WOTC-EDD Informational Seminar

The Sierra County Business and Career Network (BCN) was invited to a Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) Seminar in Chico on September 13, 2016. Kayte Puckett, the Resource Coordinator, attended the seminar and found the information that was provided will assist in furthering Alliance for Workforce Development Inc.’s goal to increase employment and assist local businesses. The WOTC for employers varies from $2400.00 to $9600.00 depending on which Eligibility Group the employee falls in.

The WOTC has two purposes:
- To promote the hiring of individuals who qualify as a member of a target group
- To provide a federal tax credit to employers who hire these individuals

Who is eligible?
- Veterans
- TANF Recipients
- SNAP (food stamp) Recipients
- Designated Community Residents
- Vocational Rehabilitation Referral
- Ex-Felons
- Supplemental Security Income Recipients
- Summer Youth Employees

It was announced that a new eligibility group had been added to the program on December 18, 2015, which is “Qualified Long-Term Unemployment.”
WOTC Continued -

The WOTC Program has been re-authorized to continue through December 31, 2019 and new online processing has been introduced, eWOTC (https://www.dolea.gov/wotc). All employers, and in particular smaller employers with 24 employees or less without agent/consultant representation, are also encouraged to submit new applications online. In addition, they have the option to mail the in the applications.

The Positive Aspects of the WOTC:

- Reduces an employer’s cost of doing business
- Requires little paperwork
- Applying for WOTC is simple
- WOTC can reduce an employer’s federal income tax liability by as much as $9,600 per employee hired
- No limit on the number of new employee the employer can hire to qualify for the tax credit, if the employee can qualify for the eligibility.
- Certain tax-exempt organizations can take advantage of WOTC by hiring eligible veterans and receiving a credit against the employer’s share of Social Security taxes.

The Employment Development Department is the WOTC certifying agency for California employers.
Bridges Out of Poverty Symposium

One of our partners, Sierra County Health and Human Services, invited the Business and Career Network (BCN) staff to a symposium, “Bridges out of Poverty” on July 12, 2016. Both Plumas and Sierra County BCN office staff attended the 6-hour seminar that submerged directly into the world of those who are in poverty touching on many topics that included the mental models of different classes, causes of poverty, hidden rules of economic classes, language barriers, and resources needed for their success.

The BCN staff found the training is perfect for people who work with individuals in various states of poverty, or people looking to gain a deeper connection with their community. The seminar was well received throughout the community attendees; it provided an opportunity for some much-needed cross-discussion and collaboration.

We reviewed poverty research, examined a theory of change, and analyzed poverty through the prism of the hidden rules of social class, resources, family structure, and language. Throughout the seminar we received specific strategies for improving outcomes for people living in poverty, but the focus of the seminar was to provide a broad overview of the concepts. Learn about established theories, strategies, and approaches. This seminar assists community groups, social service agencies, employers, and individuals to gain insight and strategies pertaining to this epidemic. Together the BCN staff learned how to see through the lens of economic class and provide concrete tools and strategies for a community to prevent, reduce, and alleviate poverty.
Symposium Continued -
Some interesting facts that we learned: A baby is born into poverty about every 32 seconds. More than 5.6 million children are in families living at half the poverty level or less. A family of four, living in extreme poverty, brings in $919 a month, which is $212 a week and breaks down to $30 a day.

Being educated on these strategies can help Professionals and Communities start implementing these concepts. We took time during the seminar to think about the changes that can be introduced to break down barriers that are sustaining poverty within an agency, organization, and community. We learned more about: language experience, cognitive issues, and barriers to change; how to use mental models to communicate effectively; how to assist clients from poverty to learn quickly, explore options, and develop future stories; skills of mediation; relationship building and mentoring.

The speaker was Jodi Pfarr of Minneapolis, MN. We enjoyed her engaging style, humor and approachability. This allowed her to effectively connect with the diverse audience. We highly anticipate the next “Bridges out of Poverty” Symposium.

Bridges out of Poverty seminars are provided through Proposition 63 Mental Health Services Act funds under Community Services and Supports Outreach and Engagement as a community academy.
The Power of the OJT

Michael Brooks was raised in the Loyalton area. Upon becoming a young adult and graduating, he moved away to try out life outside of this rural community. Now, at the age of 29, he came back home and he has been searching for fulltime employment. After not finding success in his job search, Michael learned about the Business and Career Network, (BCN) in Sierraville. A meeting was arranged to meet with staff and discuss his work history and employment goals. An in-depth assessment revealed that, as a youth, he helped his father in the family plumbing business. Michael enjoyed this work and decided it was worth looking for a job in the construction industry.

Dan Wentling of Dan Wentling General Contractors came in to the Business and Career Network office looking for workers. Mr. Wentling has been in General Contracting in Sierra County for over 30 years. In the last eight years he has had to reduce his company’s size due to economic conditions. Slowly, the work has been coming in, and he is now in need of workers.

Due to the fact that the county has shrunk in population, it has been hard to find qualified employees. After discussing with Mr. Wentling what he was looking for in an employee, the Resource Coordinator felt this was an excellent opportunity to discuss the On-the-Job Training Program (OJT) with him. Mr. Wentling was enthusiastic about the program and wanted to proceed. After referring Michael Brooks to apply for the position with Mr. Wentling, it was confirmed that Dan was interested in hiring Michael.

September 15, 2016 Michael Brooks began his career path as a Carpenter’s Apprentice with Dan Wentling General Contractors. Congratulations Michael and Dan.
AFWD America’s Job Center of California

Statistics

Sierra County Visitors

76

AFWD Business Services

Business Served 796

Service Provided 2596

Positions Filled 415

Program Services

Total enrollments

Adult 135

Dislocated Worker 99

Youth 116

Employed 46

Unemployment Rate

Butte 6.7% Nevada 4.9%

Lassen 6.1% Plumas 7.2%

Modoc 6.6% Sierra 6.7%

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