

SLATE Update

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



Francis G. Slay, Mayor



ST. LOUIS AGENCY ON TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

SLATE
MISSOURI CAREER CENTER

DOWNTOWN • CENTRAL WEST END

Michael K. Holmes, Executive Director

September 2012 Issue

ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS:

- 1 2013 Youth Contractors
- 3 Holmes Honored by MOKAN
- 3 Training in Health Care
- 4 Retraining Services for Vets

SLATE Update is a monthly newsletter produced by the St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment (SLATE), part of the City of St. Louis and funded by the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). SLATE helps match area job seekers with businesses through a variety of no-cost services.

The purpose of this publication is to share the progress and outcomes of our many programs, and will be of special interest to legislators, Workforce Investment Board members, vendors, partners, educational institutions, other public agencies or anyone with an interest in workforce development.

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SLATE ANNOUNCES CONTRACTORS TO PROVIDE YOUTH SERVICES

SLATE has announced the names of five contractors to provide services to youth throughout the new program year. The announcement was made at the Youth Council conducted at SLATE's Downtown location, 1520 Market Street, on July 25, 2012. After a brief introduction, each contractor

Courtney Brooks, MERS/Goodwill Youth Program Participant, addresses Youth Council at SLATE, describes her barriers to employment and the significance of WIA funded program in her life.

"It's all about being at work on time. Getting along with their co-workers, their supervisor, following instructions, being flexible. Becoming part of work community and be successful."

~HILLARY WAGNER, MERS/GOODWILL

“Partnerships and collaborations are the heart of our community. Our vendors are united to provide comprehensive WIA services which will continue to increase the overall collective conscience of our youth and provide pathways to prosperity.” ~ALICE PRINCE, MANAGER, YOUTH SERVICES DEPARTMENT

presented a summary of their youth program to SLATE Youth Council members and SLATE staff. The contractors are as follows:

Since 1918, **MERS/Missouri Goodwill Industries, Inc.** has been helping people with disabilities and other barriers to employment advance to a meaningful and self-sustainable career. Persons of all ages (16 to 70+) can receive services associated with finding and securing a job, but youth has always been a primary focus. The agency partners with Missouri’s Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, St. Louis Public Schools and St. Louis Courts to serve youth with disabilities transitioning out of high school, youth that meet low income guidelines, and youth having a criminal record. The agency’s partnership with SLATE will serve **245** youth in 2012-2013.

Covenant House focuses on teaching homeless, runaway and at-risk youth ages 16-21 vital employment skills by placing them into internships with community businesses. Two residential programs, short-term and long-term, and a variety of support services are designed to develop skills youth need to live independently. *Panera Cafe, Nex-Tech Aerospace* and *Pelopidas* are among the employers partnering with Covenant House’s internship program. The agency is confident that its partnership with SLATE will expand available internships to youth, giving them experience and employment history.

Alternative Opportunities (AO)/ JESS is proud to work in partnership with SLATE to provide services to students from the Special Education Division of the St. Louis Public Schools. This program provides work readiness training, paid work opportunities, and leadership development activities to students throughout the City of St. Louis. This year-round program has a goal of serving **50** students next year.

For more than 30 years, **Employment Connection** has been assisting individuals with limited

opportunities to gain self-sufficiency by finding employment. The Agency’s progressive job training and placement services have created more than 30,000 jobs for St. Louis residents, giving thousands of individuals an opportunity to lead a self-sustainable life in the community. The Agency’s partnership with SLATE will prepare out-of-school youth ages 16-21 to enter the workforce or post-secondary education.

Family and Workforce Centers of America (FWCA) employs staff with over 30 years of experience in delivering workforce-related services to youth and adults in the St. Louis region and has been recognized for developing innovative solutions and groundbreaking strategies. The Agency’s youth program emphasizes self-esteem, pre-employment skills and reality-based learning. FWCA’s partnership with various local organizations allow students to determine their career path by choosing from medical, government and law, art and childcare careers to build their portfolio of skills. SLATE’s funding will help the Agency recruit and place **50** determined and enthusiastic youth into employment this year.

For contact information for any of SLATE’s youth vendors, visit SLATE’s website, stlworks.com and click **Help for Youth** from the main menu.



Youth Council Leadership and Partners (from left) Alice Prince, Youth Services Manager, Stan Shoun, Ranken Technical College President, Ray Creely, Youth Council Chair (former), Pat McBride, State Youth Coordinator, Kelley Bernardi, SLATE Deputy Director, Donny Carroll, SLATE Central West End, Functional Manager.

SLATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MICHAEL HOLMES HONORED AS PUBLIC SECTOR EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR

This month, SLATE was pleased to announce that Michael K. Holmes, SLATE Executive Director, received Public Sector Executive of the Year Award from MOKAN St. Louis Construction Contractors Assistant Center (CCAC).

MOKAN CCAC recognized Holmes for his impact on the construction and building community, dedication and commitment to diversity

in the workplace and the inclusion of MBE/WBE businesses on St. Louis City projects at its 37th Anniversary and Awards Dinner held on Friday, September 7, 2012, at the Hilton St. Louis Airport Hotel. Since 1974, MOKAN has been carrying out its goal: to increase the number of qualified minority and women contractors in the construction industry and the amount of public as well as private dollars spent with those firms. MOKAN has expanded its focus to include business and educational classes for minority contractors and workers through the MOKAN Contractor

Institute, a small business initiative focused on developing and strengthening the business acumen of construction firms and workers.

SLATE HELPS TO FUND TRAINING IN HEALTHCARE

Over the last three months, SLATE offered funding for job seekers interested in working in the healthcare industry and learning new skills. SLATE entered a partnership with St. Louis Community College (SLCC) and Madison County, IL to assist qualified students with the tuition and other expenses needed to obtain certificates of proficiency in Medical Billing and Coding from SLCC.

SLATE recruited and identified participants that meet qualification requirements. While a background in healthcare was not necessary to be accepted into the program, all applicants were asked

“It is truly a great honor to be recognized in this way by MOKAN. Its history of accomplishments in support of the St. Louis building industry has made a major impact on our community and the welfare of our citizens.” ~MICHAEL K. HOLMES, SLATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

SLATE Partners with Businesses To Deliver Services For Veterans

Franklin R. Lamm (*right*), Director, Application Modernization Center of Excellence (AMCOE) at Unisys and SLATE's Business Development Department present job opportunities to local veterans at the H2H Job Fair.



to prepare and bring a summary explaining why they wanted to work in healthcare, along with a resume and a cover letter.

An increased demand for Medical Billing and Coding specialists is predicted over the near future. The rapid adaptation of technology is moving healthcare providers over to electronic medical records, and there is a subsequent need for qualified personnel to help efficiently encode medical records used for diagnoses and clinical procedures, research and education. A certificate in Medical Billing and Coding will provide students with a solid foundation towards additional training in the emerging field of Health Information Technology.

The Medical Billing and Coding program is conducted at SLCC's Forest Park campus. The program is a 45 credit-hour course that prepares students for entry-level positions as Medical Billing Specialists, Medical Coders, Claims Examiners, Healthcare Reimbursement Specialists and Health Insurance Specialists. Students learn Diagnosis and Procedure coding standards

and processes and prepare for the American Health Information Management Association's CCS (Certified Coding Specialist) and CCA (Certified Coding Associate) certifications and the HRS (Healthcare Reimbursement Specialist) credential offered by the National Electronic Billers Alliance (NEBA). The first group of students will start the program this fall and is expected to graduate in spring 2014.

RETRAINING ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE AT SLATE FOR QUALIFIED VETERANS

In July, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), together with the Department of Labor (DOL), unveiled a new training assistance program for veterans. The program, *Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP)*, is part of the *VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011* passed by Congress and signed by the President into law. The program offers up to **12** months of training assistance to unemployed veterans. Unlike the Post 9/11 GI Bill, the benefits will be paid directly to qualified veterans for expenses, such as tuition, fees and books, if

they are enrolled in a VA-approved program offered at community colleges and technical schools. Their program must lead to an Associates Degree, Non-College Degree, or a Certificate and cover training in a high demand occupation. VRAP training assistance can't be combined with other Federal or state job training programs.

VRAP limits program participation to veterans ages **35 - 60**. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, about half of all unemployed veterans fall in that age range. Upon completion of their training, veterans will be provided with employment assistance through their Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) – a no-cost DOL service that can be accessed at either of the two SLATE Career Center locations.

For details on VRAP and other training and employment services for veterans, including OJT, contact **Martin Payne**, SLATE LVER, at martin.payne@ded.mo.gov.