



Peer Technical Assistance (TA) Short Summary

Requesting Agency:	Maryland Department of Human Resources
Point of Contact (POC):	Kevin M. McGuire
POC Telephone No.:	(410) 767-7338
POC E-Mail Address:	kmcguire@dhr.state.md.us
TA Event Tracking #:	165
TA Requested:	At the request of the Maryland Department of Human Resources, this site visit was initiated to visit a training center in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in order for Maryland to begin developmental strategies for a program of similar services.
TA Goal:	The goal of this site visit was to assist Maryland in exploring the types of education and training facilities that assist unemployed and underemployed individuals with career opportunities to increase their skills set and earning potential.
TA Format:	Site Visit

Analysis:

At the request of the Maryland Department of Human Resources, this event was designed to support Maryland in exploring the Manchester Bidwell Training Center in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Maryland is redesigning their welfare-to-work program and wants to potentially replicate Manchester's model to provide education and training opportunities for their TANF population that will offer higher wages, more job stability, less recidivism in public assistance, and better outcomes for their low-income population in general. Maryland estimates that 50,395 TANF participants in Maryland could benefit from a training center like Manchester's. Maryland was particularly interested in Manchester's business model, funding sources, and program replication assistance.

This Site Visit included representatives from the Maryland Department of Human Resources, The Honorable Talmadge Branch, Majority Whip, Maryland House of Delegates, Welfare Peer TA staff and Manchester Bidwell Corporate officers.

Manchester Bidwell officers spoke informally and in depth about the struggles they encountered to launch their program. They spoke of the commitment, effort, time and work it took to fashion the program into the model it has become. In addition, site visit participants were given a tour of Manchester's subsidiary programs; the horticulture, culinary, pharmaceutical and arts and technology

centers. All were impressed with the physical space Manchester Bidwell occupies, an environment conducive to learning and promoting good will.

Maryland recognizes its potential implementation strategies will differ in many respects from those observed at Manchester Bidwell. Funding challenges and working within governmental constraints are anticipated, however, their desire to transform the lives of the individuals they serve outweigh the challenges they expect. Maryland is also seeking to identify additional programs that offer innovative curricula to engage TANF participants.

Overall, the site visit was responsive to many of Maryland's questions. There was general agreement that the site visit was a successful event that provided expedient strategies to be applied when Maryland is ready to begin designing their program for the future.

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