

Train-the-Trainer – Work-based Training Local Workforce Development Area 5

Overview describing the innovative practice

Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services, Inc. (CMJTS) is acknowledged as a subject-matter expert regarding on-the-job training (OJT) programs and, most recently, other work-based training models, including incumbent worker training (IWT) and registered apprenticeship (RA). CMJTS shares its best practices and discusses any issues or opportunities associated with work-based training that attendees wish to explore at train-the-trainer sessions. Sessions have been held at DEED's Joint Counselor training, at a CMJTS office, and, upon request, at another provider's location. CMJTS also shares its work-based learning forms and marketing materials to enable other workforce development providers to quickly implement their own work-based learning programs. Initial training has been provided to partner agency professionals by members of the CMJTS CORE (Community Outreach Employee) Team: Cathy Baumgartner, workforce development coordinator, Christina Pflueger, work-based training coordinator, and Cristy Thomas, placement specialist.

Jobseeker impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for jobseekers)

Work-based learning allows jobseekers to gain meaningful, paid employment in a timely manner. They "earn while they learn." Through OJT and RA, the trainee earns a portable, nationally recognized credential. Incumbent workers benefit by learning skills on the job that will help them advance up the career ladder. Incumbent worker training is also an employer strategy to avoid potential lay-offs due to employees lacking needed skills in the global economy. Employers help jobseekers gain skills by participating in the training process from the beginning by providing feedback and insight into the training plan. Employers monitor the ongoing training, which allows for immediate performance feedback to the employee and for connections to CMJTS retention resources.

Employer/Community impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for non-jobseekers)

When workforce development providers offer work-based learning activities such as OJT and IWT, it helps to address the need in central Minnesota for high-skilled workers in many occupations and industries. The spirit of the WIOA law is to develop programs that help match workers with jobs and provide training. When CMJTS delivers train-the-trainer opportunities to providers, it helps prepare Minnesota providers to do just that. When providers are well trained in the process, it ensures they may implement training plans that allow employees to get timely training relative to the unique needs of each business. Training plans developed for RA, document the most important skills and abilities and training needed by a person in that position, and, once developed and approved by the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry, are also available to train future employees.

Relationship building amongst workforce development providers improves the workforce development system as a whole, and when all work to train each other in their areas of expertise, all benefit. Examples of how we benefit as a whole include providing a forum to share business and jobseeker resources, to highlight employer engagement activities that satisfy WIOA performance measures, and to increase communication and collaboration between providers. The train-the-trainer method of sharing and gaining new insights and perspectives allows all stakeholders to strategically engage employers.

Identification of those involved, including collaborators

- Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council: presentation to staff and board of work-based learning initiatives
- DEED Joint Counselor Training: presentation regarding on-the-job training
- MWCA Jobseeker Committee: presentation of incumbent worker policy and process
- Anoka County, City of Duluth workforce development manager, Northwest Private Industry Council executive director: shared IWTP policy
- Southern Minnesota Staff Development Day: request to present at all-staff

Leveraging/alignment of outside resources

- WIOA funds
- Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry
- Local Workforce Development Areas
- DEED Joint Counselors Conference

Ideas for replication/lessons learned

- Build a knowledge of local industries or occupations through outreach with businesses in your area.
- Employers drive training plans and need to play a direct role in employee skill building. Employer involvement ensures greater opportunity for jobseeker success.
- Provide ongoing support of both the business and the worker throughout the entire duration of the training. Do not assume that “no news is good news.” Follow up and regular communication with both the employer and the employee are key to a successful placement.
- Collaborate with other workforce development providers to incorporate best practices and to fine-tune work-based training policies.
- Allow staff the time and flexibility needed to implement work-based training. CMJTS has a designated work-based learning coordinator who assists employment specialists and the CORE Team with placement.