



Urban Partnerships for Welfare Reform: National Academy

*Engaging Employers and Supporting
Workers in the Workplace*

Memphis



Key Features

- Tennessee's Families First program operates under a Section 1115 waiver (expires 6/30/07)
- Key waiver provisions:
 - More activities count toward the Work Participation Rate, and for longer periods
 - Multiple reasons that a month does not count toward federal time limits



Successful Strategies

- Engagement of Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Local Families First Council
- Engagement/cultivate relationship with employer (e.g. FedEx)
- Built upon mutual needs (e.g. FedEx/DHS)
- Anticipate barriers and respond to them



Surprises

- Impact of “Temporary Services Market” on a large employer like FedEx
- Employer discontinuing a successful process/program
- “the right supportive services” can impact on job retention and career advancement



Challenges

- Maintaining successful process when contractual arrangements change
- Job retention and career advancement support when the case is closed due to earnings
- Up's and Down's in the Human Resource needs of the company



Replication Advice

- Remain open and flexible in working with business and industry
- Expect and anticipate change
- Be ready to “Seize the Moment”
- Stay connected to the employer (never abdicate this responsibility to a contractor)
- Constantly review employment and retention data.



Managing During Change

- Constantly asking this question:
“What impact will this new process have on our maintenance in other program areas?”
- Designate a Champion of the Cause
- Celebration of Success
- Advocate, advocate, advocate



Visions for the Future

- Make sure that the WPR does not force us to lose any “good employer”
- Expand the program to the growing Biomedical Industry (St. Jude Research Hospital)
- Keep our tennis shoes ready as we “Sniff Out” new employment opportunity for our Families First (TANF) customers (WHO MOVED MY CHEESE? By Spencer & Blanchard)