own day care operations. Other solutions, however, do exist.



The Child Day Care Association (CDCA, 314/241-3161) coordinates child care providers throughout the region, and provides this information by zip code for ease of use.

The CDCA can also help employers: contract out management of day care facilities (thus limiting liability), conduct seminars for employees on day care issues, provide direct consultation for specific employee needs, and advise employers on day care-related problems/policies.



ENVISION THIS...

An employer informally partners with a non-profit day care center located next to the employer's facility. The employer makes a donation to the day care center (a charitable contribution). The center uses this money to upgrade equipment or services so that the center is most appealing to employees. Employees then pay the center directly for services provided. The employee has convenient professional day care in which he or she is confident, and the employer has addressed absenteeism through a tax-deductible donation while assuming no liability.

TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

Laclede Cab Company, the region's largest taxi company, has accepted contract pick-ups for years with great success. Although contracted services are not discounted from standard cash fares, having a contract with a cab company would allow an employee to have access to transportation without having to have available cash.

One local employer in St. Louis finances a maximum of \$3,200 for designated employees to purchase a used car. The employer is lienholder on the title and garnishes a weekly car payment, interest free (roughly \$20 per week for three years) with the verbal understanding that this employee will allow other workers to carpool. The vehicle owner is paid \$20 per week by each employee in the carpool. This money funds fuel, maintenance, and insurance. After three years, the car is fully-owned by the employee. Does it work? Absolutely—one employee even continued driving the car pool every day during his vacation in order to pick up the extra cash!

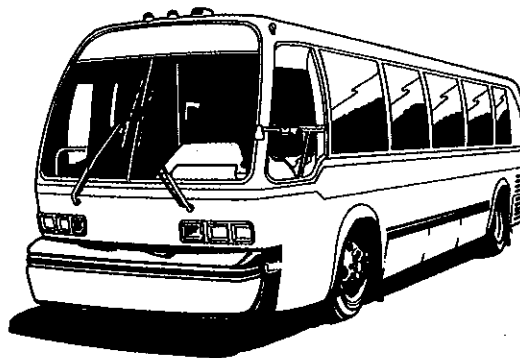
THE IMPORTANCE OF A BACK-UP PLAN

Have a back-up plan, and then a back-up for the back-up. Day care and transportation solutions must be able to handle special circumstances. Cars don't start, buses are missed, baby-sitters get sick -- as do children. It is important to have viable options laid out in advance. Some day care centers will take walk-ins or sick children; a contracted cab company will carry an employee and send a bill. These options must be identified in advance, though.

A small shopping mall in another state operates a shuttle between the mall and the nearest light rail stop. This is easily replicated in St. Louis. The cost would be divided among stores, and the liability would be acceptable if the stores contracted with a bus company rather than operating their own vehicles.

A larger mall runs its own bus service from designated stops in the urban area; the landlord operates this service and divides the cost among tenants as part of the common area maintenance agreements.

One grocery store chain found it beneficial to operate an employee shuttle bus between a vacant shopping mall in north St. Louis county to stores in far west St. Louis county.



CONCLUSION: A NEW WAY OF THINKING

Welfare reform is a radical new approach to the long-standing issue of poverty. Shifting the responsibility of welfare administration from the federal to state level opens the door to new ways of thinking and new ways of acting. This new environment requires a paradigm shift for all parties involved, and this will be a difficult task. New funding and decision-making require that government agencies change the way they have operated for decades. Financial resources and tight timelines demand that service providers redefine their work and their work environment. Welfare recipients must make significant adjustments to accommodate a well-defined window of opportunity. Educators and trainers must continually reevaluate the relevance of their services, for they are the bridge between human resources and job opportunities. Businesses must make changes, too.

The federal government has shifted the responsibility for public assistance programs to the state governments. It is now essential that welfare recipients move into employment because welfare benefits cease after a specified period of time. By making employment part of the process, employers now have a critical role—regardless of size, regardless of field, and regardless of interest.

Businesses need to view welfare reform as an opportunity. The emerging welfare reform environment offers businesses their greatest chance to affect job training so that it can better support individual business needs, while also giving access to a previously untapped labor pool. *U.S. News and World Report* recently ran an article stating that employers are “desperate for workers,” citing grocery chains tapping 14- and 15-year-olds, pizza drivers being given added benefits and signing bonuses, and bidding wars for secretaries. The economy is creating jobs, and analysts cited in the article anticipate that the worker shortage will intensify for the next three years.

Job growth in the present economy appears to be across-the-board. The *U.S. News and World Report* story noted several impressive statistics from across the country. The thirty-four May '97 graduates from the University of Virginia's Masters in Accounting program all had job offers secured by December '96. Sixty-five percent of the members of the National Center for Construction Education and Research are experiencing labor shortages among electricians, carpenters, and pipe fitters. The fastest job growth over the next ten years is anticipated in areas which do not require extensive technical training: cashiers, janitors and cleaners, waiters and waitresses, home health aides, guards, and nursing aides. This is an encouraging economy in which to launch a welfare-to-work initiative, provided that it is done correctly.

Businesses, in a sense, are customers in this new scenario. The new labor pool is the product. Educators and trainers are preparing workers for the labor market. Communication is critical. Businesses, as customers, must make their needs known. Those in the labor pool must make known their strengths and weaknesses, in order to maximize the training opportunity. Educators and trainers, as suppliers, should create the finest product available to satisfy the customer. In the end of this model, it is a win-win situation. Businesses work, trainers work, labor works. The task force recognizes that reality is not that simple. The involvement of businesses must be reasonable, achievable, and profitable.

MORE INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE...

For a national perspective on welfare-to-work and the federal incentives, business owners will want to read *Blueprint for Business: Reaching a New Work Force*. This is a guidebook for getting involved. Copies of this 48-page document are available from the Welfare to Work Partnership, 1250 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 610, Washington DC 20036-2603. Visit their website at www.welfareto-work.org or call toll free 1-888-USA-JOB1. This group has also compiled a Welfare to Work Service Provider directory. The Missouri Welfare to Work Partnership can be reached toll free at 1-888-664-5624. The Illinois Partnership had not been organized at the time this handbook was printed.

Locally, the Federal Funding Impact Study (FFIS) is a research project coordinated by the United Way of Greater St. Louis. The FFIS tracks legislation and funding of welfare to work initiatives and health and human service programs at both the state and federal levels. For more information on FFIS or to obtain copies of the latest study, contact Amanda Moore, the United Way's Project Coordinator, at (314) 539-4079.

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ABOUT FOCUS ST. LOUIS

FOCUS St. Louis is a nonprofit organization whose members share a vision and a commitment to work together to improve the St. Louis region as a place to live and work. The organization pursues a wide range of leadership development programs and community policy initiatives each year as part of its mission to strengthen the St. Louis region. It is committed to involving citizens, developing leadership, mobilizing diverse interests, addressing needs and opportunities, and acting regionally. Any individual, organization or company that has an interest in the welfare and progress of the greater St. Louis region may become a member of FOCUS St. Louis.

FOCUS St. Louis was created in July 1996 through the merger of two of the region's strongest and most influential nonprofit organizations—Confluence St. Louis and The Leadership Center of

Greater St. Louis. These organizations shared a history of working to make the St. Louis region a better place for all people. Together they had over 30 years of experience in developing citizen leaders and dealing with community policy issues. After careful consideration of the region's needs and their own strengths, the leadership of Confluence and The Leadership Center determined that they could expand the reach and impact of their programs and activities by merging the two organizations.

FOCUS St. Louis is governed by a 30-member board of directors which establishes policy for the organization. Board members are selected from the membership of the organization and serve on a volunteer basis without compensation.

For more information on any of our programs or activities, please call the FOCUS St. Louis office at 314/622-1250.

OUR VISION

FOCUS St. Louis will transform the St. Louis region by developing citizen leaders, stimulating citizen involvement, and mobilizing diverse interests to act regionally on critical issues.

OUR MISSION

FOCUS St. Louis will strengthen the St. Louis region by:

- Attracting and developing citizens for active involvement and leadership roles in regional decision making;
- Facilitating alliances to foster inclusive and collaborative action for the region;
- Developing solutions that produce visible change.

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