

I. IDENTIFICATION INFORMATION:

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II. GENERAL INFORMATION

Name of Program/Project Nominated: The WorkSource - Employer Services Model
Nomination Category: Innovation
Month/Year Initiated: 09/2002
Is the nomination for: local program
If local, the name of the locality is: 13 County Houston-Galveston Gulf Coast Region of Texas

III. RESOURCE

Total Start-Up Costs: Direct: \$4.2 Million * Div budget
Fund Source(s): TANF, FSE&T, WIA
Indirect: None

Total On-going Annual Costs: Direct: \$ 4.2 Million* Div budget
Fund Source(s): TANF, FSE&T, WIA
Indirect: None

IV. SYNOPSIS (Narrative Section)

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V. CRITERIA INFORMATION (Narrative Section)

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The WorkSource –Employer Services Model

IV. SYNOPSIS

The Employer Services Model is The WorkSource system's newly developed marketing and sales division offering human resources services to the region's employers. It helps employers identify and solve their workforce problems by using a separate workforce staff of Business Consultants who are responsible for marketing and selling The WorkSource services directly to priority employers, chambers of commerce, business/trade associations, and economic development groups across the region.

The Model complements the Resident Services (for individual customers) side of the system, and in only eight months has greatly exceeded its priority placement and other goals set for the entire year. Implementation of the Model has involved an internal culture change and staff empowerment. The Model promotes teamwork and focuses on helping employers solve workforce-related business problems and individuals with job training and career transition.

The WorkSource Employer Services Model has been so effective that it soon will be studied by the U.S. Department of Labor as a possible national service model. Overall year-to-date figures for April 2003 reflect that Business Consultants, partnered with their assigned Employment Counselors, reached a total of 6,227 priority employer placements—surpassing a goal of 2,320 priority placements. This number far exceeds the number of priority placements targeted for The WorkSource system's entire fiscal year (9/01/2002-8/31/03).

Currently 11,470 direct placements have been achieved, and this number will help determine a baseline direct placement goal for the upcoming contract year. Confirmed hires to date are 103,029- the annual goal for the system was 97,000. In addition, 3,223 job orders have been entered into the Texas Master Information System, 8,924 contacts with employers have been documented, and a total of 118 chamber of commerce, expo and trade association meetings have been attended by the Business Consultants.

V. CRITERIA INFORMATION

Project Basis

When the Gulf Coast Workforce Development Board was legislatively established in 1997 to serve the workforce needs of the 13-county Houston-Galveston service region, it became the largest workforce board in Texas and one of the largest regional board systems in the United States. The challenge it has faced since that time has been how to effectively meet the workforce needs of a region with more than 100,000 businesses and a labor force of 2.6 million. Over the years, the Board's service delivery system, known today as The WorkSource, has done an outstanding job of utilizing its 32 one-stop career offices to provide employment services for area residents. However, in order for it to truly become an employer-driven system, the Board decided it needed to do more, as it recognized employers as the source of jobs for its residents. Therefore, in 2002, the Board began a total re-organization of its service delivery system and developed its Employer Services Model.

Project Operation

The WorkSource Employer Services (ES) Division manages the employer services component, provides policy guidance, planning assistance, research, technical assistance and training to support the employer services contractor and its staff. A manager, industry account executives, industry liaisons, employer representatives, workforce specialists, labor market analysts and support personnel staff the ES Division. The sales team consists of Business Consultants who market The WorkSource services to employers.

The Business Consultants are assigned a "priority employer" in a primary service area, which corresponds geographically to the service area of the one-stop career offices where he/she is based. They work hand in hand with Employer Counselors, who are providing employment services to resident (individual) customers at these offices, to communicate employers' workforce needs and align the two to the greatest extent possible.

The Business Consultants concentrate their efforts on priority employers because in this way The WorkSource can offer the "biggest bang with its workforce dollars." Priority employers are those 1) specifically targeted by The WorkSource as having 100 or more employees in industries that demonstrate increased growth, a future of high wage jobs, and career ladder positions; 2) those with 500 or more employees not otherwise targeted by The WorkSource, that offer many job opportunities for different skill level candidates; and 3) those that have well-established working relationships with existing career office personnel.

Keeping in mind that The WorkSource system serves all employers in its service region, career office personnel continue to provide assistance to employers not in these categories, as needed and when asked.

The specific responsibilities of the Business Consultants include

- ◆ testing the education and skill levels, interests, and aptitudes of an employer's current workforce
- ◆ recruiting, screening, and referring qualified applicants for job openings

- ◆ arranging for education, general and customized training for an employer's current or potential workforce-on-line, on-site, or at a location of the employer's choice
- ◆ arranging for workplace diversity training for employers and their employees
- ◆ working with employers who need outplacement services due to layoffs and company restructuring
- ◆ referring employers to the Employer Services Division of The WorkSource for special, intensive services: professional, technical, and logistical help; education and skills training to meet critical labor shortages; special recruitment, screening, and referral services.

Keeping in mind that employer needs vary, the Employer Services Model focuses on the following customer service elements, empowering its Business Consultants to

- ◆ establish and maintain a visible presence with "priority employers"
- ◆ make personal visits to priority employers in their specific service area
- ◆ build ongoing relationships with employers, particularly those willing to list job openings in targeted occupations with The WorkSource
- ◆ understand the nature of the employers' businesses - the problems they face and the kinds of people they like to hire
- ◆ meet and build relationships with the people who actually do the hiring
- ◆ work to understand and solve employers' workforce problems, not to sell them a pre-packaged solution that's supposed to solve all problems
- ◆ make only qualified referrals to priority job orders and verify and report all hires
- ◆ make follow-up calls to make sure employer customers are happy; if they aren't, do what it takes to make them happy
- ◆ above all, provide services that are likely to solve the problem, and if The WorkSource services can't solve an employer's problem, be the first to say so
- ◆ evaluate results, share information and findings with other staff, and strive for continuous improvement
- ◆ freely share the latest available labor market information, including information about current and prospective job openings and emerging market trends, with contractors and staff throughout The WorkSource regional system
- ◆ develop and maintain ongoing relationships with other suppliers of qualified applicants for job openings listed by The WorkSource's employer customers.

Use of Award Funds

Should The WorkSource be selected as a winner of this award, it would use the \$25,000 to further its marketing efforts with area employers by developing and distributing an interactive multimedia CD presentation, similar to an award-winning presentation developed for its resident customers.

Project Results

The Employer Services Model was implemented as of September 1, 2002. The Employer Services contractor is responsible for documenting how the Employer Services Model is

effectively working with resident service personnel and priority employers. The Business Consultants are tasked with meeting system and career office goals.

Overall year-to-date figures for April 2003 reflect that Business Consultants, partnered with their assigned Employment Counselors, reached a total of 6,227 priority employer placements—surpassing a goal of 2,320 priority placements. This number far exceeds the number of priority placements targeted for The WorkSource system’s entire fiscal year (9/01/2002-8/31/03).

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