



Urban Partnerships for Welfare Reform: National Academy

*Engaging Employers and Supporting
Workers in the Workplace*

Kansas City, Mo.



Key Features

- **Provide** effective job readiness and placement services
- **Offer** client job retention payments of \$1,800 for remaining employed with same employer for 9 months
- **Offer** Employer Skill Development Vouchers (\$1,000 upfront employer payment for tryout employment)
- **Determine** collaborative roles and responsibilities including a willingness to collocate services and staff
- **Provide** pre-employment intensive case management through collaboration with state partner
- **Provide** post-employment 90-day case management through collaboration with state partner



Successful Strategies

- **Maximize** supportive service dollars by filling gaps not covered by state funding
- **Collocate** staff in state office buildings
- **Respond** to community interest in wage progression and career paths through job development
- **Provide** intensive case management through collaboration with state welfare agency



Surprises

- **TANF clients:** Hard-to-serve population because of multiple barriers
- **Job market:** New jobs required GED or high school diploma plus and lack of vocational skills to fill construction jobs
- **Child care:** Relatively low wage rates at which a family can lose child care subsidies



Challenges

- **Place and keep** clients in jobs with self-sufficient wage rates – because wage progression can result in loss of supportive services
- **Develop** new job retention incentives
- **Maintain** contact with clients 9 months following placement in employment
- **Obtain** a 50% engagement rate under current state policy
- **Maintain** seamless service delivery



Replication Advice

Payment issues

- **Client incentives:** Retention payments and more flexible WRE payments would encourage clients to keep jobs
- **Employer incentives:** Allow great flexibility for employer incentives to offer tryout employment to clients

Information systems

- **Data systems:** Need solid management information system to support seamless service delivery

Organization issues

- **Collaboration:** Maintain effective relationships with partners



Managing During Change

- **Maintain** effective collaboration and cooperation of state agency during system changes
- **Improve** job development and job matching capabilities to ensure greater likelihood of client success
- **Provide** more flexibility with employers
- **Offer** incentives for clients to participate in work activities and/or more disincentives for them to not participate.
- **Provide** flexible work hours for Career Center – evenings and Saturdays – to encourage clients' participation
- **Hire** as many placement specialists as case managers to emphasize the role of work



Visions for the Future

- **Secure** better data systems
- **Maintain** community involvement in supporting system change
- **Employ** community-based case management
- **Adjust** state policies to encourage greater work participation