

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

www.stlworks.com

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NEWS HIGHLIGHTS:

- 1 Adult Success Story
- 2 Employment for Vets
- 3 Why Attend a Job Fair?
- 4 Benefit for Businesses

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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SUPPORTIVE SERVICES AT SLATE HELP BUILD A NEW LIFE

Edith Hernandez relocated to the City of St. Louis from Los Angeles with her husband in November of 2012. As with many jobseekers entering a new market, she found it difficult to match her background with the available opportunities.

Edith heard about SLATE, stopped by and enrolled. It was obvious to the staff there that Edith had the necessary skills to go to work immediately. Edith, bi-

lingual and a trained and certified phlebotomist, was immediately assigned by SLATE to an Employment and Training Advisor (ETA), who was able to match her with several viable job leads and assist with simple yet critical changes to her resume. During the discussion, Edith asked if her husband could benefit from our services - a certified forklift operator, he too was finding it difficult to identify employment opportunities. Within a few days, both Edith and her husband *DeMon Tyler* were working with the

ETA to focus their job searches and find employers with an immediate need for their respective skill sets.

As 2013 approached, Edith informed SLATE that she had received an offer from BJC as a part time phlebotomist and would begin shortly after the first of 2013. Within days of the new year, an opportunity also arose for DeMon, who was offered an immediate position with an organization extremely pleased with his qualifications. Even more good news arrived shortly thereafter when Edith's position was increased to full time!

DeMon stopped by the CWE location to personally express his gratitude for the professionalism and encouragement he and his wife experienced as they build a new life for themselves in St. Louis. They are representative of the many thousands of families SLATE assists annually through job search assistance, workshops and supportive services.

“What I have learned at the seminar works.”

-Veteran, WREAP participant

EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM OVERCOMES BARRIERS FOR VETERANS

Since August 2012, when the *Work-Ready Employment Assistance Program (WREAP)* was launched at the U.S. Conference of Mayors' Workforce Development Conference in Washington D.C., SLATE has offered numerous WREAP sessions across the St. Louis region. Overall, the program has proved so successful that other metropolitan areas in Missouri and even other states have indicated their interest in replicating similar sessions for their own veterans. This year, WREAP has conducted workshops in Kansas City, Columbia, Fort Leonard Wood, and Cape Girardeau, with upcoming

sessions in Jefferson City and Kansas City before the program returns to St. Louis in June. Any veteran interested in registering for a WREAP session should contact **Martin Payne**, SLATE Veterans Representative at martin.payne@ded.mo.gov.

Often, the differences in terminology between the military and civilian workforce present a barrier to employment for veterans recently returned from duty overseas. WREAP specifically addresses this challenge with exercises that help veterans better translate their training and skills into common business terminology. **Frank Alaniz**, the Missouri Workforce Regional Liaison at SLATE who coordinates WREAP, states that “military veterans often have a wide range of skills and talents civilian employers are seeking. But at times the veterans and the employers don't speak the same language.” Seminars are also offered to recruiters to ensure that hiring managers can adequately discern the skill matches they are looking for.

The response from veteran participants has been nothing short of outstanding. One Missouri National Guardsman told SLATE, “As a specialist who hates military briefings



Frank Alaniz helps veteran rework his resume.

this was the best brief that I've ever attended." A veteran who was struggling with his job search confirmed that "what I have learned at the seminar works. I couldn't believe the responses I've received in the last three weeks. Thank you!"

SLATE Executive Director **Michael K. Holmes** looks forward to building upon the success of the program. "WREAP plays an important role in helping our highly skilled and motivated veterans reenter the job marketplace. For them, it really is a shift between two worlds, and SLATE helps make that transition as painless and quick as possible."

WREAP has been endorsed by both businesses and educational institutions including Monsanto, Ralston, Habitata, McDonalds, BJC, SSM, Webster University, the University of Missouri St. Louis, St. Louis University, Washington University, by the Missouri ESGR (Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve), and by numerous veteran support organizations throughout the St. Louis metropolitan area.

WHY PARTICIPATE IN A JOB FAIR?

If you're looking for employment, a Job or Career Fair is a good starting point. By including it as part of your job search plan, you will obtain invaluable face time with representatives from a variety of companies at one convenient location.

Many people believe Job Fairs are a quick way to get hired on the spot. While the company representatives do provide information about general career opportunities



as well as specific details on current openings, the main purpose of a Job Fair is to meet company representatives in person and establish relationships with employers you want to work for.

A successful Job Fair experience seldom results in immediate employment, but it's a good place to perfect your on-the-spot interviewing and networking skills. Events such as these are excellent opportunities to look at the job market as a whole, interact with numerous companies, and satisfy your curiosity about a wide variety of career opportunities.

"Talk to as many people as you can; never underestimate the value of face time with recruiters from leading companies. And, just as importantly, listen to them, too. Pay attention to the questions you're being asked and to the kind of information they're offering. It's impossible to leave without something of value," advises Tory Johnson, founder of Women for Hire.

Before heading to a Job Fair, SLATE recommends that you review our presentation entitled *Navigating through a Job Fair*, available at www.slideshare.net/SLATEMCC. It walks participants through the steps which will help make their Job/Career Fair experience a positive one. "Remember to smile to everybody, starting with the gatekeepers and others waiting in queue line, definitely smile when talking to recruiters. Recent studies suggest that smiling faces are easier to remember," states **Frank Alaniz**, Missouri Workforce Regional Liaison, who coordinates SLATE's Bounceback STL program for dislocated professionals and other jobseekers.

Alaniz calls attention to those questions that attendees should not ask recruiters at the Job Fair; instead he provides examples of what can and should be addressed. He stresses: "Don't be offended if the recruiter doesn't take your resume or business card. Don't get disap-

pointed if you weren't offered a job. Your participation is an indication that you are doing everything right."

The next event in which SLATE is participating, *Congressman Clay's 8th Annual First District Career Fair*, is scheduled to take place on Monday, June 10, 2013, at Harris-Stowe State University, 3026 Laclede, St. Louis, Missouri 63103. Details about this and other Job Fairs can be found on SLATE's website, www.stlworks.com. For a listing of all networking events scheduled in the St. Louis area, go to www.stlworks.com, >Help for Job Seekers, >Job Opportunities, >Recruitment and Job Fairs. For career guidance, visit our Career Center and ask to speak with one of our Career Specialists.

OJT OFFERS BUSINESSES A SUCCESSFUL GROWTH STRATEGY

On the Job Training (OJT) is a proven and effective incentive. It gives employers the opportunity to receive a temporary, federally-funded subsidy for up to 50 percent of all wages in the first six months of employment for each jobseeker they hire into a full time, permanent position. Last September, SLATE announced the creation of a new OJT Coordinator position to facilitate these agreements and reach out to area employers and jobseekers. SLATE is proud to report that in response, our OJT program has received an enormous outpouring of praise and support from the St. Louis business community.

OJT is often described as a win-win, helping employers reduce costs while giving jobseekers access to quality opportunities. The CEO of **IDC Projects** told us that *"Due to the benefits of the OJT program, we have been able to comfortably train [our current Creative Director] into the valuable asset he is today."* The HR Department of **Lloyd Industries, Inc.** likewise wrote in appreciation of the program's advantages: *"We are only as good as the people we are able to employ. The OJT program has aided us in being able to bring in employees with potential and have the monetary support to see them through their learning curves."*

Beyond the cost savings aspect of OJT, it has also become apparent that many businesses find the program to be an efficient resource in matching individuals with specific positions. *"We have 3 fantastic employees that we would not have found had we not engaged the OJT program for our company,"* the Sr. Director of Organizational Effective-

ness at **Swiss-American, Inc.**, a local distributor of imported and domestic cheeses, declared in writing.

Once an OJT contract is signed, it is important to follow up with companies to ensure that all procedures are followed correctly. SLATE received praise on this phase of the process as well: *"Once the OJT Training was implemented it left an array of questions and concerns which were all addressed by this team in an appropriate manner. [SLATE] is definitely an asset to numerous businesses in our region,"* stated the HR Manager at **Behavioral Health Response.**

Companies of all sizes expressed their strong preference for continued or increased funding for On the Job Training. *"The only way we will grow our economy and improve our communities is by putting people back to work and the OJT program is doing this every day,"* stated one, while another told us that as they grow, *"we intend on using the SLATE OJT program to hire most of our new employees."*

HELP WANTED

SLATE EXTENDS A HELPING HAND TO FORMER HOSTESS WORKERS

The Hostess workers affected by the closure have been approved for Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) and a National Emergency Grant (NEG). This means that, if qualified, former Hostess employees can receive funds to enroll in school or a training program that will increase their ability to find new employment. Other supportive services are also offered at SLATE Missouri Career Centers. If you know someone who worked at Hostess, please let them know about this funding opportunity. Details can be provided by **Susan Fulton** at sfulton@stlworks.com.