



Wider Opportunities for Women

Join Promising Practices in Workforce Development Audio Conference Series!

In Spring 2006, Wider Opportunities for Women, a national advocacy and workforce organization, released a publication, *Reality Check: Promoting Self-Sufficiency in the Public Workforce System – A Promising Practices Guide for Workforce Boards* --- which offers twenty-two case studies of local workforce investment boards that have defined and implemented the concept of self-sufficiency to promote the economic well-being of job seekers and their families with the goal of creating an economically sound and thriving community. The report, broken into seven practice areas, combines a printed executive summary with an interactive online resource and documents the experiences of local WIBs and can be viewed in full at: <http://www.wowonline.org/wow>

This audio-conference series was developed to engage allied workforce professionals, researchers, workers and policy makers, in sharing promising practices across the country. Through these calls we will discover areas of common ground for developing voluntary practices and public policy to build strong local economies and strong communities. You will garner new information about policies and programs targeted to low wage workers that can have a positive impact on employee retention and productivity as well as exploring long range planning such as counseling workers in career pathways.

Through this initiative, [Wider Opportunities for Women](http://www.wowonline.org/wow) is serving as a convener to foster important conversations between workforce development professionals, non-profits and other stakeholders to have a dialogue on win-win solutions for community economic well-being.

Private sector employment growth needs to be bolstered through economic development programs and supplemented by government job creation efforts that target job opportunities toward those most in need. Entry-level jobs become dead-end jobs if workers do not have access to education and training. Publicly-funded worker training programs, integrated with job creation and economic development strategies, can be a successful tool in providing less-skilled workers with a ladder to higher wage employment.

The Promising Practices material can be accessed at www.wowonline.org/wow

Audio Conference Series: Once you sign up, call-in information with supporting materials will be provided.

1. Defining Economic Self-Sufficiency for Workforce Development Goals

Date: Tuesday, November 14th

Time: 2:30 – 4:00 (EST)

Speakers: Kate Farrar, *Associate Director of National Programs and Policy, Family Economic Self-Sufficiency Project (FESS), Wider Opportunities for Women*

This presentation offers a primer on the concept of economic self-sufficiency and the data tool of the Self-Sufficiency Standard. You will learn about the components of the Self-Sufficiency Standard, a goal-setting tool that determines the amount of income for an individual or family to meet their basic needs in the “marketplace” without public or private subsidies. You will also learn about using the Self-Sufficiency Standard in work support and wage modeling, and the identification of high-wage, high-growth occupations. The Self-Sufficiency Standard has been developed in 35 states and the District of Columbia through WOW’s Family Economic Self-Sufficiency Project (FESS). This data tool is utilized in workforce and education systems across the country to build economic independence for customers and the community as a whole. This is an opportunity to learn the basics of the concept and how defining self-sufficiency can benefit your work and customer outcomes.

2. Designing Workforce Programs to Build a Strong Local Economy: Choosing a High-Definition of Self-Sufficiency and Benchmarking

**Date: Nov 30th from 2:30 – 4:00
Time: 2:30 – 4:00 (EST)**

Speakers:

Sylvia Beville, Executive Director, *Metro South/West Regional Workforce Investment Board, MA*
Marlena Sessions, Chief Operations Officer, *Seattle/King County Workforce Development Council, WA*

Establishing goals and benchmarks based on a realistic definition of self-sufficiency can help workforce boards design the type of programs that will move people to economic independence while helping those who serve these individuals to assess the ability to prepare jobseekers for jobs that pay self-sustaining wages. Local economic growth needs to be bolstered through economic development programs and supplemented by government job creation efforts that target job opportunities toward those most in need.

The ongoing challenge in establishing concrete benchmarks is in creating measures that can demonstrate how well a system is performing, while at the same time capture the more nuanced aspects of success. Programs balance the administrative burden created by data collection required with the need for detailed information to understand how well the system is working.

You will hear from Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) that have concluded that setting WIB goals according to a higher definition of self-sufficiency and collecting and analyzing certain data can help to identify the types of programs/policies that are working to move workers towards economic independence in their local economy.

Please RSVP for the calls to Vivian Staples at vstaples@wowonline.org or 202-464-1596

**Once you are registered, we will send you the call-in information.
Watch your e-mail for information on upcoming calls!**

Would you like to join WOW's Self-Sufficiency Workforce Practices listserv to be updated on resources and events for workforce professionals to best promote the economic well-being for workers and their families?

If yes, please provide us your email: _____

Or, sign up at: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/selfsufficiency_workforce

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