Baldwinsville Public Library
Best Practices for Delivering Workforce Development Services

1. Ask the community you serve what they need. In the beginning the most helpful advice we received was from our target populations. We reached out by holding Focus Groups at the library. The questions to ask are
    a. What do you need from the library?
    b. How do you want the information delivered to you (one-on-one versus group classes, or email correspondence)?
    c. What barriers/obstacles does the library need to overcome to deliver services?

2. We created at Business Advisory Board, comprised of local business owners and the Executive Director and President of our local Chamber of Commerce. The Board is aware of the library's mission to serve the unemployed and under-employed. They often have helpful tips and suggestions for us as to how best serve those looking for work (such as skills that need to be developed) and they keep the library informed of local job openings, which get passed to those seeking employment. In addition, the Chamber has become a strong advocate for the library and the workforce development we do. They "talk up" our services throughout the community.

3. We watch what other libraries are doing and we **"borrow with honor".** No one can think of everything that may be needed or how best to deliver services in all situations. Praise your colleagues and ask for advice.

4. When making evaluations for classes/workshops ask people what other offerings they want. We take requests for classes seriously and try to provide what people are asking for.

5. Evaluations – our patrons like paper best. We get the feedback before we let them out of the room. Some of our patrons still struggle with email and the internet in general, so paper is still the best method for evaluating classes.

6. Partner with local organizations that serve the unemployed/under-employed. We regularly receive requests for resume help from people who have been referred to us by PEACE Inc. We keep brochures about PEACE Inc. in our library and refer clients to them for the services they provide.

7. We have been most successful with one-on-one assistance when delivering workforce services. Many clients are embarrassed to admit that they are unable to fill out applications online or do not know how to upload a resume. They are much more comfortable working with someone individually. We ask that whenever possible they make an appointment in advance, though we will work with someone "on the spot" as time and other responsibilities permit.

8. Offer to work with someone on their resume via email. Many of our patrons are on a limited budget. After the initial visit, email correspondence is much more cost-effective, since many of them are living on a fixed income. An added bonus is that it helps them develop their emailing, emailing with attachments and uploading skills.

9. Be kind. While this should go without saying, we are all very busy and sometimes we get exasperated with those are serving and we might snap a little. I take a few deep breaths, offer them the chocolate that is on my desk and remind myself how fortunate I am to be on my side of the desk.

10. While most of us have offered classes in JobNow! and Learning Express, offer to teach in a one-on-one setting with a job seeker. We have found that working with patrons individually is much more effective. They are more likely to utilize the service again after individual instruction. We forget that these services are simple for us to use because we are information professionals. Many of those we serve have very limited computer experience.

11. If at all possible, work in your office (if you are fortunate to have one with a door and a DO Not Disturb button on your phone… all the better!). We have also used the training lab for individual assistance when classes are not in session.

12. Provide statistics and anecdotal information to your Director (or Board of Trustees if you are the Director). We kept our Board of Trustees aware of the work we were doing with the unemployed/under-employed, thus making sustainability of services a given after the grant was over.

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