

WORKFORCE POLICY BULLETIN

WPB #: #06-08

DATE: June 16, 2008

TO: Contra Costa One-Stop Operator Consortium
ATTN: Operational Management

FROM: Bob Lanter, Executive Director
Workforce Development Board

SUBJECT: Updated Protocol for
Serving Older Workers

SUBJECT:
ADMIN
PLANNING
MARKETING
EEO/AA
MIS
FISCAL
OPERATIONS
RAPID RESPONSE

SPECIAL FILING: X

Purpose:

This Workforce Policy Bulletin serves to communicate the Workforce Development Board's policy regarding updated protocol for serving older workers.

On March 4, 2008 The Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration issued Training and Employment Notice (TEN) 34-07 to inform all state and local workforce investment boards of the release and availability of *Current Strategies to Employ and Retain Older Workers* Report.

With the aging of the baby boom population, the United States is facing an unprecedented demographic change. As the number of people reaching traditional retirement age increases, the shrinking labor pool threatens American economic growth, living standards, Social Security and Medicare financing, and funding for other government programs. Older workers typically bring maturity, dependability, and years of relevant experience to the workplace. Therefore, employers may need to rethink traditional workplace practices to attract and retain older workers, many of whom are highly knowledgeable and skilled. This report describes current strategies used in the private, government, nonprofit, and education sectors to help attract and retain older workers.

The report was commissioned by the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration (ETA) to support the work of the Taskforce on the Aging of the American Workforce. The report was prepared by the Urban Institute.

The findings indicate that as older adults are becoming an increasingly important labor source, employers are beginning to tailor their programming and services to individuals age 50 and older. For employers, the challenge is to develop workforce policies that appeal to older workers without sacrificing productivity.

The following are examples of current employer strategies described in the report:

- Flexible work arrangements may appeal to older adults who no longer wish to work traditional full-time schedules. This can include part-time employment, flexible work schedules, job sharing, changing jobs within the company, telework, and snowbird programs.
- Phased retirement plans offer older workers the opportunity to phase into retirement gradually with their current employers, while still having access to some of their retirement benefits.

The following are examples of additional resources included in the report:

- Private sector companies provide a variety of job search assistance resources for older workers including job Web sites, job fairs, books and articles, job centers, recruiters, and career counseling services.
- Some examples of programs that train older workers to meet employer needs include community colleges, and publicly funded programs such as the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 adult and dislocated worker programs, and the Senior Community Service Employment Program.

A main objective of workforce development agencies has been to develop partnerships among key stakeholders. Many states, local workforce agencies, community colleges, and advocates for adults are taking steps to educate employers on the value of hiring and retaining older workers in order to dispel the misconceptions that persist in the employer community.

Policy:

It is the policy of the Workforce Development Board of Contra Costa (WDB) that:

One-Stop Career Centers will:

- Collaborate with business and industry to identify and post job vacancies appropriate for mature workers. One-Stop staff will refer these workers to available job opportunities.
- Educate businesses about alternative work arrangements such as job sharing, and phased retirement programs that may attract older workers.
- Use Mature Worker Service Providers as workforce intermediaries, reaching out to older workers and referring them to One-Stop Career Centers for services and developing working relationships with businesses interested in hiring mature workers. (AARP and the Contra Costa County Aging and Adult services are two local resources and there may be other community and faith-based organizations that could serve as intermediaries).
- Refer income-eligible mature workers to SCSEP/Title V programs.
- Ensure staff is available to help mature workers navigate computer tools such as web-based software, etc.
- Offer a broad array of services, including intensive services, to older workers, based on the local workforce investment area's strategic plan. Align services to better serve older workers and provide workforce solutions to businesses.
- Stress personalized follow-up services and post-placement services to ensure employee employment retention and advancement.

- Ensure specialized training opportunities to heighten staff awareness of approaches to use with senior customers, issues with mobility, hearing impairment, and retention.
- Develop on-site resources targeted to seniors.

Resources:

DOLETA Training and Employment Notice #34-07 March 4, 2008
Current Strategies to Employ and Retain Older Workers Report
http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr_doc.cfm?docn=2599

Job Search and Resource Guide for Mature Workers June 2008
<http://www.eastbayworks.org/categories.php?id=323>

If you have any questions regarding this bulletin, please contact Linda Chandler at (925) 646-5239.

cc: Stephen Baiter, Administrator One-Stop Operator Consortium
Ron Addy, WID Regional Advisor