

**Metrovision Workforce Partnership
Community Asset Audit
Notes from Recruitment Focus Group
September 12, 2002**

- **Basic Problem:** From the perspective of area universities and community colleges, a qualified talent pool which wants to stay in Louisiana exists. We need to connect positions with this talent pool. Local employers are not familiar with how to recruit on college campuses. Universities can (and want to) work with local employers to assist in developing job descriptions, setting wage levels, and walking them through how to recruit college graduates to their companies.
- The existing gap is in entry on-the-job internship or professional experience (1-3 years) required by most employers. Temp agencies provide part of the solution, but there is no career pathway set for new graduates to transition into the mainstream professional labor pool in the New Orleans Region.
- **Most Critical Skill Shortages:**
 - Health Care
 - Legal Assistants
 - Basic Clerical Assistants
 - Entry-Level Tourism/Restaurant workers
 - Janitors, Waitstaff, Cooks
 - Scientists
 - Civil Engineers
 - Environmental Engineers
 - All skilled trades (plumbers, mechanics)
 - WIBs: NO jobs in technical areas
- Linkage between Universities and LTC (or other alternatives to college) should be strengthened to allow placement of students who are not suited for college instead of dropping out of college without any back-up institution to turn to. Many students as well as clients who go through the WIBS are unaware of income opportunities in skilled trades or else do not want to work as a tradesman due to stigmas attached to trades vs. professional employment. This is a major disconnect which effects college dropouts who often drift, without awareness of other options that exist. The system needs to educate them (and their parents) about opportunities in skilled trades and entry points to these opportunities to keep them from dropping out of career track.
- Businesses in the region need to be educated to think differently about internship and employment from a more long-term perspective (interns are

worth time & energy investment on the part of the company, because they can turn into productive employees)

- **Career training at the corporate level (major companies) is often done elsewhere—this leads workers to relocate, moving from the New Orleans region**
- **Companies need to develop a better understanding of skills vs. degree. In the case of liberal arts graduates, although their degree might be unrelated to the job, they have developed strong skills for management positions (problem solving, etc.)**
- **Gap: Understanding of specific skill needs and operational skills—students, educators and training providers need better information on skills which business & industry truly needs**
- **Colleges need to register with One-Stop Centers as training providers**
- **OJT program can help fill the experience gap (1-3 years experience required by most employers). Melissa Cardinale of the St. Bernard Job Center expressed that she has supplemented job candidates that have graduated from college without strong work experience, through contacting the company they are interviewing at and offering to supplement wages through an OJT contract. One Stops and LDOL offices must overcome negative connotations associated with their status as federal agencies.**
- **There is a perception that One-Stop Centers are only a source of laborers. This is not true, they can also supply candidates primarily for entry-level in professional, white-collar environments. However, it must be stressed that One Stops do not want to and cannot compete with private staffing companies as they are working with a different skill level and socio-economic sector. Instead, the stakeholders must work to form partnerships with One-Stop as a feeder system.**
- **LMI System:**
 - **NACE job preview: not much information**
 - **LOIS: Universities/One-Stops: data is incomplete, slanted to blue-collar**
 - **Manpower Economic Outlook Survey offered as a compliment to LMI**
 - **For a truly effective LMI System, up-to-date DATA is needed, not just resumes and positions:**
 - **Salary Data**
 - **Career Pathways – clearly outlined**
 - **Training or Academic Program Information (plugged into above)**
 - **Make it OF VALUE: Valid, Current Data and Information**
 - **Build relationship with employer**

- **Need ongoing dialog and action—this group should meet regularly and organize to act**
- **Universities—internships—need meaningful work experiences (builds basic skills)**
- **Many have experience, but no jobs/internships available (in Georgia's system, students can choose between 300 jobs)**
- **Small companies can't train interns (train companies to train!)**
- **Colleges need more resource programs:**
 - **Alumni Resume Database**
 - **Alumni Placement Services**
 - **Consortia to work with Colleges to match demand and skills**
- **Ask area employers to provide internships (utilize cluster committees)**