

## **Job Placement**

### ***Description***

The task of job-hunting may be a daunting one for the job seeker, but, on the flip side, it is also a challenge for employers to find qualified and committed employees. A job placement service acts as an intermediary between the job seeker and the employer. The task of this intermediary person can be two-fold as both a placement specialist and a job developer. This means first of all, to market people trained with skills known to be in high demand in the community; but second, to closely track the requirements of local employers and then direct suitable candidates to training for the jobs or place people who are job-ready.

In some cases job placement programs are also designed to offer financial assistance to an employer who hires someone through the placement service and where employment is maintained for a certain length of time, e.g., for six months.

A job placement service usually is and should be closely linked to job search assistance services. In addition, the employment service may need to establish training tailored to fill the gap between the skills that employers require and the skill levels of unemployed community members. For example, in a community with many aging citizens who require additional care either to live at home or within a seniors' facility, there may be an unmet need for people trained in geriatric care and home care. A training service can be designed to prepare workers for such jobs and can then place them. In short, again, the employment services need to be integrated into a systematic human resource development strategy.

### ***Benefits***

Effective job placement programs in connection with other human resource services can help to reduce the length of time that people are unemployed, minimize the stress and struggle of the job search process, and fill the staffing needs of local businesses that contribute to the economic vitality of the community.

The job-seeker will have access to potential jobs that might not be advertised elsewhere and their skills and career objectives can be specifically matched to employment openings.

Employers benefit from having potential candidates pre-screened through the placement service. They do not have to wade through piles of resumes. Only candidates qualified for the position are referred to them.

***Major challenges***

When presented with candidates from marginalized populations, employers may be reluctant to hire them because of concerns about reliability, interrupted work history, etc. These concerns need to be addressed head-on by acknowledging the possibility that someone, who, for example, has suffered from a mental illness, may very well have a day, here and there, on which he is unable to work, but that in other ways the potential employee may be prepared to offer better than usual services.

Funding for employment-related programs often does not extend to some marginalized sectors in the community (such as the under-employed, immigrants, re-entry women, and youth with no work history) who nevertheless require job placement services and could benefit greatly from them.

***Some practical steps***

- In the early planning stages, consider not only the interests and capabilities of the target populations you want to serve, but also the types of initiatives that are being funded by government and private industry, and the staffing needs of local employers.
- Then you can design ways to combine these factors in a program that will have a broad relationship to an overall human resource development strategy.
- Building positive relationships and alliances with local businesses is an essential element of a job placement service. Staying in touch with local business people allows you to remain informed of and responsive to their needs, to get feedback for improvement on your services, and most importantly to maintain a network of satisfied employers who provide jobs to people through your service.
- Look for ways to develop strategic partnerships so that you can create a full human resource development system. These partnerships over the long-term benefit everyone concerned and contribute the economic and social improvement of your community. For example, does your local community college have a job placement program for their graduates? Perhaps resources can be combined to serve their new graduates and other community members.
- Consider ways that you can provide support to the new employee and the employer, to ensure that the job placement is a success for both parties. This may include such techniques as check-ins to see that both parties are satisfied with the employment arrangements.

***Resource organizations & contacts***

- The Learning Enrichment Foundation has a multi-function Action Centre for Employment (ACE) that includes job placement services. See their website ([www.lefca.org](http://www.lefca.org)) or telephone 416-769-0830.
- The Coast Foundation in Vancouver serves people with mental illness and assists over 300 people each year to enter or re-enter the workforce. To learn more, call Cathy Johnson at (604) 877-0033.

***Publications***

Joe Valvasori, *An Integrated Model for Career Development* (Toronto, ON: Learning Enrichment Foundation, 2000).