

Ageing Worker Initiative: Strategies for Regional Talent Development

Fox Valley Workforce Development Board, Inc.



Grantee: Fox Valley Workforce Development Board, Inc. (Wisconsin)

Industry Focus: Healthcare, Telecommunications, Manufacturing

Location of Grant Activities: Southwest Wisconsin

Key Partners: Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board; Fox Valley Technical Colleges; Blackhawk Technical College; Fox Valley Healthcare Alliance; ADVOCAP Inc.; Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resource (SCSEP grantee).

Grant Amount: \$1,000,000

Challenge: This program will serve the thirteen counties that make up the Fox Valley and Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Areas. Both areas have recently experienced significant increases in layoffs. Fox Valley layoffs nearly doubled from 2007 to 2008, and have continued to increase in 2009. In the Southwest area, the two largest cities had unemployment rates of 9% and 11.4% in December 2008, with more than 5600 layoffs in 2008.

Addressing the Challenge: The *Wisconsin Regional POWER (Paths to Older Worker Employment Readiness)* will employ a six-step plan to train older workers over the next three years. Step one includes an orientation and series of customized workshops. The workshops train participants in areas such as teamwork, communication, problem solving, and computer skills. Step two is comprehensive career counseling leading to one of the high-demand industries targeted by the project. After participants chose an industry, they will be placed into cohorts that will meet regularly to study, discuss the program, and network. Participants then complete an educational program and earn a credential. Step three includes job readiness training, including resume workshops, mock interviews, and sessions on techniques for re-entering the workforce. In step four, participants take their new skills and credentials and enter employment. Step five includes follow-up activities to monitor the success of the participants and the project. The final component, step six, is an innovative feature which will recruit successful program participants to become mentors to new participants. These recruits will give presentations at the initial orientation and continue in their industry cohort group to provide peer mentoring.

Projected Outcomes:

- 80% of participants will complete their education/training and receive a degree or certificate.
- 75% of participants will complete education/training activities and enter employment.
- At least 50% of participants will engage in mentoring in some way after successful completion of program.

