

# Executive Summaries



## Road to Recovery Strategies for ReEmployment

2010 National ReEmployment Summit



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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR



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# The State of the Economy and the Role of Workforce Investment in Labor Market Recovery

▪ Speaker: **Paul Harrington**, Director, Center for Labor Markets and Policy, Drexel University

## Overview

After an unprecedented labor market recession and anemic recovery, the American labor market will be saddled by an oversupply of labor for an extended period. Job creation is slow and long durations of unemployment are common. Returning to pre-recession unemployment levels within five years is remote.

The current workforce development toolbox was created for times of full employment. New strategies and tools are needed that are tailored to today's labor market realities.

## Context

Professor Harrington discussed today's labor market problems, illustrating why the market will be saddled with an oversupply of labor for an extended period and what that means for workforce development strategies.

## Key Takeaways

### ▪ Deflationary pressures are causing companies to hoard cash versus invest in labor.

There are powerful deflationary forces, an after-effect of the financial crisis. Deflation is a downward spiral that occurs after speculative asset bubbles burst. Asset prices plummet (as housing prices have), and expectations of further declines cause households and companies to hold onto their cash instead of spending or investing it.

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*"When people are scared, they want cash."*  
— Paul Harrington

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This is a key reason why the recovery has created almost no net jobs. Companies have hoarded cash versus investing it in labor. Firms now hold \$1.93 trillion in cash. (Too much hoarding can cause a decline in nominal GDP.)

Continued deflation could lead the economy into a "liquidity trap," a term coined by Professor Harrington to describe conditions when holding cash is in the self-interest of consumers (and companies) but not in the best interests of society. To jumpstart the economy, society needs spending and hiring, not cash hoarding.

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*"What is this 'liquidity trap'? Our incentives are to save, but from a societal point of view we should be out spending."*  
— Paul Harrington

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A debate is underway among policymakers. One camp views inflation as the greatest economic threat; the other is worried about deflation. "Deflation hawks," including Fed Chairman Bernanke, favor more fiscal stimulus in the form of quantitative easing (i.e., purchase of financial assets by the Treasury). Quantitative easing injects money into the economy and helps stave off deflation. (The recently passed tax reductions also are a form of stimulus.) "Inflation hawks" worry that huge deficits will re-inflate the economy. They think the money supply needs to shrink to mitigate inflation. The economy's future path depends heavily on how the deflation/inflation debate is resolved.

### ▪ The labor market recession has been uncommonly protracted and severe, its recovery tepid.

For perspective on how poorly the labor market fared during the recession and the recovery consider that:

— *The labor market recession lasted more than twice as long as usual.* While the recession officially ended in June 2009, job losses continued through December 2009—a full 24 months since the downturn began. That duration of recession is far longer than the 9-11 months that have been typical since World War II.

— *Far more jobs were lost than is typical—with goods-producing industries hardest hit.* Some 8.3 million jobs were lost, 6% of non-farm employment, compared with the typical losses of 1.5-2.0%. The private sector lost 7% of its jobs, with goods-producing industries hit harder than service-producing industries. Blue-collar construction, manufacturing, and mining occupations "got clobbered," losing one-fifth of all jobs. Jobs in professional business services (largely temporary services) fell 9%. Education and health services were the only industries with continued jobs growth.

— *The recovery has been anemic, particularly in the goods-producing sector.* The past 11 months (through November 2010) have seen slow recovery, as just 950,000 jobs were added. The vast majority came in service-producing industries; only 120,000 jobs were added in goods-producing industries.

— *The under-educated, the young, blue-collar males, and minorities have suffered most.* People hardest hit were at the low end of the educational and age spectrums; e.g., high school graduates and particularly dropouts. More jobs were lost by males than females (given severe losses in male-dominated occupations like construction), particularly black males. Hard-hit areas geographically were those that saw the worst housing market collapses (e.g., the West).

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*"Looking at the employment impacts of this recession, we beat up young people, blue-collar people, people with a few years of schooling, and racial/ethnic minorities."*  
— Paul Harrington

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▪ **Pre-recession employment levels are not likely possible for years to come.**

Much has been written about looming labor market shortages. Forget that notion. The oversupply of labor is so severe that the possibility of returning to pre-recession employment levels over the next five years is remote.

Why? While the labor force typically grows each year, it has remained stagnant over the past two years as discouraged job-seekers have withdrawn from the market. This has understated the unemployment problem. Assuming more normal labor force growth rates, unemployment would have averaged 11.1% versus 9.7% last year. It has also understated the oversupply problem. Because discouraged workers have withdrawn from the job market, there is greater oversupply than is visible.

Once jobs are more available, previously discouraged job-hunters will flood back into the market, prolonging the time before better balance between labor supply and demand is achieved.

New jobs have to be created at an unprecedented pace continuously for five years (260,000 jobs per month) to restore the unemployment rate to its pre-recession level. But never has the U.S. economy created jobs at such magnitudes and it doesn't seem poised to do so now. The conclusion: **Excess labor supply will be a reality for the foreseeable future.**

America's unemployment problem is unprecedented in other ways as well. These include:

- *Historically slow job creation.*
- *Extremely long durations of unemployment.* The mean duration for unemployment is 34 weeks versus a usual 16-week duration. About 22% of the unemployed have been out of work for 26 weeks or more, with 2.6 million people unemployed for 1-2 years and more than 600,000 people unemployed for more than two years.
- *Huge problems among dislocated workers.* Dislocation problems are so severe because future job growth is not likely in the blue-collar occupations where most jobs were lost. There is poor skill transferability between the industries where jobs have been lost and service industries where jobs are being created.

Underutilization of the workforce has led to mal-employment among college graduates, with many taking jobs that traditionally have gone to high school grads, dropouts, or students.

With labor oversupply forecasted for years to come, high school dropouts face remote chances for long-term employment even in times of economic prosperity.

▪ **Today's workforce development strategies need to reflect today's labor market realities.**

Until the recent recession full employment has been typical for the U.S. economy. The Workforce Investment Act was written based on the economy operating at a full employment level. A new toolbox is necessary, designed for the new labor market realities.

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*"We need to retool workforce development legislation based on the new data that the economy will remain in labor surplus for an extended period."*  
— Paul Harrington

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There have been slow declines in unemployed-to-vacancy ratios (from 6:1 in December 2009), which creates opportunities for workforce development. Importantly, development strategies must match the realities of the severe labor oversupply that is probable.

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*"Today's labor market solutions must be reflective of the labor market we have today, not a labor market of 45 years ago . . . we need to retool our workforce and need direct job creation."*  
— Paul Harrington

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Three workforce development strategies will be critical:

1. *Active job development and job placement.* Employers are looking for trusted labor market intermediaries who know candidates well—their interests, aptitudes, work behavior, etc. Program administrators need to build trusted relationships with employers to best serve their constituencies.
2. *Expanded on-the-job training programs.* Employers want opportunities for trial work arrangements—like internships and co-op programs—before investing in new hires. Such programs will be an important solution for the long-term unemployed. Training activities should target specific occupation segments, with need determined based on solid, local data. Ideas like 50/50 programs (where employers match government resources) can cultivate employer relationships.
3. *Industry and occupational market segmentation to provide strategically targeted help.* No legislative measure will help all of the unemployed get jobs or all of the industries requiring skilled labor find it. Those most in need must be explicitly targeted in legislation.

## Washington Update

▪ Speaker: **Andy Van Kleunen**, Executive Director, National Skills Coalition

### Overview

Policymakers are focused on finding solutions to long-term unemployment. One of the keys is addressing structural problems in the labor market. The reality is that even with high unemployment, many businesses cannot find enough skilled workers. Efforts to re-train workers are hindered because millions of people lack the basic skills needed.

The Recovery Act provided significant funding for workforce development, but much of these funds have been spent. Many other pieces of related legislation are now working their way through the legislative process. Concerns over the deficit and the shift to a Republican majority in the House will impact funding for job training and job creation programs in 2011.

### Context

Mr. Van Kleunen discussed how policymakers are addressing workforce development during this time of high unemployment. He reviewed how Recovery Act funds were allocated and highlighted important legislation to watch in 2011.

### Key Takeaways

▪ **Policymakers recognize that long-term unemployment and job creation are critical issues.**

Finding solutions to long-term unemployment is driving policy conversations in Washington. The recession has made the already difficult task of helping people find jobs and acquire skills even more challenging. The unemployment rate in the U.S. is now 9.8% and those who are unemployed have been unemployed for an average of 33 weeks. Six million people have been unemployed for more than six months.

Job creation is a related challenge. Eight million jobs were lost since the recession began, and although the Recovery Act created about 3.6 million jobs, a large gap remains.

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*"Long-term unemployment in this country is what has been driving the conversation in Washington around a variety of different issues over the past couple years."*

— Andy Van Kleunen

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▪ **Structural problems in the labor market contribute to the unemployment rate.**

Some argue that job training is not the most effective use of funds during a deep recession; that job creation should be a higher priority. Mr. Van Kleunen believes that both are necessary. Many employers want/need to hire, but are

not hiring because they cannot find people with the right skills. Some industries have changed so substantially that workers need to be re-trained. It is estimated that 2-3 points of the unemployment rate can be attributed to this "structural skills mismatch."

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*"Many employers can't find skilled labor . . . . Even when the economy fully recovers, this will continue to be a real challenge."*

— Andy Van Kleunen

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Michigan's No Worker Left Behind program makes training benefits available to laid-off workers. The program entitles anyone who is unemployed to receive two years of post-secondary training at a community college or other post-secondary institution. However, one-third of laid-off auto workers lack the basic literacy skills needed to take a course. Nationally, over 80 million people do not have the basic skills necessary to take a post-secondary education course.

▪ **The Recovery Act provided funding for many workforce development programs.**

Workforce development programs in the DOL and in other agencies received significant funding. Within the DOL, funding included:

- *Education and Training.* Much of the \$4 billion that was allocated has been spent. ARRA funding for other ETA programs included \$400 million of reemployment grants.
- *TAA (Trade Adjustment Assistance).* \$575 million was provided to assist a wide range of workers in the service and public sector areas. A new title created under TAA (The Trade Impacted Communities Title) will look at getting resources to communities with mass layoffs.

Higher education initiatives included:

- *Pell Grant expansion.* Eligibility was expanded for UI recipients, giving more adults access to Pell Grants.
- *TAA community college & career training grants.* \$2 billion was allocated for community colleges to encourage working adults or non-traditional students to go to community college and get technical training.
- *Student loan modification.* Moving student loans from a subsidized program to a direct student loan program provides \$60 billion in savings, most of which has been put toward Pell Grant expansion. This makes post-secondary training available to more people.

Accelerated hiring was the focus of the following programs:

- *HIRE Act tax incentives.* Tax incentives were offered to employers to cover payroll tax costs. In addition, if a company hired an out-of-work employee and retained them for one year, the company received another \$1,000 tax credit. The challenge with tax credits is that they are a better incentive for large employers, because these companies have the infrastructure and cash flow to handle the extra paperwork.
- *On-the-job training.* \$75 million in grants were awarded to 41 states to expand on-the-job training. This has been effective at engaging employers who don't take advantage of tax credits.
- *TANF Emergency Contingency Fund.* \$5 billion was allocated to aid states with high welfare caseloads. This provided an expansion of basic assistance, one-time emergency payments, and subsidized work. Subsidized work is a way to encourage employers to hire someone sooner than they may have. This was a successful program, employing about 300,000 people.

▪ **Funding for workforce development in 2011 will be impacted by concerns over the deficit and the shift to a Republican majority in the House.**

With funds from the Recovery Act running out, there have been efforts to move several jobs bills and a “second stimulus” through Congress, all of which failed because of political concerns about the deficit. Although attempts to extend unemployment insurance have been met with resistance, a bipartisan tax bill proposed in the Senate is likely to pass and includes a 13-month extension of unemployment benefits. Concerns about the deficit will continue in 2011, heightened by the tax compromise, which will add \$800-\$900 billion to the deficit.

The president's budget proposes a three-year cap on non-defense domestic discretionary spending for FY11-13. These factors will impact discretionary funded programs, such as workforce development. A bright spot is that the ETA (Employment and Training Administration) budget for 2011 includes the Workforce Innovation Fund, totaling \$321 million and shared between ETA and the Department of Education. Funding will support innovative strategies in workforce development that are already working.

A Republican majority in the House will also impact future funding. It is unclear whether Democrats and Republicans will be able to work together in a bipartisan manner.

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*“The elections are going to have a significant impact on conversations.”*  
— Andy Van Kleunen

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▪ **Several pieces of legislation that impact workforce development will be on the table in 2011.**

The following programs will be up for reauthorization or included in new legislation in 2011:

- *Workforce Investment Act (WIA).* WIA bills have traditionally been developed in a bipartisan manner in the Senate. Legislative language is being developed and is likely to include a greater emphasis on training, alignment across WIA titles, and alignment with programs now funded in the Department of Education, Agriculture and Department of Transportation.
- *SECTORS Act (Strengthening Employment Clusters to Organize Regional Success).* This is an investment in sector partnerships where multiple employers, labor-management groups, community colleges, and community based organizations come together to set goals for a particular industry. Many large and small employers, as well as House Democrats and Republicans, have endorsed the Act. There is a possibility that this will be included in legislation this session or the next.
- *TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families).* TANF was not reauthorized but was extended for one year. It is unclear whether Congress will move forward on reauthorization. HHS has been looking for ways to ensure that people benefiting from TANF can be included in some of the cross-program alignments to help them get jobs and advance their career path.

Other pending legislation that could impact workforce development funding includes:

- The Transportation Bill
- Perkins/CTE (Career and Technical Education)
- SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)
- The Higher Education Act

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## Other Important Points

- **Data initiatives to track success.** Under the Recovery Act, \$265 million in grants went to 12 states under a data quality initiative. This initiative will track students from K-12 through employment to identify successful pathways.
- **Limited success of the Hire Act.** Private industry surveys show that 17% of new hires were attributable to tax incentives under the Hire Act but only 10% of small employers made use of the tax credit.
- **Postings as data.** Job postings don't always represent a job opening; they can be used to assess the labor market. Using postings as data may not be helpful.
- **Smaller committees.** House Republican leadership announced that committees will be smaller, so knowing who is on a committee in 2011 will be important for those looking to inform the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress.
- **National Skills Coalition.** Information about the National Skills coalition is at [www.nationalskillscoalition.org](http://www.nationalskillscoalition.org).

## Employer Engagement in Times of Recovery

- Opening Speaker: **Gerri Fiala**, Deputy Assistant Secretary, U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration
- Moderator: **John A. Fernandez**, Assistant Secretary, Economic Development Agency, U.S. Department of Commerce
- Speakers: **Joe Burmester**, Chief Executive Officer, Ruralogic  
**Deborah Rowe**, Senior Director, Genesis HealthCare

### Overview

To rebuild America's competitiveness, it will be essential for the workforce development system to collaborate with local employers in innovative new alliances that accelerate job creation and economic growth. The federal government is paving the way via policies, programs, and inter-agency collaborations. But a critical piece of the reemployment puzzle will involve regional workforce development programs that deliver the specific kinds of support that local employers need to maximize their job creation activities.

Ruralogic and Genesis HealthCare are two employers that rely heavily on close partnerships with workforce development and community colleges to reach their hiring, training, and business objectives. These win/win partnerships exemplify the kind of integrated, collaborative, innovative approaches that will revive employment in America and restore the nation's competitiveness, region by region.

### Context

After an overview of the federal government's plans for employment revitalization, Mr. Fernandez led the panelists in a discussion of how win/win public-sector partnerships help their companies accelerate job-creation activities.

### Key Takeaways

- **It will take innovative alliances between the workforce development system and employers to revitalize employment.**

The nation's unprecedented unemployment problem is exacerbated by a mismatch between the type of job openings and the labor that is available. Bridging that disconnect will require innovative new alliances between the public and private sectors.

Specifically, the workforce development system and community colleges need to work more closely and creatively with employers. The federal government is working to promote smart, innovative public/private partnerships via its policies, programs, and collaborative efficiencies among federal agencies.

The Department of Labor, for example, is working to strengthen opportunities for employer engagement with the workforce system through changes such as:

- *Stakeholder outreach initiatives* to help the federal government align its activities with the needs of the "customers" it serves.
- *Reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act*. The vision is a revitalized public workforce system that promotes innovation and continual improvement; identifies more effective ways to serve jobseekers and employers; and targets sector-based and regional economic development in ways that produce the greatest returns.
- *Enhanced and strengthened partnerships among federal agencies*. The Departments of Labor and Commerce are collaborating on initiatives to revive employment.

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*"We have to work smarter, and the only way to work smarter is to work together at a time when resources are precious."*

— Gerri Fiala

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Employers and workers will benefit from these important federal-level changes. But the more immediate challenges confronting those involved in local workforce development are identifying where job openings exist, where jobs are going to be created, and what kinds of support employers need to facilitate and accelerate job creation. That knowledge is a critical piece of the reemployment puzzle.

- **Both panelists represent organizations confronting new types of hiring and training challenges.**

Joe Burmester is CEO of Ruralogic, an IT consultancy whose business model leverages the cost advantages of locating operations in rural America. The company also brings stable, well-compensated IT jobs to rural locales. With this win/win "on-shoring" model, Ruralogic is creating the service sector equivalent of secure manufacturing-sector jobs that had supported rural towns in past decades, before the era of off-shoring.

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*"My costs are about 20% of what they'd be in a large city. And the salaries people need to have a good life in a community of 10,000-15,000 are very different than in a city of 5 million."*

— Joe Burmester

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Ruralogic has no shortage of job openings; its challenge is finding the right people to fill them. Rural communities aren't magnets for skilled IT professionals. The firm's hiring depends on identifying people with the right qualities—aptitude, stability, loyalty, work ethic—and

developing their IT skills via training. Notably, Ruralogic finds that middle-aged people typically embody the characteristics it most values. The average age in Ruralogic's training classes is 45—a very different profile than the 20-something computer whiz kids typical in IT.

Genesis HealthCare's business model also calls for atypical employee profiles. This provider of short-stay and long-term healthcare services (200 centers in 13 eastern states) has a more diverse range of positions than is traditionally found in healthcare.

For instance, Genesis' strong customer orientation demands a less institutional environment in its facilities than is typical. That means fine cuisine and chefs, which are unusual in such settings.

Genesis' hiring has become more selective in recent years as its nursing skill needs have increased. Patients and residents suffer from more acute ailments, requiring more specialized RNs. The number of nurse practitioners has doubled, along with the number of full-time positions.

As this model has evolved, Genesis has needed to attract a more varied labor source and a higher-skilled one. Hiring has become more selective, training more extensive, and developmental opportunities have expanded.

In June 2009, Genesis began a centralized training program that welcomes recent nursing graduates and further develops their skills. Besides providing Genesis with the higher skill levels needed, the program meets the needs of recent nursing school graduates to find jobs (46% of June 2010 graduates haven't found work).

Genesis tends to promote from within, providing employees with varied career-development opportunities. Employees are encouraged to acquire college and university degrees to broaden their in-house career options.

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*"You ask what's changed in our approaches. I think it's a lot more creativity in regard to our workforce."*  
— Deborah Rowe

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- **Both firms rely on workforce development programs and community colleges for hiring and training support.**

Ruralogic depends heavily on its partnerships with community colleges to identify and train potential hires. In fact, the company won't expand into an area that lacks a suitable community college with which it can partner.

Community colleges also provide the certification programs Ruralogic needs to reassure clients that staff is properly qualified to perform the work. It's less important that

Ruralogic employees hold traditional college/university degrees than certifications.

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*"Community colleges are my training engine. . . . They work with One Stop folks to find the right people, get them into training, and bring them into my organization."*  
— Joe Burmester

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Local economic development agencies provide critical help to Ruralogic in establishing operations in a new location. They find creative financing solutions like grants and low-interest loans, made available to the company because of the additional tax revenue its new jobs bring municipalities.

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*"I've gotten very creative deals. I benefit by creating jobs, and creating jobs benefits the local economy."*  
— Joe Burmester

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Genesis also leverages local partnerships to achieve hiring objectives. One Stop career centers perform screening and recommendation functions for its graduate nursing training program. A coalition of hospitals and long-term care facilities meets regularly with community colleges and workforce development organizations to share hiring projections and requirements of open positions.

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*"Having those partnerships really enables us to be more successful."*  
— Deborah Rowe

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- **The panelists see opportunities to accelerate job creation with additional public-sector initiatives.**

When asked what kinds of public-sector initiatives might accelerate local talent development and their companies' job-creation activities, the panelists shared their wish list:

- *More help from local agencies in cutting through bureaucratic red tape.* With the Departments of Labor and Commerce increasingly collaborating, Mr. Burmester sees the potential for more bureaucratic complexity hampering employers' efforts to access programs. If local agencies familiar with the various federal programs and processes could facilitate red-tape processes for the job-creating employer, that would be immensely helpful.

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*"As an employer, I don't want to have to figure out whom to work with. I don't know all the agencies out there. I know funds are available, but I don't know how to find them."*  
— Joe Burmester

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- *More pre-hiring foundational support from One Stop career centers.* Ms. Rowe would like to see more One



Stop career centers assuming more extensive, employer-specific pre-hiring roles. They could screen potential candidates for basic skills like math and reading. They could conduct “soft skills” training (e.g., teaching workplace communication skills, appropriate behavior, etc.)—allowing staff to get to know individual job candidates and provide candidate recommendations to employers. Genesis has a partner that performs these foundational services, which it highly values.

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*“Not everyone can do healthcare. . . . The One Stop provides crucial screening to identify those who can.”*

— Deborah Rowe

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- *Greater cross-border integration among states’ employment-related systems.* Mr. Burmester would like to see states collaborate more to create more uniform employment-related regulations and systems. When he sets up shop in a tri-state area, the challenges of navigating each states’ regulations and systems are daunting.

Mr. Fernandez concurred. “Arbitrary” state borders create frustrating inefficiencies, which work against the kind of smart win/win investments that the federal government wants to see spur employment and revive local economies. But there are more questions about how to break down the silos and foster innovative collaborative solutions than there are answers.

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*“The federal government is in a unique role here: How can we be a catalyst for cross-border collaboration? We are always interested in better ideas.”*

— John A. Fernandez

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## Other Important Points

- **From glut to shortage.** The difficulty that recent nursing graduates are having finding jobs is a nationwide phenomenon. However, pockets of opportunity exist in atypical areas, such as home healthcare and schools. And by 2018, America is expected to have a tremendous need for more nurses.

# The Future Is Now

- Speakers: **Hilda L. Solis**, *Secretary of Labor, U.S. Department of Labor*  
**Jane Oates**, *Assistant Secretary, U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration*

## Overview

Servicing displaced workers during this time of extremely high unemployment is a major challenge, yet it is incredibly important. This is the calling and mission for those in workforce development. Over the past two years those serving the unemployed have answered the call, have worked incredibly hard, and have delivered high levels of service that have made a difference in people's lives.

Going forward, those in workforce development must continue to make every effort to help people find work, while also providing comfort and reassurance. A better job needs to be done communicating the services offered by the Department of Labor because many of the unemployed are unaware of these programs.

Job training and job creation are both necessary for getting people back to work. Retraining skilled workers is critical. Incenting business to invest in the economy and hire more workers is the key to future job creation. Having elected officials, especially governors, as partners is essential to the success of these programs. In addition, effective collaboration and partnership between all stakeholders is a key to long-term success in workforce development.

## Context

Secretary Solis and Assistant Secretary Oates encouraged regional and local staff to continue steadfast efforts to get people back to work. Participants discussed some of the challenges faced in workforce development and ways resources can be leveraged.

## Key Takeaways

- High unemployment has challenged DOL staff to not only help people find work, but to offer support and encouragement.**

The economic crisis has created an extremely challenging environment for those in workforce development. To date, everyone has answered the call. Still, it is a continual struggle to motivate dispirited unemployed workers and to reach out to those that don't know how to ask for help or are unaware of the services offered.

Those working in workforce development need to offer the unemployed comfort and reassurance. People want to improve their lives, get a better job, and be an example for their family. Some lack a college education and want to get more training. These people need to be empowered

because unemployment affects not only the person without a job, but their family and community.

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*"If we leave one person behind, we leave a family behind, and eventually we leave a community behind. We can't allow that to happen."*

— Hilda L. Solis

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- The Department of Labor needs to better communicate its services to the unemployed.**

The DOL does not create jobs; businesses do. But the DOL provides services like referrals, job training, coaching, and résumé writing. Unfortunately, many people do not know about these programs. Through its state and local offices, the DOL needs to better communicate the services available and build trust with the unemployed, many of whom distrust government.

The recently launched website, [www.myskillsmyfuture.org](http://www.myskillsmyfuture.org), is a DOL effort to reach more people. The site had 200,000 hits in its first two days. The hope is that this site will make it easy for more people to access DOL's services.

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*"Some people don't know that the DOL Employment Training Program has this array of services available to them."*

— Hilda L. Solis

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One of the best ways to get the message out is to highlight success stories, like the story of a teenager from a homeless family who went through the summer youth program, got a job, and used what he earned to make a down payment on an apartment for his family.

- Congress should extend unemployment benefits and reauthorize TAA.**

Unemployment insurance (UI) is not welfare; it is insurance, and it needs to be extended. UI is essential for many people and it helps create jobs because every dollar spent goes back into the economy.

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*"Congress needs to do the right thing and extend unemployment benefits."*

— Hilda L. Solis

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Reauthorization of TAA is also important because the program gets people back to work. Alignment among community colleges, workforce investment boards, elected officials, and the business community is critical. TAA is an example of alignment because the partnership between community colleges and workforce development is integral to making this program work. Programs associated with

community colleges are sometimes criticized for not meeting the needs of business. This can be addressed through a curriculum that is flexible and adaptable. People don't necessarily need a 12-month program; some may benefit from a 3-month or even a 3-week program.

- **Job training and job creation are both necessary for getting people back to work.**

The Recovery Act allocated significant funds for job training programs, allowing the DOL to put a structure in place and align partnerships. Green jobs and jobs in health care will continue to grow and programs need to focus on retraining skilled workers to move into these jobs.

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*"People have skills that are already there and are usable. We can help them re-frame [their skills], refocus them, tighten them up, and hopefully get them on their way."*  
— Hilda L. Solis

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- **Governors and other stakeholders must be viewed as partners.**

Everything DOL does is in a partnership with the NGA (National Governors Association) as well as state and local elected officials. Every newly elected official presents the opportunity to highlight the need for workforce development. The new class of governors needs to be quickly educated about the risks their states face in the competitive global workforce. There are many standing governors who already understand the importance of a public workforce system. They need to be encouraged to mentor the new governors.

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*"Every time a newly elected official is put into office, regardless of party, it is an opportunity to educate them about the importance of a public workforce system."*  
— Jane Oates

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Governors need to know how to institute an effective "rapid response." They need to know how to apply for national emergency grants for dislocated workers. This money makes a difference, yet some states are reluctant to apply for them. The Office of National Response is available to offer regional offices assistance in accessing national emergency grants.

In addition, those working in workforce development can achieve better results by partnering with other public- and private-sector stakeholders.

- **Providing universal access for workforce development programs is challenging when resources are limited, but is important.**

Prioritization is essential when dealing with limited resources. The law mandates that veterans and disadvantaged adults are a priority for DOL. This is the

right thing to do and it makes economic sense as funds invested today in employment programs will decrease the spending required through safety net programs.

Because the DOL does not have the funding to serve everyone, the agency's work needs to be done better and smarter. Programs such as Pell Grants and the TANF program need to be leveraged. In addition, programs need to be aligned so that efforts and spending are not duplicated. ITAs (Individual Training Accounts) should be created judiciously and not given when not needed.

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*"We cannot make a judgment call that because somebody is fifty-five years old they are not worth our attention."*  
— Jane Oates

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However, the idea of only allocating the country's workforce development resources toward younger people doesn't make sense. Older workers have built America's communities. Unfortunately, some of these workers have spent careers in industries like textiles, automotive, aviation, or manufacturing. Their displacement deserves attention and resources. Programs to retrain these individuals and help them get jobs are essential, and these programs must be flexible.

## Other Important Points

- **Job seekers.** A participant noted that UI customers are first and foremost "job seekers" and should be thought of as such. Everyone needs to understand that an unemployed person's primary goal is to find a job and all resources need to be aligned to assist this person.

- **Sharing ideas.** Several participants commended the sharing of ideas that occurred at this Summit and expressed the desire for continued information sharing and networking. Ms. Oates offered three suggestions: 1) the DOL newsletter is a vehicle for idea sharing. Everyone is invited to provide ideas for inclusion; 2) online communities of practice have been established on [workforcezone.org](http://workforcezone.org) which enable people with interest in a particular subject to connect; and 3) regional conferences are replacing large, expensive national events. These regional events minimize travel costs and allow people to connect with others in their area. The DOL has co-hosted some regional events in conjunction with the Department of Commerce.

# Emphasis: Strategies for Integrating Service Delivery Across Workforce Programs

## Overview

Integrating UI and workforce systems and leveraging resources are essential for finding solutions to structural unemployment in the United States. In seeking integrated solutions, a national vision for a comprehensive workforce system has been established for connecting UI claimants to the job-seeking and job-training services they need.

Collaborative efforts are yielding positive results. The public workforce system and Registered Apprenticeship (RA) have partnered to develop an apprenticeship model that increases training and employment options for dislocated workers. Local workforce systems are also building relationships with community colleges in an effort to meet both U.S. education and employment goals.

Regional collaboration is critical when a large-scale layoff occurs. Rapid Response is designed to respond to such layoffs in an integrated way; understanding that there is flexibility in how the funding can be used is important.

## Context

In several sessions emphasizing integrated service delivery, presenters highlighted the ways that the public workforce system is developing solutions to long-term unemployment.

## Key Takeaways

- **An integrated UI/Workforce System is the optimal way to bridge the gap in UI-workforce connectivity.**

The national vision for UI-workforce connectivity reflects a single, comprehensive workforce system, with UI as one of the critical elements. The shift to remote claims-taking has resulted in a disconnect of the UI claimant from the workforce system and the services it offers. An “Emerging National Vision” has been articulated that reconnects UI claimants to the workforce system so they receive the job-seeking and job-training services they need to successfully find employment. The workforce system is called to innovate around these four concepts:

- *A common front door.* A single point of entry for the workforce system with integrated workforce customer registration.
- *Real-time triage.* Integrated information and data to support decision making at every point in the service delivery cycle.
- *Skills transferability.* Focus on helping UI claimants who have been in the labor force develop skills that are valuable and transferable.

- *Social media.* Use social media for outreach and as a new mechanism for service delivery.

Bridging the gap in UI-workforce connectivity also requires:

- *Focused policy at the state level.* Identify key areas of policy to focus on areas such as economic development, entrepreneurship, and job growth initiatives.
- *Better industry connections.* Find ways to build relationships with and incent employers. Encourage on-the-job training programs.
- *Partnerships that leverage resources.* Leverage the resources of different funding streams. Leverage the ideas, technology, and resources of the UI, Employment Service, and local Workforce Investment boards.
- *Early outreach.* Perform assessments and share information.
- *Skills training.* Understand the connection between skills and literacy. Workforce readiness, certification, and pathways to credit-bearing credentials and apprenticeships are necessary.
- *Support activities.* Encourage job clubs, self-help groups, and staying connected through social media. Provide stipends for transportation and child care.
- *Educating claimants.* Ensure claimants are aware of the services available in a One Stop.
- *Integrated services.* Create an integrated workforce system that is holistic, seamless, and transparent to the customer.
- *DOL as partner.* Understand that the DOL is a key partner in helping states reemploy UI claimants in an integrated workforce system.

- **Registered Apprenticeship is an important tool in workforce development.**

Registered Apprenticeship (RA) creates pipelines of skilled workers, helps unemployed workers begin a new career path, and provides incentives to attract and retain more highly qualified employees.

The public workforce system and RA are working together to use an apprenticeship model to increase training and employment options for dislocated workers. An effective approach to integrating RA into a workforce strategy requires:

- *Collaboration.* Both the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and the Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL 02-07) require the WIA and RA systems to collaborate. Local WIA plans and strategies should include creating optimal collaboration with RA.

- *Inclusion.* Local WIBs have the responsibility to create an environment that supports inclusion of RA in the One Stop delivery system.
- *Support.* Support for RA at the local level should include business services, referrals, applicant preparation, and leveraged WIA funds support when applicable.
- *Training.* Inclusion of RA as a training option for eligible WIA participants should be simple for RA sponsors and their applicants.

▪ **Strong relationships between community colleges and the workforce system are essential for meeting education and employment goals.**

Community colleges play an important role in meeting U.S. education and employment goals. Collaborative efforts between local WIBs and community colleges are yielding positive results. Presentations highlighted successes in Baltimore and Connecticut:

**Baltimore**

In Baltimore County, the new position of healthcare consultant was created to strengthen the relationship between The Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC) and the Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development (BCOWD). The healthcare career consultant is co-located at the CCBC campus and the BCOWD One Stop office and has the following roles:

- *Role at CCBC:* The consultant counsels students, makes referrals to BCOWD, manages the database, follows up with students, and provides employment services to students.
- *Role at BCOWD:* Supervised by the center manager, the consultant participates in Center activities, works with career consultants, provides core and intensive services, and is involved in business service activities.

CCBC and BCOWD work together by serving on BCOWD's Health Care Committee, partnering on new proposals, supporting initiatives sponsored by each institution, and serving as individual resources for each other.

**Connecticut**

In Connecticut, the partnership between the workforce investment system and the Connecticut Community College have been successful because:

- *Well-defined roles.* The commitment and roles of the partners were agreed upon up front.
- *Innovation and efficiency.* Increased innovation, greater efficiency, and combined resources led to more effective results.
- *Support and sustainability.* Enhanced support came from diverse groups statewide and greater opportunities for sustainability resulted.

- *Successful models.* Successful models have been developed, refined, and replicated in subsequent projects.
- *Career advisors as best practice.* Co-funded by WIBs and community colleges, advisors do outreach, recruitment, assessment testing, and advising for targeted industries. They work with dislocated workers, incumbent workers, employers, high school students, and college students. Advisors also develop education and career success plans.

▪ **There is flexibility in how Rapid Response funding can be used.**

Rapid Response funding is underutilized in many areas of the country because it is viewed as a one-time orientation to Unemployment Insurance and the One Stop Career Center system. In reality, Rapid Response allows for the flexibility to provide more comprehensive solutions in times of economic transition.

Intelligence gathering, early layoff warning mechanisms, and layoff-aversion strategies are some of the areas with the biggest gaps between what is allowed and what gets done. Developing a strategic approach to layoff aversion establishes a Rapid Response team as a critical player in managing economic transition. Strategic partnerships allow Rapid Response to provide solutions based on the needs of stakeholders.

Rapid Response must be flexible, adaptive, proactive, innovative, and able to identify, track and measure elements of performance. Performance elements should convey what has been done and demonstrate the value of Rapid Response to all stakeholders.

▪ **Regional collaboration is critical when large-scale layoffs occur.**

When the New United Motor Manufacturing Inc. (NUMMI) partnership ended, Toyota decided to close their plant in Fremont, California. It is estimated that 50,000 jobs were lost due to the plant closure's impact on suppliers and other service-related businesses. A Regional Community Response Taskforce was set up to deal with the layoffs. The lessons learned include:

- *Start well in advance of closure.* Bring your stakeholders together before a plant closes or an employer conducts a layoff.
- *Involve key federal and state decision makers.* Make sure that you have key decision makers at the table.
- *Nurture relations among relevant stakeholders.* Bring WIBs, state and local staff, federal staff, and regional municipalities together with training providers
- *Recognize the impact.* Never underestimate the impact that a massive closure will have on the regional economic structure, from housing to education and healthcare.

# Emphasis: Services, Strategies, and Activities That Have the Strongest Impact on Reemployment

## Overview

Today's extreme, structural unemployment problems were never imagined by policymakers when the current workforce development system was created. Instead of an unemployment system, what the nation needs a *reemployment* system that moves the unemployed back into the workforce more quickly.

Driven by this urgent priority, many states have launched reemployment initiatives characterized by innovative and diverse approaches.

The focus of these reemployment strategies runs the gamut from retraining the unemployed via innovative public/private partnerships, to helping entrepreneurs launch businesses, to providing Career Pathway programs via partnerships with employers and community colleges, to helping companies succeed so that they can create more jobs. Some strategies target special population segments, such as the young and undereducated or unemployment insurance claimants likely to exhaust their benefits.

## Context

Several sessions at the 2010 ReEmployment Summit emphasized services, strategies, best practices, and activities that have the strongest impact on reemployment. Some sessions also involved discussions of policy implications.

## Key Takeaways

- **A tsunami of unemployment is threatening the infrastructure of services for the unemployed.**

Before the recent recession, the big concern for the U.S. labor market was looming shortages once the baby boomers began to retire. Providing training and other reemployment services wasn't an issue. It is now.

The numbers of unemployed in America—particularly the long-term unemployed—are higher today than they ever have been. The tsunami of unemployment is threatening the infrastructure of services for the unemployed. Moving the unemployed back to work is an urgent priority.

Research has found that:

— *The longer a person is unemployed, the worse the employment outcome.* Unemployment claimants who return to work sooner tend to earn as much or more than they earned before they were unemployed, whereas those who exhaust their benefits earn much

less once they are reemployed. One study from Oregon found that 70% of exhaustees earned less during their first year of reemployment than before their unemployment. Older exhaustees experienced a 40% decrease in wages. Those aged 24-59, however, regained their lost earning power in their second year back in the workforce. These outcomes held true in both recessions and boom times.

— *Reemployment training decreases the duration of unemployment.* A study from Minnesota, conducted in the 1990s, showed that if a person received reemployment training it decreased the duration of unemployment by three weeks on average. Another study found that participants in employment programs targeting specific industry sectors secured higher-paying jobs than control groups (see Focus on Training box on page 16).

Our employment/training system was not designed for the volume of people requiring services or the nature of services they need to rejoin the workforce in an economy that is rapidly and painfully restructuring (driven by the advance of technology and other forces).

The system was designed for seasonal and cyclical unemployment, whereas now we have structural unemployment. With the entire economy restructuring, we need to restructure our employment and training system.

*"Our employment and training system is not designed for the challenges we are now facing."*

— Michael Thurmond, "Strategies for Serving the Longest Unemployed"

- **We need to shift from a system focused on unemployment to one that emphasizes reemployment.**

We need to be a system that emphasizes reemployment.

While many people view the country as having an unemployment system, it is important to focus the workforce investment system—including the unemployment insurance program—on reemployment. (A key takeaway from the session "Strategies for Serving the Longest Unemployed" was about the need for a "reemployment system.")

A system focused on reemployment helps those who are unemployed—no matter which part of the system they touch first, whether it is UI, rapid response, or a One Stop Career center. This system helps those who are unemployed understand the reemployment opportunities

that exist, access the wide array of services available, and gain the necessary skills to become reemployed.

As is described in the following pages, many states have enhanced their workforce systems with creative programs focused on reemployment. A few examples include entrepreneurship programs in Minnesota and Alaska, a career pathway program in Oregon, workshops in Tennessee, and projects in Massachusetts that help young people connect to jobs and career plans.

To facilitate the shift to a greater focus on reemployment, it is important for those involved in reemployment service delivery to tell a compelling story about the benefits and returns on investment of reemployment programs.

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*“Public investment in reemployment programs has a return; the story needs to be told better.”*

— Session Participant, “Strategies for Serving the Longest Unemployed”

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▪ **Creativity and diversity characterize states’ reemployment strategies.**

Driven by the pressing need to move the unemployed back into jobs, many states have introduced creative reemployment initiatives. The focus of their efforts is diverse—encompassing retraining, facilitating entrepreneurship, strengthening ties with employers, serving particularly vulnerable groups, preserving precious state resources, and more.

Below are highlights of various state-level reemployment strategies shared at the Summit, culled from different Road to Recovery sessions:

**Promoting Entrepreneurship**

— *Minnesota’s Project GATE helps people become entrepreneurs.* Program participants receive classroom training and consultations with small business development centers. Of 98 people who have participated, 57 have gone on to start businesses and 30 have operated their businesses for more than one year. The state’s workforce development laws are being rewritten to encourage development of entrepreneurs.

— *Alaska’s ROPE—Rural Outreach Project for Entrepreneurs.* ROPE utilizes Rapid Response funding to implement strategies that link with economic development. Businesses are provided with technical assistance, resources, and business counseling services to foster their growth and sustainability. The program results in more private-sector jobs and reduced business closures. Keys to success include providing targeted resources that meet individual companies’ specific needs and working with partners to expand local business opportunities. The focus needs to be on

collaboration, not duplication. (For more information, go to [www.alaskarope.org](http://www.alaskarope.org).)

**Stimulating Job Creation**

— *Minnesota’s “business service specialists” call employers with the intent of exploring opportunities to create jobs.* They have made over 4,500 calls to employers with more than 20 employees, and their efforts have resulted in 582 new jobs. The state also plans to merge unemployment services and economic development efforts.

**Providing Career Pathway Programs**

— *Oregon provides a Career Pathway reemployment program.* Pathways are modularized “chunks” of community college degree programs that are “laddered” together. This laddering allows the student/worker to take small portions of the degree program at a time, entering the workplace sooner with specific skills that employers have identified. Wrap-around counseling and support services assist retention and promote success of career pathway students. Combining different funding streams helps to gain partners’ buy-in.

— *Wisconsin offers Career Pathway “bridges.”* Two types of bridges—Adult Basic Education and English Language Learning—expand the accessibility of Career Pathways to dislocated workers who need additional basic academic preparation before entering technical colleges’ Pathway programs. Early results of these bridge programs have been encouraging in terms of completion rates, transition to higher-level occupational training, job placement, and earnings improvement. (For more information, see: [www.shifting-gears.org](http://www.shifting-gears.org) and [www.risepartnership.org](http://www.risepartnership.org).)

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*“Career Pathways are a powerful tool for assisting laid-off workers to re-enter the workplace.”*

— Camille Preus, Commissioner, Oregon Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development

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**Targeting Specific Groups**

— *Veterans.* Several tips were shared about strategies to reemploy veterans. Among them: it is important for veteran staff to maintain full integration with the One Stop career center (to offer veterans access to an array of services and programs) and with Business Services to explain the benefits of hiring veterans. It is also important for veteran staff to market their services in the community by communicating directly with veterans through military installations, military affairs committees, veterans’ services organizations, veterans’ job fairs, and other relevant organizations.

— *Tennessee’s Reemployment Eligibility Assessment (REA) program* identifies specific categories of UI claimants and targets them for additional reemployment services

(e.g., workshops on résumé writing, interviewing). Outreach efforts raise employers' awareness of the program, which has proven critical to its success. By helping 4,360 people deemed most likely to exhaust UI benefits to find employment, the REA program has reduced UI overpayments and saved Tennessee's UI trust fund large sums—\$954,840 per week of saved benefits. For more information, see: <http://www.tn.gov/labor-wfd/JobServiceWorkshops.html>

- *Maine* provides UI claimants who have been on unemployment for about 85-90 weeks an additional set of services to reconnect them with the One Stop system.
- *Projects in Georgia and Massachusetts helped young adults connect to jobs and plan careers.* In Georgia, 68 young adult dislocated workers who lacked a high school diploma or GED received special services, including job search workshops, career exploration and assessment, résumé development, and one-on-one career counseling. They were encouraged to enroll in Job Corps, Youth Build, or the project-funded GED preparation course. Partners were key to the project's success, assisting participants with transportation and GED testing.

A similar program in Lowell, Massachusetts assisted 54 young adult UI claimants in planning their next career moves. Lessons from these initiatives included: 1) offering career center services to young adults in a comfortable environment with similar-aged customers results in more enthusiastic participation and improved results; and 2) providing case management, mentoring, and peer interaction has a positive impact on both the decisions young adults make and their approaches to decision making.

For more state-level reemployment strategies—those that focus on leveraging labor market data—see the summary emphasizing “Developing and Leveraging Quality Workforce Information.”

▪ **Workforce development best practices include partnering with economic development, employers, and education.**

The “Anguish of Unemployment” session participants offered tips for providers of workforce development services:

- Link workforce development with economic development and employer needs.
- Build stronger connections with other organizations that serve the unemployed.
- Expand on-the-job training and apprentice programs.
- Enhance labor market intelligence to help job seekers.
- Set and enforce standards for program quality.

Advice from the session on “Strategies for Success in Long-Term Training” included:

- Workforce pipeline development is critical given the shortages of skilled professionals predicted as baby boomers retire over the next decade.
- Align economic development, workforce development, and education systems.
- Increase your community's academic achievement level. Be prepared with a trained workforce for any employers arriving or expanding in your area.
- Connect with local community colleges for cost-effective/high-value diploma or degree programs. They are an important and strategic partner.
- Many community colleges offer free credits to dislocated workers. Leverage each other's resources to benefit the customer, not the system.

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*“The associate's degree is the new high school degree.”*

— Session Participant, “Strategies for Success in Long-Term Training”

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## Focus on Training

A study by Public/Private Ventures found that enrollees in employment programs that are focused on specific industry sectors fare better in the job market than their peers.

Three mature nonprofit-led programs participated in the study. All took different approaches to meet the needs of the job seekers, employers, and funders they work with, and all saw positive effects on earnings. Program participants earned 18% more than the control group over the two-year study period and 29% more in the second year alone.

Researchers identified five common elements as key to success:

1. Strong and adaptable organizational capacity.
2. Strong links with employers and an understanding of target occupations.
3. Training focused on a specific occupation or sector.
4. Processes that match applicant, program, and target occupation well.
5. Individualized services to support training completion and success on the job.

(For more information, see *Tuning In to Local Labor Markets: Findings from the Sectoral Employment Impact Study* at: [http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publication.asp?section\\_id=26&search\\_id=&publication\\_id=325](http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publication.asp?section_id=26&search_id=&publication_id=325).)



# Emphasis: Meeting the Needs of Employers

## Overview

Understanding the needs of employers is critical to the reemployment success of job seekers. In order to effectively position workforce services with employers and gain their buy-in, it is necessary to speak their language, adopting private-sector principles of strategic communication and customer service.

An integrated services approach is an effective way to attract and retain businesses as partners in workforce development. Strategic partnerships between Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) and employers can help solve workforce problems and create relationship-building opportunities that can be critical when times are tough.

A key component of any reemployment effort, the Rapid Reemployment Initiative (RRI) is a national initiative that includes an employer outplacement exchange, career event database, automated job search agents, and other valuable tools to assist in the rapid reemployment of displaced employees.

## Context

In sessions that emphasized meeting the needs of employers, presenters offered insights on ways that WIBs can better engage and service employers.

## Key Takeaways

- **Understanding the needs of employers is essential to reemployment efforts.**

WIBs need to distinguish themselves as a value-added partner of an employer, able to help an employer solve its workforce problems, rather than be just one more organization that wants something from them. An effective partner understands the employer's needs and has an efficient system in place that offers real workforce solutions.

- **A responsive, integrated system is an important component of a business service strategy.**

Attracting and retaining businesses as partners in workforce development requires having a local and regional strategy for offering services. States, WIBs, One Stops, and community colleges can establish a continuity of services across the business cycle by effectively leveraging a fully integrated service package. Selling these integrated services require speaking to businesses in a language they understand and effectively communicating potential benefits.

- **Strategic relationships between WIBs and business offer many benefits.**

Developing partnerships with business offers the opportunity to educate companies about the benefits of the workforce system. Businesses will engage if they understand the value proposition. A successful partnership, such as the Northern Silicon Valley Partnership which created a "technology hub" that could market its collective assets and attract business investment, leads to job creation. In addition, partnerships give WIBs a deeper understanding of those industries and subsectors, a valuable resource for the business community.

- **Workforce development professionals must have a communication strategy that engages employers.**

Workforce organizations compete for market position against a crowded market of other non-profits and causes. Building market position requires awareness, understanding what you do, defining the value proposition, and engaging with the customer.

Messaging is critical, yet very little time in workforce development is spent on strategic communication. Messaging requires identifying a pain point, communicating a call to action, and defining the value proposition. Having a communication strategy requires a shift in how an organization communicates to employer prospects and current customers, whether through websites or social media, one-on-one verbal interactions, or written outreach materials.

A communication platform with a story-telling system that highlights human success stories is a valuable tool. The National Workforce Campaign is a website of success stories that demonstrates the value proposition of workforce development at [www.WorkforceInvestmentWorks.com](http://www.WorkforceInvestmentWorks.com).

- **A strong customer service orientation that focuses on problem solving should be the goal when serving employers.**

Workforce development offices should create a cohesive employer services team that is customer-focused and able to offer solutions to employer workforce problems. A benefit of helping employers solve workforce problems is the relationship-building opportunities created that can be critical when times are tough. This is reflected in two examples from the Gulf Coast.

- *Aerospace industry.* The NASA Johnson Space Center had a shortage of engineers. The local WIB formed a steering committee and offered to help solve the problem. Although NASA turned down the offer of help, a year later they alerted the WIB that they were laying off 7,000 employees and needed help with a transition

plan. When a relationship is built with a business customer in good times, they will let you know when bad times are coming.

- *Healthcare industry.* The local WIB developed a unique relationship with the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston, doing all the screening and referrals for anyone that wanted a job with UTMB. When Hurricane Katrina hit, the hospital was ruined and 10,000 of 16,000 people had to be let go. The WIB set up a transition center to help displaced employees. When the decision was made to rebuild, the WIB was involved in rehiring 8,000 employees. The best way to do “rapid response” is to have a relationship with the employers in your region.

- **The National Labor Exchange's (NLX) Rapid Reemployment Initiative is a key component of any reemployment initiative.**

The Rapid Reemployment Initiative (RRI) is a national initiative that includes an employer outplacement exchange, career event database, automated job search agents, and other valuable tools to assist in the rapid reemployment of displaced employees. Together they connect downsizing employees with hiring employers, inform employers and job seekers about career events around the nation, and connect displaced employees to employers who are currently hiring.

The NLX is an online network connecting thousands of businesses and state workforce agencies by collecting currently available and unduplicated job opportunities from verified employers' corporate websites. These jobs are then delivered into state workforce agency sites to reach a maximum number of jobseekers.

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## Other Important Points

- **Additional information.** The presentation on *Effective Employer Outreach Strategies* can be downloaded at <http://bit.ly/fXMB9p>.

# Emphasis: Developing and Leveraging Quality Workforce Information

## Overview

The economic crisis of the past two years has brought new urgency to the efforts of those working at state and local levels to attract employers, spur job creation, and deliver the services dislocated workers need to become reemployed as soon as possible. Creative, new approaches to accomplishing these related missions are flourishing—and data is playing a central role.

Increasingly, regional employment services providers and economic development professionals are expanding their visions of what they can accomplish given the right labor market and other data. They are taking innovative approaches to collecting and organizing the data they need—often with interagency collaborations—and they are creating new tools with the new forms of data.

Innovators are using data tools in conjunction with one another to reach new levels of insight about current labor market demand and supply forces. Those insights are being leveraged to better execute employment revitalization missions: to train smarter and more efficiently, to attract new employers, and to better equip dislocated workers with the information and skills they need to get on with their lives.

## Context

Several sessions at the 2010 ReEmployment Summit discussed innovative uses of labor market intelligence to better execute employment revitalization missions.

## Key Takeaways

- **The urgency of many states' employment situations has led to new and more effective uses of labor market data.**

Increasingly, regional employment services providers and economic development professionals are using new types of labor market data in new ways to more effectively pursue their missions.

Some data-based tools used by presenters at the conference include:

- *STA: Skills Transferability Analysis.* These reports help dislocated workers find new occupations requiring their skills.
- *TORQ: Transferrable Occupation Relationship Quotient.* TORQ is an analytical tool with many uses. It links occupations and ranks the relatedness of the skills they

require, making it easy to see the degree of skills transferability between occupations.

- *VOS: Virtual One Stop.* VOS is a real-time job system that connects job seekers and job openings.
- *O\*NET: Occupational Information Network.* The O\*NET database provides standardized descriptions of factors critical in the performance of occupations. This is the database that makes skills transferability software tools possible.
- *Iowa's Skillshed Analysis.* Using data from three sources—the Mid Iowa Growth Laborshed Survey, the Regional Workforce Needs Assessment (Job Vacancy) Survey, and O\*NET—Iowa's proprietary Skillshed Analysis reveals gaps between the skills and knowledge in a region's available labor pool and the skills and knowledge required for the region's available jobs. Mismatches highlight areas of need and opportunity. The data can be used in multiple ways to increase employment. Examples include: to better align training resources with demand; to point job seekers and counselors to pockets of employment opportunity; to help economic developers attract those employers whose talent needs match the region's available skills; to find new ways to leverage an area's existing skills to meet future demand; and to avert layoffs by showing employers how they can "repurpose" workers with particular skills when products or projects are discontinued. This spreadsheet-based tool will be available online for other states' use in the future. Meanwhile, for more information, download this guide: [http://www.workandeconomy.org/images/Multistate\\_Skillshed\\_Report\\_Final\\_2010.pdf](http://www.workandeconomy.org/images/Multistate_Skillshed_Report_Final_2010.pdf)
- *HWOL: Help Wanted OnLine.* A joint project of the Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation and the Conference Board, HWOL provides real-time data about jobs in demand based on spidered Internet jobs listings (that have been de-duplicated). The huge benefit of this data is its currency. Real-time data is fundamental to the immediate missions of revitalizing employment, getting displaced workers retrained and reemployed, and best allocating training and other resources. Labor market intelligence (LMIs) that project demand 8-10 years are of comparatively little help for these urgent purposes. Employment service providers are mandated by law to provide for jobs in demand; but One Stop career centers often don't know what jobs are most in demand, even among those advertised on their own systems. They need real-time job demand data to target their efforts most effectively.

— *mySkills myFuture*. Information is available at <http://mynextmove.dol.gov/>. My Next Move is designed to help job seekers make decisions about their career and find a job they will enjoy.

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*"To pursue reemployment objectives, current, real-time jobs in demand should be used instead of long-term projections of jobs in demand."*

— Becky Rust

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— *North Dakota's STARS: Skills Transferability Analysis Reemployment*. North Dakota has created this product with two purposes:

1. To provide workers affected by large-scale layoffs with information they need to understand labor market and industry conditions statewide, as well as TORQ data, LMI data, information on their re-employment potential, and how to access employment services.
2. To conduct a longitudinal study of affected workers before and after a layoff event (data reflects where/whether they found employment, whether they got training, how their wages changed). This research will provide an overview of how well state services have sustained dislocated workers and will be used to inform future efforts of staff and policymakers.

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*"The STARS project required a lot of inter-agency organization. . . . I was pleasantly surprised how much everyone wants the same type of data."*

— Marcia Slag

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— *Utah's Profiling Model*. Utah has developed a Profiling Model used to target unemployment insurance claimants for reemployment services. The model has been used to: 1) provide profiled claimants with online eligibility review, orientations, and assessments (OARS Project); 2) integrate unemployment systems with employment services systems (RES Technology Upgrade Project); and 3) automate REA program administration.

— *WPRS—The Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services system and related statistical modules*. WPRS uses statistical tools to identify unemployment insurance recipients who are likely to exhaust benefits and refer them to reemployment services. The Upjohn Institute is involved in updating WPRS models and creating products from them, including a Systematic Job Search Module and a Service Referral Module. (For more information, see [www.upjohn.org/targetingemp.html](http://www.upjohn.org/targetingemp.html).)

▪ **Innovators in Florida are leveraging new types of data-based insights in new ways to more effectively revive employment.**

Job creation is more effective when economic development and regional workforce boards work together to recruit businesses, believes Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation. Data helps immensely.

The first question that a business thinking of relocating asks is, "Do you have available labor?" Florida responds with three kinds of data: 1) occupations with related skills, per TORQ data; 2) numbers of people working in those occupations (potentially recruitable by the company); and 3) One Stop centers' registrants and training program enrollees. Together, these data form a composite picture of the available labor supply. It is a persuasive approach that has won numerous successes.

Florida is also using real-time labor supply data to create a detailed matrix of labor market supply and demand—the first of its kind. Data from the education and workforce pipelines will feed into an expanded picture of labor supply.

Some other innovative ways Florida uses its data toolbox include:

— *To determine proper allocation of training resources (TORQ and HWOL data in conjunction)*. A common pitfall is overtraining. But determining an overtraining situation is tricky. If 231 people are in training to be medical assistants, for example, and that is an occupation with 115 current openings per HWOL data, overtraining might be the assumption. But if TORQ data shows a high degree of skills transferability to occupations in greater demand, perhaps that is not the case.

— *To give unemployment insurance claimants more job leads*. TORQ data on skills relatedness is put into the system to send claimants a broader range of job listings to pursue.

— *To shape training programs*. TORQ data on individuals' skills can highlight training gaps in on-the-job training programs, for example.

— *For training placements*. Systems in the past used just occupations data; now they take into account training relatedness to recommend people for training in new careers.

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*"You might think you are over- or under-training without looking at training relatedness. That's key."*

— Becky Rust

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# Emphasis: Strengthening One Stop Capacity to Respond to Current and Future Service Demands

## Overview

Given the large numbers of people who are unemployed, One Stops are seeing high levels of demand for their services. Yet, resources to meet this need are on the decline.

To best meet the needs of dislocated workers, One Stops must leverage technology. This means implementing integrated intake and case-management systems, developing a web presence, and training customers to use social media tools for job searches. In addition, greater emphasis must be placed on innovative service delivery and training programs. New approaches are needed to reemploy professional workers, develop effective on-the-job training programs, and partner with industry. Examples of effective programs abound nationwide.

## Context

About 10 sessions at the 2010 ReEmployment Summit emphasized strengthening One Stop capabilities. Speakers discussed different ways that One Stops can increase their capacity and serve greater numbers of unemployed workers.

## Key Takeaways

- **States moved quickly to implement the Workforce Investment Act and the workforce provisions of ARRA, but they also faced obstacles.**

A recent study by the National Association of State Workforce Agencies/Center for Employment Security Education and Research (NASWA/CESER) found that states moved quickly to implement the Workforce Investment Act and the Unemployment Insurance/Wagner-Peyser provisions of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

They established Workforce Investment Act summer youth programs on short notice, increased the capacity of the workforce system to serve more customers, helped unemployment insurance claimants get back to work, and created more opportunities for Americans to acquire new skills through training.

However, states also reported major challenges. There were spending delays due to staffing issues and delays in obtaining legislative approval to spend funds. In addition, states faced difficult reporting requirements and time pressures. All states are concerned about the “funding cliff” that will occur when Recovery Act funds run out.

- **Integrated intake systems increase One Stops’ capacity through customer-centered policies and infrastructure.**

Integrated intake enables customers to provide their basic information once to be used by multiple programs, while supporting streamlined eligibility determination and provision of services. With integrated intake, people are able to enter the workforce system at multiple access points, such as by phone, in person, or through the Internet. No matter how customers enter the system, they are equally well-served and their privacy is maintained.

While varying degrees of integration exist, a completely integrated intake system has three characteristics:

1. *Customer service.* Customers provide information once in a seamless, customer-centered process.
2. *Policy alignment.* Policies are aligned to share and use captured information for multiple program applications and reporting requirements.
3. *System infrastructure.* One management information system handles multiple programs. Alternatively, data linkages between existing management information systems seamlessly share customer information.

- **Effective case management requires skilled case managers at the front line and robust systems at administrative levels.**

Case managers are required to assess, triage, and determine customer needs. This means preparing and coordinating comprehensive employment and training plans, as well as coordinating job placement. Good case managers use a variety of tools and techniques, such as templates for developing and updating individual employment plans, skills assessment tools, and career counseling. They must also have knowledge of local training options and financial assistance programs.

To support strong case management at the state and local administrative levels, it is helpful to have clear policy guidance related to case management practices. Through professional development and supervision, case managers should have access to additional training. In addition, each state or local area needs an integrated intake process that is supported by an integrated management information system, which should cross-populate to other programs.

- **The DOL’s Integrated Intake/Case Management Technical Assistance Initiative will provide valuable tools and education throughout 2011.**

The Department of Labor’s Employment and Training Administration (ETA) has initiated the Integrated Intake/

Case Management Technical Assistance Initiative. This project will provide the following deliverables in 2011:

- *First quarter.* The initiative will identify successful practices, processes, and management information system tools currently being used for integrated intake and case management. Increased functionality will also be added to a database of assessment tools.
- *Second quarter.* Practice briefs will be made available for integrated intake and effective case management. In addition, webinars, peer-to-peer learning exchanges, and workshops will be organized.
- *Third quarter.* A complete needs analysis on integrated intake and case management will be completed. Workshops on these topics will be presented at three regional forums.

Integrated Intake/Effective Case Management information can be accessed at the Workforce3 One website (<https://www.workforce3one.org/view/2001034248897710098/info>).

▪ **To provide the most value to today's recruiters and job seekers, One Stops must develop a web presence.**

In recent years, social media has become an important job search and recruitment tool. A 2010 Jobvite survey of 600 firms showed that hiring companies are spending more on social recruiting and less on job boards, third-party recruiters, and search firms. Job seekers have also become more computer savvy.

In response, One Stops must replace traditional job fairs with virtual forums for employment. Virtual job fairs should provide the maximum capability for businesses, be easy to use for job seekers, and offer lots of administrative functionality so workforce investment boards (WIBs) can demonstrate their value over time.

▪ **Combining social media tools and live networking creates a "killer app" for job seekers.**

By combining social media tools like LinkedIn and live networking, One Stops can unlock a "killer app" for job seekers. Through social networking tools like LinkedIn, it is possible to find contacts. Then job seekers can solidify relationships through live networking.

- *LinkedIn.* LinkedIn is a powerful networking and job search tool. It is considered the most professional of the social media websites, with more than 80 million users. The majority of recruiters (78%) source on LinkedIn.

NOVA Workforce Investment Board offers job seekers a basic and a more advanced class on LinkedIn. The basic course covers how to create an account, set up a profile, build a network, and use the LinkedIn inbox. The advanced course reviews how to research companies and job postings, as well as how to use LinkedIn to prepare for interviews.

LinkedIn Groups also offer an easy and professional platform for One Stop members and staff to stay connected. A group enables customers to learn about upcoming event and job openings, while the One Stop is able to access real-time job information and match skills with requests for talent.

- *Live networking.* Through a partnership between NOVA Workforce Investment Board and Employment Development Department, the two organizations developed ProMatch, a professional networking organization with 200 members. The ProMatch program is comprised of two weekly meetings, job search classes, and four hours of volunteering each week. Half of ProMatch members returned to work within six months of joining the program. This program also enabled NOVA to serve over 200 people each week with just 2.5 staffers.

▪ **Electronic tools can help One Stop staff improve service to customers while also helping job seekers.**

In a slow growth economy, One Stop staff are often overwhelmed with large numbers of customers. Electronic tools are one way that One Stops can increase their capacity and empower both employees and customers.

The U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration's electronic tools provide a wealth of information and practical advice for job seekers. They include:

- mySkills myFuture (<http://www.myskillsmyfuture.org>)
- O\*NET (<http://online.onetcenter.org>)
- O\*NET Career Profiler (<http://www.onetcareerprofiler.org/>) Note that a new version will be available soon.
- Worker ReEmployment Portal (<http://www.careeronestop.org/reemployment/>)
- The Guide to State and Local Workforce Data ([http://www.doleta.gov/usworkforce/whatsnew/eta\\_default.cfm?id=2637](http://www.doleta.gov/usworkforce/whatsnew/eta_default.cfm?id=2637))
- CareerOneStop (<http://www.careeronestop.org/>)
- OJT Toolkit (<https://ojttoolkit.workforce3one.org/>)

For workforce investment system professionals, Workforce3One (<https://www.workforce3one.org/>) is a key site. The content is free, but registration is required. This site includes several Communities of Practice (<https://www.workforce3one.org/ws/www/pages/communities.aspx?pparams=>), including Labor Market Information WIN-WIN Network (<https://winwin.workforce3one.org/ws/winwin/pages/home.aspx?pparams=>) and Green Jobs (<https://greenjobs.workforce3one.org/>). It also contains a Toolkit for Grant Applicants ([https://www.workforce3one.org/ws/www/pages/grants\\_toolkit.aspx?pparams=](https://www.workforce3one.org/ws/www/pages/grants_toolkit.aspx?pparams=)).

- **The keys to reemploying professional workers are outreach and creative service delivery.**

The first step in engaging unemployed professionals is overcoming the perception that the workforce system only helps entry-level workers. This takes a lot of outreach combined with word-of-mouth campaigning. To attract professional workers, One Stops typically have to engage in repeat messaging using different formats.

In addition, support services are different for professional workers than for other demographic groups. One Stops must look for new ways to meet professionals' needs, such as social media courses or financial planning education. An example of an innovative program targeted at professional job seekers is Career Fitness. This program is based on two premises: 1) each person is individually responsible for the health of his or her own career; and 2) in today's work world, people must work on their career every day. On-the-job training for professional workers is another great way to engage this group in workforce services.

- **A best practice for on-the-job training is using a team comprised of the customer, a career coach, and a business resource specialist.**

Using a staff team approach works well for developing on-the-job training plans. The team is comprised of the customer, a career coach, and a business resource specialist. Business resource specialists are the single point of contact between an employer, the customer, and career coach. The business resource specialist depends on the career coach for job-ready customers, while the career coach knows the business resource specialist's accounts and job openings.

Staff teams create training plans comprised of three parts:

1. *Skills analysis.* The career coach and the job seeker typically work together on this part of the plan. There are a variety of tools that may be used to measure a job seeker's skills. These include Work Keys (<http://www.act.org/workkeys/>), O\*NET (<http://online.onetcenter.org>), and Prove It! (<http://www.proveit.com/default.htm>).
2. *Employer-required skills.* The employer, business resource specialist, and job seeker collaborate to identify which skills the employer needs.
3. *Negotiating the training plan.* The business resource specialist and the employer determine what training will be required to fill the job seeker's skills gaps.

- **To increase capacity at the local level, One Stops around the country are partnering with industry and developing innovative training programs designed to get people back to work.**

At the local level, One Stops are engaging in a variety of creative programs to increase capacity. A variety of strategies from the field are highlighted below:

- *Texas Back to Work (TBTW).* TBTW is a statewide initiative aimed at moving low-income unemployment insurance claimants back into the workforce. The program provides a \$2,000 subsidy to employers for each qualified Texan hired and retained 120 days. Since the program's inception in February 2010, over 8,500 people have been moved into full-time employment.
- *Unemployment Insurance Group Orientations.* In Texas, claimants are contacted as soon as they apply for unemployment insurance (UI) and are called in for Group Orientation. Group Orientations are held twice a day, four to five times per week. The meetings discuss Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) and Workforce Center differences, Work In Texas registration and training classes, and the WorkInTexas.com online job search site. Since July 2010, the orientations have had a 42 percent attendance rate.
- *Georgia Work Ready Regions and Communities.* Work Ready Regions bring together industry assets to deliver competitive advantage for Georgia companies. Counties are given three years to reach the goals necessary to become a Certified Work Ready Community. Those counties willing to complete the process in 18 months are eligible for state-funded grants. To earn the designation, counties create a team of economic development, government, and education partners. They must demonstrate a commitment to improving public high school graduation rates through a measurable increase and show that a specified percentage of the available and current workforce has earned Work Ready Certificates. More information about the Georgia Work Ready Program is available online at <http://www.gaworkready.org/>.
- *Career Readiness Certificates.* In Pennsylvania, the Lancaster County Workforce Investment Board found that employers complained about prospective employees' lack of readiness. In response, the organization initiated a Career Readiness Certificate program. Employers now put people with this certificate at the front of the line for employment.
- *Short-Term, Skill-Oriented Training.* Industry needs to define the types of short-term, skill-oriented training that will produce more employable people. Lancaster County Workforce Investment Board has been providing this type of training using ARRA money for the last two years. More than 1,000 workers were trained last year.

## Other Important Points

- **Onsite services.** One of the best ways that the workforce system can assist dislocated workers is by providing services onsite before a layoff. Since onsite services are often the first touch that the workforce system has with dislocated workers, they are a critical component in the process of reemployment.

## Takeaways in Other Areas of Emphasis

### Overview

Economic and political realities, social dynamics, and funding-related factors have bearing upon the workforce system's efforts to move the unemployed back into good jobs as rapidly as possible. These contextual factors also affect the realities of the clients the workforce system serves. It is devastating to lose a job, but even more so in a slow job growth environment.

The slow job growth environment is altering the employment landscape—affecting the quality of jobs created and swelling the ranks of the underemployed. Temporary jobs don't lead to secure positions, research has found, and such jobs allow employers to shift risk to employees. Also, with uncertainty in today's political environment certain government programs are at risk.

### Context

Besides the areas of emphasis summarized previously, a few 2010 ReEmployment Summit sessions emphasized other important themes. This summary distills takeaways provided by presenters from two of these themes:

- The Current Economic, Social, and System Funding Context for Our Reemployment Efforts
- Defining Success in the Context of Slow Job Growth

### Key Takeaways

- **Slow job growth is altering the employment landscape and creating situations that call for innovative solutions.**

The era of slow job growth is reshaping the employment landscape in many ways. For instance, temporary and part-time employment is a bigger part of the picture than in the past. Additionally, high volumes of unemployment insurance claimants and the remote claims-taking capabilities that allow them to be serviced have disconnected claimants from the One Stop system, running counter to the integration priorities that underpin the Workforce Investment Act.

#### **Session: "UI Connectivity—A Call for Innovation"**

The move to remote claims-taking has disconnected the UI claimant from the workforce system's services. A workgroup has identified an "Emerging National Vision" for reversing this trend and augmenting reemployment services for all of the unemployed. The national vision builds on the Workforce Investment Act's vision for a single, integrated workforce system.

The workforce system is called to innovate around the vision's four transformational elements:

1. A "common front door" for the single workforce system with integrated workforce customer registration.
2. "Real-time triage" using data to support decision making at every point in the service delivery cycle.
3. A skills transferability focus, as UI claimants have been labor market attached.
4. Use of social media for outreach and service delivery.

The Employment and Training Administration is committed to supporting the vision; the workgroup has made recommendations regarding how. Many states and local areas are already implementing components of the vision, such as co-funding and cross-training strategies.

#### **Session: "Rise in Temporary and Part-Time Employment"**

Key points:

- Research suggests that temporary jobs do not lead to stable employment. Government return-to-work programs (e.g. WIA and welfare-to-work programs) tend to make extensive use of temporary help agencies in placing clients into jobs. But program providers should be cautious about doing so. A large quasi-experimental study of welfare-to-work programs operating in Detroit (Autor and Houseman, 2010) indicates that while placements into regular jobs significantly improved clients' employment and earnings over the subsequent two-year period, temporary jobs provided no lasting benefits. Temporary employment did not help clients transition into stable employment. Instead, it resulted in greater job churn and crowded out employment in regular jobs.
- There are a range of reasons why workers may be employed part-time. These include economic conditions, the nature of the job, or the worker's needs and preferences. The nature of the work arrangement could be good or bad for the worker, depending on the situation.
- Employers have shifted risk onto employees via increased use of temporary and staffing firms for work that has variable and unpredictable hours. That is not likely to change anytime soon.
- Workforce agencies should consider it part of their mission to help people who prefer part-time work to find it. However, the performance measures often discourage agencies from serving such clients.



▪ **Contextual factors play a role in shaping reemployment efforts.**

Economic, social, and system funding dynamics all have bearing upon efforts to move the unemployed back into the workforce as soon as possible. Presenters in two sessions emphasized specific contextual issues.

**Session: “The Psychology of a Layoff”**

Being laid off is one of the most traumatic events an individual can experience. On the stressful life events scale, job loss ranks just below losing a loved one to death or divorce, going to jail, or coming down with a major illness.

Some tips for establishing a productive relationship with the newly unemployed include:

- *Build trust* by demonstrating that you care and understand what they are going through. When workers lose a job, they lose much more than a paycheck. They lose their daily routines and lifestyle patterns, their work family, their role as a worker and provider, and their sense of being productive and independent. They lose the sense of being in control, and security about the future. They can feel disenfranchised and vulnerable, cut off from the American Dream. Pride, dignity, and self-esteem are often affected. To assist the

unemployed, it is critical that those working with them are sensitive to their financial and psychological losses.

- *Convey benefits information as simply as possible.* Avoid “government speak.” Workers who have just been laid off typically need time to work through the change process. Typically, they go through a four-phase adjustment period, moving from denial to resistance, to exploration, and finally to acceptance. During the early phases, they often have difficulty comprehending their options and benefits.
- *Help people focus on one thing at a time.* Give them a starting point to focus on—such as filing unemployment insurance—and then a second step. Clear tasks set them on the road to help make the situation less overwhelming.

The unemployed have unique practical and psychological needs that those working with them should recognize. Here is some of what the unemployed need: jobs and training; access to information and services; and social support, including the support of family and friends as well as social support for family members. The newly unemployed need to be listened to and understood, to feel valued, and to reduce feelings of self-blame.