

October 28, 2009

Notes from Brownfields PLC Session #14

Session leader: Mike Senew

Topics: Recruitment, Placement, and Student Services

Follow up to the 2010 RFA conference

#### **NOTES FROM SESSION 14**

When planning a Brownfields job development program, it is often useful to work backwards, starting with the jobs to be filled and potential employer commitments.

- (1) For example, some military installations will not allow individuals with felony convictions to work on site. If you are planning an ex-offender program, you need to be aware of potential future hiring constraints. While it should not discourage you from developing the ex offender program, planners need to be aware of external issues graduates may face upon graduation
- (2) Certain employers may require minimum GED and or high school diplomas. Will your program include a GED component or will entrants be required to hold a diploma for entry?
- (3) Will gender become a placement issue? Intensive hazardous materials work, physicals for performance, protective gear, or material handling requirements may limit participant participation.

Again, working backwards, the proposed curriculum influences the recruitment process.

- (1) Are recruits at a sufficient academic level to be successful with communication, math, and science tasks required of the curriculum? Students lacking sufficient English, math, and science skills become discouraged when course content exceeds their ability to understand or perform. The net result could be low retention rates, and discouraged students and instructors.
- (2) The resolution to issues just raised focus on a solid screening and testing program of potential recruits. Additional resolutions may include extensive testing coupled with math, science, and English remediation prior to commencement of environmental training.

Having determined the physical, skill, and academic requirements to be successful in the proposed program, the final step is student recruitment and consideration of the target group you wish to address.

- (1) Radio, newspaper, and public announcements in communities to be served are effective ways of reaching your target population.
- (2) Brochures and posters placed in community centers, housing facilities, and churches provide a direct communications link to potential students.
- (3) Web sites and videos have also been used as effective marketing and student recruitment tools.
- (4) Perhaps the best approach to finding the most qualified participants requires personal commitment. Visits to community meetings, "word of mouth" recommendations, and "one-on one" recruitment result in the highest retention and placement rates.