UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

NATIONAL EMERGENCY GRANT PROMISING PRACTICES SERIES:

EXPANDING NEG TRAINING CAPACITY THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS WITH COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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About the National Emergency Grant Promising Practices Series

States and local areas that administer National Emergency Grants (NEGs) have developed a growing body of expertise in the effective management of these grants. The *National Emergency Grant Promising Practices Series* is a compilation of ten documents whose purpose is to highlight and share some exemplary approaches that were instrumental in preparing for, planning, and implementing a NEG. The intent of disseminating these effective methodologies on a broad, national level is to facilitate the continuous improvement of NEG project operations and to promote peer-to-peer information-sharing among practitioners.

The information presented in the *NEG Promising Practices Series* was gleaned from a study, which focused on the in-depth review of fifteen NEG projects that varied in type, size, and scope. Collectively, these projects represent an investment of $282,377,589 made by the Department of Labor (DOL) that helped states assist dislocated workers obtain reemployment in the aftermath of a large layoff or disaster-related event. The insights shared by these grantees were synthesized for dissemination, resulting in a set of promising practices that build upon four broad themes:

- *Infrastructure and Readiness.* How grantees have organized state and local delivery systems to ensure effective and efficient use of NEG resources;
- *Planning and Start-Up.* How grantees have mobilized key resources and stakeholders to facilitate effective grant planning and implementation;
- *Program Design and Implementation.* What specific interventions and services have been implemented to support the unique reemployment needs of dislocated workers; and
- *Institutional Results.* How NEG investments have directly or indirectly resulted in an enhanced capacity to respond to unexpected economic events.

Listed below are the ten documents, which comprise the *National Emergency Grant Promising Practices Series*. Each review addresses a specific area of NEG management and has been written to emphasize the specific planning, design, and operational decisions that contributed to successful retraining and reemployment strategies.

- *Working Across Boundaries in Planning a Regional NEG Response*
- *Expanding NEG Training Capacity Through Partnerships with Community Colleges*
- *Aligning NEG Strategies with High Growth Sectors and Occupations*
- *Peer Support Systems that Strengthen Outreach and Participation*
- *Preparing for the Unexpected in Disaster Grants*
- *Establishing and Managing a Temporary Jobs Program*
- *Implementing Transition Teams to Lead the Dislocation Response*
- *Partnering with Organized Labor to Support Reemployment*
- *Coordinating Resources to Meet the Reemployment Challenge*
- *Using Data Strategically to Align Job Seekers and Occupational Demand*

PREVIEW

NEGs respond to large, unexpected layoffs resulting in substantial numbers of workers in need of retraining and reemployment assistance. Some of these workers will embark on new career paths if they strengthen basic skills, upgrade existing skills, or gain credentials for new demand occupations. Community colleges, which offer a wide variety of education and training options, are often a natural partner for NEG grantees in responding to this need.

Purposeful partnerships between NEG grantees and community colleges can contribute significantly in preparing dislocated workers for relevant long-term reemployment and enhance a NEG project in all stages of its lifespan:

- *Infrastructure and Readiness.* An established relationship between local community colleges and the workforce system ensures that unexpected layoff events will be met with a coordinated response. Creating lasting infrastructure or processes in support of this partnership will ensure efficient start-up when large dislocation events occur.

- *Planning and Start-up.* The involvement of the educational institutions during grant planning and start-up enables NEG project operators to assess the training needs of the dislocated worker population in the context of available capacity and resources at the community college. Their involvement further allows the stakeholders to work collaboratively to address gaps in capacity as well as unique educational and training needs of the dislocated worker population.

- *Program Design and Implementation.* The community college/NEG grantee partnership aids in the design of educational programs that are relevant for the impacted population and are available on a schedule when workers can access the training.

A sudden influx of dislocated workers can pose challenges to community colleges and NEG grantees working together to provide training and educational services. Some of these challenges include:

- *Strains on existing capacity.* Large layoffs that suddenly and significantly increase demand for training and educational opportunities can leave community colleges scrambling to find classroom space, teachers, and equipment.

- *Mismatches between timing of layoffs and timing of course offerings.* Layoffs generally do not conform to community college schedules, and recently laid off workers are anxious to return to work as quickly as possible. In some cases workers need to enroll in training to maintain or avoid exhausting unemployment benefits.

- *Need to match training/course offerings to current employer demand.* Major dislocations can be part of a larger regional economic restructuring that significantly alters the type of skills and jobs that are in demand. This creates a need for colleges to quickly assess skill requirements for jobs that will be available and to design responsive education and training options.

- *Need for new curricula so as to meet profile of dislocated workers.* Dislocated workers may have a variety of training and education needs even though they are experienced workers. As a result, the training plan developed by NEG grantees needs to account for existing competencies, adapt for basic skill deficiencies, and/or recognize the need for short-term training options as well as to communicate these needs to community colleges.

- *Need for new methods to attract, support, and retain dislocated workers.* Laid off workers who need retraining to find new jobs may face challenges that are quite different from those of traditional college students. Many have never attended college and are years removed from a formal educational setting. Additionally, while acknowledging the need for new skills, dislocated workers may need to return to employment as quickly as possible to support themselves and their families. NEG grantees and education providers must recognize these unique considerations when attempting to attract and retain dislocated workers into their programs by customizing outreach and enrollment strategies, creating a sense of community, and integrating feedback mechanisms to ensure they are meeting the needs of these returning students.

Learning from NEG Grantees: The following NEG grantees and community colleges were able to develop successful partnerships to address these various challenges. These partnerships facilitated rapid expansion of training and education capacity, developed offerings that met employer and worker needs, and created conditions that supported workers to remain and succeed in education.

North Carolina. The 2003 **Pillowtex Inc.** closing in Kannapolis caused the loss of 4,800 jobs in a "company town." **Rowan-Cabarrus Community College (RCCC)** faced the challenge of expanding its capacity to immediately serve 3,900 new students, almost doubling the student body. A portion of this NEG funding supported the influx of dislocated workers attending the North Carolina Community College System. NEG Award Amount: $20,655,048 million.

Maine. The shutdown in 2003 of **Great Northern Paper's** two mills in the rural communities of Millinocket and East Millinocket affected approximately 1,100 workers. The NEG grantee worked with the **Katahdin Regional Higher Education Center (KRHEC)**, an off-campus site for Eastern Maine Community College located

in East Millinocket that had historically provided training to laid off and incumbent Great Northern Paper workers.[1] Based on availability of its newly-expanded space in East Millinocket, the center was co-located with Training and Development Corporation (TDC), the operator of the One-Stop Career Centers in the region, to serve dislocated workers from the mills. This partnership reached out to the community to expand resources to these workers and their families. NEG Award Amount: $9,298,121.

Mississippi. Hurricane Katrina wrought devastation throughout the Gulf Coast in 2005. The **Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College (MGCCC)** serves approximately 9,000 students in a four-county district on the Gulf Coast. Despite severe damages to the campus, MGCCC was up and running within seventeen days of the hurricane to serve students and support recovery efforts through the **Mississippi Hurricane Katrina NEG**. NEG Award Amount: $95,000,000.

Outlined below are examples of the ways in which the community colleges worked with NEG grantees to expand education and training capacity, flexibly design and schedule instruction, and support dislocated workers in the community college setting.

Expanding Education and Training Capacity

The NEG grantees and their community college partners described above had three basic methods of planning for and expanding training and education capacity:

- Assessing the training needs of dislocated workers and the training requirements of in-demand occupations to determine what additional capacity was needed;
- Forming strategic alliances to maximize training and education resources; and
- Leveraging available community resources to increase capacity and meet the needs of workers while in training.

Assessing Demand and Capacity: As the critical first steps in planning training and education services, these exemplary NEG grantees began by identifying the skill needs of workers and potential employers and then identified the education and training system's capacity to meet those needs.

[1] The main campus of Eastern Maine Community College is located in Bangor. The college also maintains three off-campus sites in Dover/Foxcroft, Ellsworth, and East Millinocket. Through enrollment in these centers, individuals can enroll in credit courses and, in some cases, complete most coursework toward an Associate's Degree program. Off-campus professional staff assist students with academic advising, financial aid, career counseling, placement testing, and course registration.

In North Carolina, the State Workforce Board staff worked closely with the Employment Security Commission and RCCC in developing the NEG proposal and implementation response for Pillowtex workers. These partners collected and analyzed demographic information on workers being laid off, identified potential demand for services, and compared that demand to existing training capacity. It was apparent that with approximately 3,900 dislocated workers in Rowan and Cabarrus Counties, the sheer volume of people seeking education and training was going to pose a major capacity challenge. The analysis further revealed that the average dislocated worker was forty-seven years old and that half did not have a high school diploma. Successful enrollment of these individuals in a community college setting would likely require basic education and computer literacy training. The identification of this gap between the needs of the dislocated worker population and the existing capabilities of the college resulted in the use of a portion of the NEG funds to support the temporary expansion of RCCC's capacity to serve Pillowtex workers. Early and intensive involvement of the college with the workforce development system underscored the importance of this partnership in serving dislocated workers effectively and efficiently.

Key Issues in Determining Community College Capacity

- ***Size of layoff:*** *Potential/anticipated volume of displaced workers*
- ***Demographic/educational profile:*** *Need for basic skills and computer training*
- ***Educational support:*** *Need for tutoring and/or educational counseling*
- ***Employer demand:*** *Unique or emerging training requirements*

"The first piece in this work was that we [State workforce development and the college] already had well established partnerships... Pillowtex gave the State a model to follow for dislocations. The State workforce development team goes out and invites the community college representative to come to the employee orientations now."

– Stephanie Deese, Director Workforce Initiatives, NC Community College

In Mississippi, MGCCC also worked with the Mississippi Department of Employment Security to identify employer demand for skilled workers as well as the college's capacity to respond to this demand. They held town hall meetings, engaged in continuous dialogue with local chambers of commerce and other business organizations, and conducted workforce development surveys in several target sectors where demand and growth had been identified. Healthcare and construction, in particular, emerged as important training areas with immediate demand for skilled workers. MGCCC responded by expanding its capacity to provide short-term, customized training programs focused on developing the skills identified by employers in these growth industries.

In Maine KRHEC was established by Eastern Maine Community College to provide educational opportunities to adults and non-traditional students, which included many Great Northern Paper workers. Following earlier layoffs at the company in 1986, KRHEC retrained these workers for new jobs. KRHEC also worked closely with the company over the years to develop many in-house training programs for incumbent workers. As a result, when the Great Northern Paper mills were shuttered in 2002, KRHEC had a long-standing relationship with the company and its workforce. The center was therefore a natural planning and implementation partner for the NEG.

KRHEC staff worked alongside NEG staff to assess the training needs of Great Northern Paper workers. This process revealed that many of the workers were older and had long work histories at the plant; they generally needed basic skill instruction and computer literacy training as an initial step in the retraining process. The assessment team also identified common employment goals among Great Northern Paper workers that guided training program development. For example, many dislocated Great Northern Paper workers were interested in nursing as a high demand, high-paying occupation. KRHEC staff recognized that an allied health curriculum offering short-term certification programs could serve as a pathway to an eventual Associate's Degree in nursing or other demand occupations in the sector. KRHEC and Eastern Maine Community College therefore provided Great Northern Paper workers with the opportunity for immediate access to allied healthcare occupations by developing a surgical technician and medical lab technician certification programs.

Forming Strategic Alliances to Maximize Resources: A successful response to major layoff events requires that NEG grantees quickly ramp up training and educational capacity to meet the demand for these services. Often this means forging strategic alliances between community colleges and training or business organizations to maximize the resources and core capabilities that each provides. These partnerships can yield additional space and equipment for training as well as curricula and strategies to develop needed competencies for individuals in training.

> *"Partnerships are integral and have to be maintained, strengthened, enhanced."*
> *– Anna Faye Kelley-Winders, MGCCC*

In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, the Twin Districts Workforce Area and MGCCC partnered with the Mississippi Construction Education Foundation (MCEF) to quickly develop training programs that would build the necessary skills for expanding job opportunities supporting the extensive rebuilding efforts being undertaken in the Gulf Coast. Within two months of the hurricane, the community college launched its first construction training program for workers displaced from their jobs as a result of this natural disaster. Several factors allowed for the rapid start-up and efficient deployment of resources needed to design these programs:

- *Eagerness to collaborate.* The parties saw clear alignment of purpose as well as shared benefits that would result from combining resources to mobilize the program.
- *Leveraging of shared resources.* The community college used an existing lab environment for construction education while MCEF contributed materials and funding for an instructor. Additionally, while the college was planning the larger construction program, MCEF offered workers an initial two-week Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) safety training certification, a valuable companion credential in the construction field.
- *Adaptation of instructional materials.* MGCCC, with the help of the National Center for Construction Education, was able to adapt the Contren Learning Series based on the MCEF credential requirements to create training manuals for use in this training program.[2]

Leveraging Community Resources: Partnerships with the community can support capacity-building through provision of classroom space, community volunteers, support services (via referral networks), and community activities that mitigate the impacts of dislocation.

In Maine, KRHEC partnered with the Maine Department of Labor, the Training Development Corporation (the One-Stop Career Center operator) and numerous community-based organizations to form a community transition team. The community cooperation built by this transition team helped to enhance the needed training capacity for Great Northern Paper workers. Local high schools donated space and community volunteers provided tutoring services to augment the existing capacity of KRHEC.

Similarly, at RCCC in North Carolina, community partnerships boosted the capacity of the college's facilities and provided wrap-around support. Local public schools and churches provided space for classes, and the chamber of commerce afforded a location for the college to set up small business counseling. The college had a referral relationship with the United Way and other social service agencies for supportive services. Community members also donated professional clothing to the college to provide Pillowtex workers with business attire for interviews with potential employers.

Designing and Scheduling Instruction

The partnerships between NEG grantees and the community colleges that are featured below illustrate how course offerings were adapted to meet dislocated workers'

[2] To meet the needs of the construction and maintenance industry in safety, training, and education, the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) developed a competency-based craft modular known as CONTREN Learning Series.

reemployment needs through flexible class schedules to promote rapid engagement, including condensed and intensive "semester-within-a-semester classes" as well as training on nights and weekends. In addition, short-term trainings and a variety of teaching modalities increased the accessibility of programming for dislocated workers.

Flexible Scheduling for Rapid Engagement: Two initial challenges for community colleges serving dislocated workers are:

- Incorporating the new students into the semester schedule; and
- Ensuring classes are held at convenient times for workers to attend.

In Maine, NEG resources allowed KRHEC to quickly assemble new classes needed to serve the influx of 1,100 students laid off from Great Northern Paper. For the first time in its history, KRHEC created a semester-within-a-semester format and also increased classes offered at nights and on weekends. One of the semester-within-a semester courses was a full-time Associate's Degree in nursing with classes starting in March and ending in May to allow students to move seamlessly into the summer session. Staff provided students with one-on-one support to help them cope with the intensity of the condensed schedule.

Reemployment Connection

- *Rapid start-up and engagement through flexible scheduling*
- *Retention and completion through short-term trainings and a variety of teaching modalities*

Short-Term Training: Short-term trainings and packaged curricula are a practical, time-sensitive solution to rapidly engage workers and maximize training dollars. Based on their assessment of labor market demand, occupational growth potential, and workers' educational levels, KRHEC staff in Maine received strong support from Eastern Maine Community College to create specialized short-term certificate training, including programs in allied health, welding, and construction. These programs were integral to removing barriers that prevented workers from entering each of these fields. For example, KRHEC's allied health curriculum that included surgical technician and medical lab technician certificate programs provided a pathway for those dislocated workers with a more limited educational background to their longer-term goal of earning a nursing credential. A short-term certificate welding program offered on nights and weekends provided an opportunity for dislocated workers to obtain in-demand skills without having to wait for openings in the traditional welding program at the college. Finally, many dislocated workers were also interested in construction as a career path. KRHEC developed a short-term construction/ heavy equipment certification program in partnership with Associated Contractors of Maine. Local businesses donated equipment to use in the program, and as part of the training, Great Northern Paper trainees participated in the construction of new dormitories for the college.

In North Carolina, RCCC staff responded to the increased training demand from laid off Pillowtex workers by offering short-term training courses for the first time. Prior to the Pillowtex closing, RCCC focused on serving young adults looking for a two-year degree or for advancement to a four-year college. Under this general model, RCCC did not provide traditional workforce development services and did not serve many working-age adults since so many went to work at Pillowtex straight from high school and remained employed for their whole career. The Pillowtex closing, however, necessitated that RCCC develop a more robust workforce development mission to facilitate access to new employment, and the NEG funds helped it develop and institutionalize this capacity. The college developed six- to nine-month short-term training programs to teach marketable skills in areas such as health-related occupations and light construction. In addition, the college offered an expanded set of course options such as customer service and computer usage that provided students with transferable skills that could be applied in multiple sectors.

> *"Don't reinvent the wheel during a crisis. Use creativity in leveraging your resources, and take a standardized model and run with it."*
> *– Anna Faye Kelley-Winders, MGCCC*

Varied Teaching Modalities: In order to maximize access to educational services, community colleges can increasingly rely on distance learning strategies that use computer and Web-based instructional technology. This teaching modality allows institutions to expand their reach to accommodate students who are spread across the region as well as to make use of instructors who may not be local. Thus KRHEC and the University of Maine college system, located in a very rural part of the State, offer four teaching methods for NEG participants to support remote access to training:

- Classroom instruction;
- Interactive television classes (ITV)[3];
- Online courses; and
- Videoconferencing.

All dislocated Great Northern Paper workers began their training in a classroom with an instructor so as to ensure students became comfortable with the return to school and felt supported. Instructors, however, were not always locally available to teach advanced courses and thus alternative teaching modalities were important for students' progression. Great Northern Paper workers were able to access interactive television at over 100 locations within the University of Maine system, including universities and local high schools around the State. Videoconferencing was another option that allowed students to remotely access instructors from KRHEC or other University of Maine locations. Finally, online learning

[3] ITV provides viewers with an opportunity to interact or affect content on the television (e.g., real-time voting by class members that is reflected on the screen).

options, which are especially critical in rural Maine, provided additional access to classes for dislocated workers using home or library computers. Distance learning options were particularly important for the Great Northern Paper workers who completed the Allied Health certificate programs and wanted to complete coursework toward a nursing degree since these courses were not available on-site at KRHEC. Online learning facilities were also heavily utilized by individuals enrolled in the NEG who needed computer literacy training and used the computer lab to complete self-paced instruction and practice software applications.

Supporting Dislocated Workers in a Community College Setting

Once dislocated workers are enrolled in a community college program, making sure they are retained in the program can be a challenge. Many of the workers dislocated by Hurricane Katrina in Mississippi and the mill closings in both Maine and North Carolina had never been to college. Attending community college represented a significant transition for people moving from jobs emphasizing physical skills to an environment focused on academic skills. In many cases, workers also suddenly faced instability in their lives as they tried to replace prior incomes and determine new directions. At the extreme end, such as the workers displaced by Hurricane Katrina, people were also coping with replacing homes and basic necessities.

NEG grantees and their community college partners supported dislocated workers in five critical ways that are discussed in the text that follows:

- Customizing outreach;
- Minimizing paperwork;
- Adapting enrollment deadlines;
- Emphasizing community; and
- Seeking and heeding feedback.

Customizing Outreach: Customized marketing and outreach efforts can effectively inform dislocated workers of existing educational providers that are striving to meet their unique needs. For instance, the recruitment strategy of the Rowan-Cabarrus Community College in North Carolina was based on previous meetings with dislocated workers. Because community college staff had been a part of the NEG planning process, they knew that their orientations for prospective students needed to accommodate non-English speakers, those who spoke English as a second language, and those with visual and/or hearing impairments. To meet these needs, RCCC:

- Used a bilingual staff member to translate for Spanish speakers;
- Hired a former Pillowtex employee of Thai descent to provide communication assistance for Southeast Asian workers; and

- Developed training brochures in multiple languages.

Additionally, as a follow-up to the initial Rapid Response meetings, college staff sent letters and made calls to dislocated workers informing them about available courses and their training benefits. As part of the outreach effort, RCCC's President also wrote a letter to all dislocated Pillowtex workers inviting them to attend the institution. This personal approach from a respected local figure proved highly effective with mill workers whose families had lived in the community for generations. This aggressive and diverse outreach process was essential since, as NEG staff described, some workers had lost phone service, others feared bill collectors and were reluctant to answer the phone, and some had moved because they were no longer able to afford rent.

> *"One lesson the college learned was in marketing. Our materials had been designed to attract students just graduating from high school. Pillowtex workers didn't look like those pictures. We created new brochures with pictures of Pillowtex workers and had them printed in Spanish and Laotian as well as English"*
> *– Jeanie Moore, RCCC*

Shared intake: For the Pillowtex dislocation, RCCC staff collaborated with the Employment Security Commission to create a streamlined operation with common documents that facilitated information sharing between the two organizations. By streamlining the intake and assessment process, the workforce and community college partners sought to reduce potential frustration and improve the likelihood that workers would take advantage of training services available to them.

Similarly, KRHEC in Maine collaborated with Training and Development Corporation (TDC), the WIA provider, to share information. KRHEC and TDC co-designed a consent form for the client to indicate permission for the two agencies to share information. This alleviated duplication during the intake and testing processes.

Adapting Enrollment Deadlines: Institutional flexibility can remove barriers and provide dislocated workers with an opportunity for enrolling in and completing training as quickly as possible. The Pillowtex plant closing in North Carolina occurred just as RCCC's enrollment deadline arrived. While NEG and Trade Adjustment Assistance training funds were not yet in place, RCCC encouraged workers to enroll in training and then arranged for reimbursement from the State. Another community college within the region also extended its enrollment deadline date. These actions demonstrated not only the willingness of the colleges to respond to a community crisis but also their commitment to forging a trusting partnership with the workforce development system. These partners collectively assumed the financial risk that allowed workers to quickly enroll in classes and pursue their path to new employment.

> *"Support retention and completion by demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness as a way of doing business."*
> *- George Pollitz, Twin Districts WIB*

Emphasizing Community: Community colleges also play an important role in creating space for dislocated workers to reunite and preserve the sense of community that existed in their workplace. RCCC in North Carolina has historically been a commuter school with interactions among students and teachers generally limited to the classroom. College staff, however, emphasized to their Pillowtex students that they had a community at the campus and made an effort to develop supportive relationships with them. Many students did homework together on campus and looked at being at the college as their work "shift."

KRHEC in Maine emphasized community building through both personal support and regular social activities. KRHEC staff worked to helped organize a group book buying and distribution time to ease workers' return to school. In addition, staff scheduled special social events once a month. KRHEC ultimately became a community space where workers felt at ease. Continuous engagement with the college also helped workers reestablish a sense of purpose with structure and routine.

Seeking and Heeding Feedback: Quality assurance processes ensure that colleges are responding to dislocations as effectively as possible. RCCC in North Carolina created an accountability program to support continuous quality improvement by gathering ongoing feedback from students, faculty, and employers. The college engaged the Center for Applied Research from Central Piedmont Community College to do focus groups and satisfaction surveys. Halfway through the NEG, focus groups were conducted with faculty and staff in order to determine what was working (or not) and what lessons could be learned moving forward. Satisfaction surveys were also conducted with

> *The fact is that the workers at the plant not only lost their jobs, they also lost their community. We tried to convey that... folks were getting something no one could take away from them"*
> *– Jeanie Moore, RCCC*

Supporting Dislocated Workers

- ***Customized outreach:*** Utilize marketing and outreach strategies to show knowledge of and consideration for the particular needs of disclosed workers.
- ***Minimizing paperwork:*** WIA and the community college streamline intake/assessment processes with a common client form to ensure clients do not duplicate intakes or assessments.
- ***Flexibility and adaptability in serving clients:*** Remove barriers for clients to participate in training and education by having flexible enrollment procedures and classroom locations.
- ***Emphasis on creating community:*** Encourage dislocated worker leaders to take charge in creating cohesion among affected workers at the college.
- ***Seeking and heeding feedback:*** Support continuous quality improvement by establishing needs assessment and quality assurance processes to retain students and show you care how they're being served.

Pillowtex students to determine whether their needs were being met and whether they were satisfied with the services they were receiving from the college. RCCC staff also conducted their own follow-up survey with employers of former Pillowtex workers to determine if employers were pleased with their level of preparation. Results showed that employers were satisfied, though lower satisfaction was evident in sectors such as advanced manufacturing that required continuing technical education on the job. Working with the JobLink career center, RCCC now provides occupational information that is more targeted to prospective enrollees. This effort has increased employer satisfaction and students' ability to make informed decisions about their career interests and job placements.

REEMPLOYMENT THROUGH NEG PROMISING PRACTICES

Effective **partnerships with community colleges** can help to maximize the reemployment of dislocated workers. The role of the community college is crucial in the planning and start-up as well as the program design and implementation phases of a project. During the planning and grant preparation phases, active collaboration with community colleges broadens the overall stakeholder base and increases the likelihood of an integrated NEG response. This creates a level of investment that ideally leads the community colleges to expand or customize their capacity to serve the non-traditional population of dislocated workers. The net result is a set of training and support services that are customized to meet students' and employer's needs. This more customized support ultimately leads to stronger completion, graduation, and placement success.

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