

SLATE Update

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ST. LOUIS AGENCY ON TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT



Francis G. Slay, Mayor



Summer 2010

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS:

- 3 2010 Workforce Report
- 5 The Many Faces of Training
- 6 Expect Success: NGCC Built on Information Sharing
- 7 SLATE Staff & Partners: New Workshop Facilitators
- 8 SLATE Snapshots

OVERVIEW

Explain who we are and what services we offer.

**Review
The NGCC
Model Chart
and learn how it
benefits SLATE and
our customers!**

~PAGE 6

SKILLS/ JOBS TEAM

Enroll customers in WIA, refer them to Workforce, Skills Training and Employers

By Michael K. Holmes—

Teamwork is the foundation of everything we do here at the St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment. Without it, we can duplicate our efforts and contribute to non-productive use of time. With it, we can accomplish much more together than any one SLATE staff person could individually.

The Next Generation Career Center (NGCC) model that we are currently implementing is proof of the power of teamwork. Although the past months have presented some challenges, everyone has pulled together to find ways to make the change-over as smooth as possible while continuing to meet the needs of our customers. We have been recognized by Missouri's Division of Workforce Development for our rapid and effective transition. SLATE serves as a model to other Career Centers across the state.



This represents a major accomplishment – one that should not be overlooked. My congratulations and gratitude goes out to everyone at SLATE's downtown and Central West End locations for your hard work and spirit of cooperation. Only by working as a team can SLATE move forward with confidence.

SLATE TO ADMINISTER REGIONAL DOL GRANT

On July 20, Mayor Francis G. Slay held a press conference at City Hall to announce SLATE's receipt of a Community-Based Job Training Grant from the US Department of Labor. This exciting development will build workforce capacity not only in St. Louis City, but across the region.

The \$4.4 million grant will fund a three-year project, the Graduate! St. Louis Consortium. The Consortium consists of SLATE as fiscal agent, a

continued on pg. 2

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number of community colleges in both Missouri and Illinois, and the Regional Chamber and Growth Association (RCGA). The WIBs from St. Louis City, St. Louis County, Jefferson/Franklin Counties, St. Charles County and St. Clair County (IL) will participate in an advisory capacity. SLATE Executive Director *Michael Holmes* facilitated the creation of the Consortium. Senior Projects Coordinator *Keith Mullen* prepared and submitted the application to DOL on their behalf.

The Consortium will prepare the bi-state St. Louis Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) workforce to meet employer demands for qualified staff in the healthcare, information technology (IT) and emerging green industries. Primarily targeting dislocated workers, the project will provide over 2,000 participants with degrees or certificates of value in these fields by 2013.

As part of Graduate! St. Louis, SLATE will welcome two new full-time staff to our Downtown



**GRADUATE!
ST. LOUIS CONSORTIUM
FACT SHEET**

- **Audience:** Dislocated workers throughout the St. Louis MSA
- **Timeframe:** July 2010 – June 2013
- **Grant Amount:** \$4,404,781
- **In-Kind Match:** \$4,409,622
- **Partners:** SLATE, RCGA, St. Louis Community College, St. Charles Community College, Jefferson College, East Central College, SWIC

Mayor Francis Slay (left) witnesses the signing of a resolution creating the Graduate! St. Louis Consortium by Zelema Harris, Chancellor, St. Louis Community College, with representatives from SLATE, RCGA, and four other area community colleges.



President of the Board of Aldermen Lewis Reed, Karla Frye, and St. Louis City Youth Corps.

location. A Program Manager will oversee and coordinate the efforts of the entire Consortium, while a Health Care industry veteran will serve as a job developer. Additional job developers and a website/data coordinator will be housed at RCGA.

ST. LOUIS RECOGNIZES MISSOURI YOUTH JOBS PROGRAM SUCCESS

Karla Frye, St. Louis Coordinator of Urban Outreach for the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, invited SLATE to participate in a special recognition of the State Parks Youth Corps summer employment program. Sponsored by Alderman Charles Troupe, 1st Ward, a number of Youth Corps participants

from St. Louis City were recognized by the entire Board of Alderman on June 25. SLATE staff members *Kelly Hubbard, Ken Petralia* and *Ken Riddick* helped recruit and place these young men and women, giving them the unique opportunity to preserve and enhance Missouri's network of state parks and historic sites.

2010 ST. LOUIS WORKFORCE REPORT: UNEVEN SHORT-TERM JOBS RECOVERY

Nearly 400 business, education and civic leaders attended the second annual The State of St. Louis Workforce Report conference, "Looking Beyond the Veil of the Recession," which was held on August 11 at the Missouri History Museum in Forest Park. Marti Ro-

mitti, director of the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center (MERIC), and David Laslo, president of Strategic Research & Analytics, LLC, presented the Report – a valuable critical assessment of the current state of the metropolitan area's economic status, including the local business climate, labor market conditions, trends and occupational skill demands. The research, based on interviews with over 1,500 area employers and 300 dislocated workers, indicates that in the coming year businesses will continue to hesitate to hire in spite of their generally positive financial outlook. Over the longer term (five years) the employment is expected to improve dramatically.

Employers reported poor economic conditions and a shortage of skilled workers or training programs as the greatest barriers to hiring. Industries with the most job openings were Health and Social Assistance, Retail Trade, and Unclassified Businesses, while those

continued on pg. 4



with the largest impact on the St. Louis economy were Telecommunications, Aircraft Manufacturing, and Life Science Technology. Overall, employers rate the St. Louis metropolitan area's supply of qualified job applicants highly. The proportion of the workforce requiring middle and high skills will increase over the next five years; on-the-job training was the most common method for increasing the skill level of current employees. At the same time, many job seekers report existing high levels of experience, skills and education, and lack of jobs. The complete 2010 State of the Workforce Report can be found at <http://stlworkforce.org>.

SLATE'S COMMUNITY OUTREACH CAMPAIGN BRINGS INFLUX OF TELEPHONE CALLS AND CLIENTS

SLATE's Marketing Committee, chaired by *Coddy Murray*, promoted the no-cost services available to job seekers at all our locations through a variety of venues. The following advertisements ran throughout June and July:

- TV Commercials on KTVI/Fox 2
- Radio spots broadcast on KWJM 104.9 FM, KSLZ 107.7 FM and KATZ 1600 AM
- Metro: windscreens at stops (Scotttrade, CWE, Grand, Wellston, Delmar and Brentwood) and signs on buses
- News Media: St. Louis Post-Dispatch, St. Louis Argus, St. Louis American, The Evening Whirl



“The purpose of our marketing campaign is ... to make people aware about our no-cost training services.”

-KELLEY BERNARDI, DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Looking for a job? Looking for workers?

Contact SLATE Missouri Career Center to learn about **NO COST** employment and training opportunities!

Job seekers, call 314.589.8000 or 314.877.0916.

Businesses, call 314.657.3546.

For more info visit stlworks.com.



Clockwise: bus interior, metro station kiosk, St. Louis Argus online ad

The Many Faces of Training at SLATE

Part I

Many customers come to SLATE Missouri Career Center for the sole purpose of 4-week reporting. But SLATE can offer them so much more! Customers should know that the true value of SLATE lies in the opportunity to access training – a no-cost service they can't afford to overlook. Training at SLATE is designed to serve every category of job seekers, from returning veterans to ex-offenders to recent graduates. The following article, the first in a series, summarizes the training available as part of our Product Box.

At its most basic level, training helps customers become job ready. Those without a high school diploma are at a serious disadvantage, and can benefit from:

- Attending SLATE's **GED Lab**, a free way to study and practice before taking the official GED exam.
- Taking a pre-GED assessment, called **TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education)**, which measures a person's grade level in Math, Reading and Language. TABE is unique to the SLATE Missouri Career Center.

AEL Instructor *Thelma Clifton* administers both tests. Registration is required. GED Orientations and TABE for both locations are posted on the SLATE's website. The customers must attend all three days of GED Orientation to be considered for the GED class.

Two Job Skills Assessments are part of the statewide Products & Services Toolbox and available at the SLATE Missouri Career Center:

- The **Initial Assessment** – World-wide Interactive Network (WIN) – evaluates person's skills, knowledge and abilities to obtain employment. Every customer registered with SLATE Missouri Career Center must be tested in WIN. Customers who need to take WIN are sent to the GED Lab, to *Phyllis Thomas*, by the Skills Team.
- **Pre-Employment Assessment** – National Career Readiness Certificate is based on WorkKeys, assessment that matches various occupational profiles to person's skills in three areas most important to businesses – reading for information, locating information, and applied mathematics.

Often seen as a precursor to the Occupational Skills Training and On-The-Job Training (OJT), WorkKeys will be examined in greater detail in a future article. Also helpful, although not a part of the Products & Services Toolbox, is the **CHOICES® Interest Profile** assessment administered by *Phyllis Thomas* in the GED Lab, which helps customers determine their interests and abilities and suitable career paths. CHOICES® is available only at SLATE's Downtown location; the schedule is posted on our website.

Some customers may lack the basic computer or 'soft' skills necessary to compete in the job market. This is where a new array of workshops, developed by SLATE's new Workshop Facilitators, *Jeanne Miller* and *Debra Blackwell*,

continued on pg. 6

SLATE's GED Lab
served 5,969
customers in FY '09.



EXPECT SUCCESS!

SLATE'S NGCC BUILT ON INFORMATION SHARING

Thanks to the unanimous support, dedication and teamwork demonstrated by its staff, SLATE reports a successful changeover to the Next Generation Career Center (NGCC) model. *Mr. Holmes* and *Stacey Fowler* expressed their appreciation of the energy, effort and flexibility shown during the transition. "Their willingness to help ... with this change-over is key," said Stacey. "It simply can't be done without them!" The Welcome, Skills and Job Teams have created a customer-friendly Overview system, revamped Case Notes and Toolbox procedures and a growing number of Workshops. Stacey also attributed NGCC's success to the teamwork demonstrated by the US Department of Labor, Missouri Department of Economic Development, and the Missouri Career Centers. Open discussions clarified the process and helped eliminate many of the initial shortcomings. Shared best practices are helping SLATE and other Missouri Career Centers achieve:

- Reduced dependency on paper records
- Quick and streamlined co-enrollment in both Wagner-Peyser and WIA
- Valid data and a reliable database
- Rapid extension of services to UI reporters
- Staff efficiency – serving multiple customers at the same time
- Improved customer flow

WELCOME TEAM

Verify/Update customer info in Toolbox

OVERVIEW

Explain who we are and what services we offer

SKILLS ASSESSMENT

Assist customers with WIN Test

SKILLS/ JOBS TEAM

Enroll customers in WIA; refer them to Workshops, Skills Training and Employers

come into play. At the base of a pyramid are two **Basic Computer Skills** workshops for beginners and intermediate computer users. Each seminar is 2 hours long and teaches the customers to work with the mouse, understand the keyboard and introduces them to Windows. The computer workshops aren't required by the state - SLATE Missouri Career Center offers them locally to address the unique requirements of St. Louis populations that have fallen behind the digital divide.

At the heart of the program are popular **Career Success Strategies (CSS)** and **Resume Workshops**. Now streamlined from 5 to 3 full days and offered at both SLATE Missouri Career Center locations, these workshops are loaded with a wealth of information for the job seekers looking for full-time employment. Current hiring practices and job search techniques are discussed, and the session culminates with a professional resume for every attendee. From there, SLATE Missouri Career Center staff can elevate the person's basic job search skills to a more advanced level.

New 2 hour workshops, **Email/Internet Job Search** and **Online Job Application**, walk customers through the process of creating their own email account, teach them to use it in a job search, and apply online. A special 90 minute seminar, **UI/MCS Workshop**, has also been created for those who need assistance with filing the Unemployment Insurance benefits (UI) and have difficulty using MissouriCareerSource website. These

three workshops are unique to the St. Louis area and address the computer literacy gap.

However, even qualified professionals with a spotless job history can benefit from refresher courses, and SLATE's new **Career Exploration/Career Networking** workshop addresses this. In just 90 minutes, the customers learn how to stay career-focused and learn about comparative statistics in their chosen occupation from the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center (MERIC) and other sources. The benefits of social or "new" media, such as LinkedIn and Facebook, are also explored. Finally, a statewide required workshop, **Retention – How To Keep Your Job**, teaches strategies that help attendees become truly valued, long-term employees.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

Read about services SLATE provides to businesses and ex-offenders.

No-cost training at SLATE provides real value to our customers, many of whom are not job ready and/or have significant barriers to

employment. This introduction to SLATE's Skill Development and Training Services, makes it clear that we have many tools in our Product Box to address their needs.

SLATE STAFF & PARTNERS

SLATE'S NEW WORKSHOP FACILITATORS PREPARE CUSTOMERS FOR JOB MARKET

Through the workshops, many of SLATE's customers become acquainted with or brush up on important job search skills, from resume-writing to interviewing. This no-charge service acclimates job seekers to the drastic changes that have occurred to the job search process.

The non-renewal of an outside vendor contract to conduct workshops earlier this year left a critical gap unfilled. Two internal candidates, *Debbie Blackwell* and *Jeanne Miller*, were selected to become SLATE's new Workshop Facilitators.

For weeks, Debbie and Jeanne adjusted existing workshop curricula and hand-out materials used by SLATE Downtown, Central West End and REOS to the NGCC requirements. They began offering the newly revised workshops to the public on July 12, 2010.

For now, Deb and Jeanne conduct *Career Success Strategies* and *Resume Workshops*, although others will be rolled out in the coming weeks and months.

Jeanne notes the impressive variety of SLATE clients: "We get everything from GEDs to Ph.D.s," she says. "Individuals from age 18 to those in their 60s – professionals with experience in fields like Marketing and IT, and workers from service industries. The diversity is really quite incredible." Debbie gives her impression: "They were dreading having to spend 2 or 3 days 'stuck' in a workshop, [only to find that] they look forward to coming to class each day and that they wished it wouldn't end so soon. That confirms we're doing the right things for our clients!"



NEW SLATE WORKSHOPS START NEXT MONTH:

- **Basic Computer Skills**
- **Online Job Applications**
- **UI/MCS**
- **Retention**

Look for an updated Workshops schedule on our web site next month.



SLATE SNAPSHOTS



1-2. Staff Picnic. On June 12, a number of SLATE staff members and their families gathered in Forest Park to enjoy a food, music and each other's company.

3. WIB Swearing In. The St. Louis Workforce Investment Board's biennial swearing in ceremony took place on August 18, 2010. Presided over by City Register Parrie L. May, with assistance from Interim WIB Coordinator *Loree Augustine*, 30 members took or renewed their oath.

Another 4 WIB members who were unable to attend were sworn in privately by Ms. May.

4-5. Youth Summer Program. SLATE placed more than a dozen youth from the world's refugee camps with KETC, so that they can document the lives of refugee families in the USA. The documentary will be aired later this year.