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Partnerships That Work: National Service and Business in Welfare to Work

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**Partnerships That Work:
National Service and Business in
Welfare to Work**

By Robert J. Keast, National Service Fellow

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INTRODUCTION

Welfare-to-work has come to the fore of the social policy debate in recent years. This especially has been the case since the enactment of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA). PRWORA significantly altered over 60 years of American welfare policy by creating a public assistance program with the aim of replacing public sector welfare checks with private sector paychecks. In order to reach this goal, time limits on receipt of assistance as well as stronger work requirements have become central in moving people from welfare and into work.

In recent years, the business community has been faced with a booming economy and tight labor markets. In response to this, businesses have begun to devise their own programs of employing welfare recipients in order to fill their unmet labor needs. Welfare recipients represent an untapped resource that can be utilized by business as they seek to expand their workforce in creative ways. The business community has been devising their own welfare to work programs even before the passage of PRWORA and positive results are being seen. Much of these efforts are being supported through a variety of both non-governmental and governmental organizations such as The Welfare to Work Partnership, US Chamber of Commerce, Small Business Association, and the Department of Labor.

The national service community, especially through the AmeriCorps*VISTA program, has begun to develop programs that meet the many challenges that have arisen as a result of welfare to work policies. While many welfare recipients are effectively using national service as a way off public assistance and into work, it is the through the development of service delivery programs within community based organizations where major impact is being seen. Types of programs that national service members have worked with the community to develop include: Micro-enterprise development, job training, mentoring, transportation, child care, Individual Development Accounts, and basic literacy programs, to name but only a few.

This report is the result of research conducted through the National Service Fellows Program at the Corporation for National Service. This Fellowship had several goals, including:

- To conduct research on welfare reform and its welfare to work policies;
- To conduct research on the role of business in employing welfare recipients, noting specific programmatic components;
- To conduct research on the role of national service in welfare to work;
- To determine if national and business are working together in welfare to work;
- To begin to develop a framework for relationships between business and the national service network, and to generate new ideas and ways of thinking.

This Fellowship and final report seeks to better link the efforts of both the national service network and the business community in welfare to work. Both have much to gain from building relationships and the time is right for this to happen. This is accomplished by:

- Presenting a comprehensive overview of welfare reform and welfare to work, and how both business and national service have responded (Part I- Welfare to Work 101).
- Presenting ideas on how these relationships can be better built (Part II- Relationships that Work).
- Providing a “National Service Welfare to Work Resource Guide” (Part III).

The proceeding only presents the “tip of the welfare to work iceberg” and interested readers should utilize the “National Service Welfare to Work Resource Guide” as an entry into more in-depth analysis. This report, however, will prepare anyone who wants a general knowledge of welfare to work issues and on how to better integrate business to make welfare to work successful.

PART I WELFARE TO WORK 101

Chapter 1

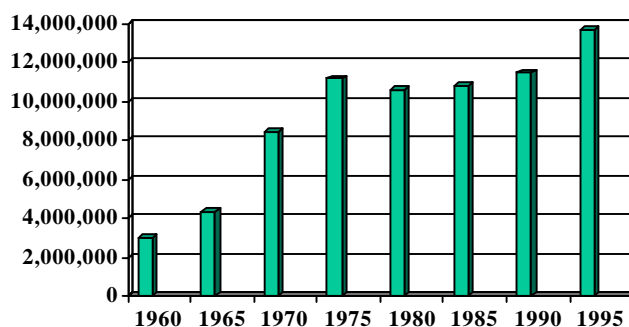
Understanding Welfare Reform & “Welfare-to-Work”

The reform of the US public assistance system, or “welfare”, has been a topic of debate for many years. Often seen as creating and supporting a “dependency culture” of families stuck in an “underclass,” where single parenthood, increased crime, and the breakdown of communities are the norms, many reforms have been initiated in the hopes of creating a system that valued self-sufficiency over government aid¹.

Welfare and Reform: A Brief History

Welfare was implemented during President Roosevelt’s sweeping social programs of the 1930s. The initial aim of the program was to give aid to widows with children. The program, however, was greatly expanded in the 1960s, especially through President Johnson’s War on Poverty and Great Society projects. Generally, women with children whose income fell below a certain level were entitled to assistance. This public assistance program, called Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), had 4,329,000 recipients in 1965 and by 1992 had increased to approximately 13,625,000². The following chart shows the increase in the welfare population over the years:

Number of People Claiming Assistance By Year



Source: US Department of Health and Human Services (1999)

By the 1980s, a growing sense that these programs did not help people escape poverty had firmly formed. Partly as a result, the Family Support Act of 1988 (FSA) was enacted and attempted to bring more welfare recipients into the labor market, thereby breaking the “cycle of dependency.” Altering Title IV of the Social Security Act of 1935 that set the rules for entitlement to benefits, all welfare recipients were required to be in a training or work program if they wanted to continue or begin to receive assistance.

¹ For discussion on “welfare dependency” and the “underclass” see Charles Murray’s (1984) *Losing Ground*

² US Department of Health and Human Services, <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/news/stats/6097rf.htm>

While significant in its insistence on participation, many felt that enough was still not being done. As a result, the early Clinton Administration began to grant waivers to states that wanted to “experiment” with their welfare systems. As a campaign pledge, President Clinton promised to “end welfare as we know it” and this was one of his first steps in accomplishing this. More than not, these experiments used the “work-first” model, or a model where work, above training and education, is seen as primary and rapid attachment to the labor market necessary. In other words, the main focus of these systems was to rapidly move people from “**welfare**” and into “**work**.”

Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996

Using the experiments of the states as “best practices,” as well as lessons learned from the FSA experience, major federal welfare reform legislation was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Clinton in the summer of 1996. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) ended welfare as we knew it by³:

- ✘ Eliminating the federal entitlement to welfare and its Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program and replacing it with the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) block-grant program;
- ✘ Placing time limits on recipients by requiring them to be in “work or work activities” within 24 months (2 years).⁴ States, however, can set lower time limits;
- ✘ Placing a 60-month (5 years) lifetime cap on receipt of aid. After this time, a person can never receive TANF. States are free to set a lower cap and can give assistance to individuals exceeding their 60 month cap if they use their own funds;
- ✘ Placing requirements on states to have certain percentages of its welfare caseloads in work activities by certain target dates. These include:

³ this section heavily relied on very helpful material provided on the web site of the National Conference of State Legislators- <http://www.ncsl.org>, as well as a paper entitled “Welfare Reform and National and Community Service,” by a former AmeriCorps*VISTA.

⁴PRWORA defines ‘work activities’ as:“(1) unsubsidised employment; (2) subsidised private sector employment; (3) subsidised public sector employment; (4) work experience . . . if sufficient private sector employment is not available; (5) on-the-job training; (6) job search and job readiness assistance; (7) community service programmes; (8) vocational educational training (not to exceed 12 months with respect to any individual); (9) job skills training directly related to employment; (10) education directly related to employment, in the case of a recipient who has not received a high school diploma or a certificate of high school equivalency; (11) satisfactory attendance at secondary school or in a course of study leading to a certificate of general equivalence, in the case of a recipient who has not completed secondary school or received such a certificate; and (12) the provision of child care services to an individual who is participating in a community service programme” (US PL No. 104-193, 1996, p.2133).

Year	%
1998	30%
1999	35%
2000	40%
2001	45%
2002	50%

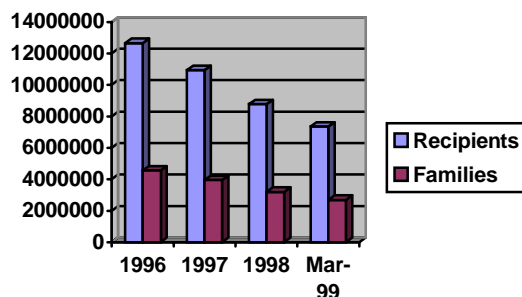
- ☒ Eliminating the automatic link between Medicaid and welfare eligibility;
- ☒ Strictly limiting, or completely barring, benefits to legal immigrants. However, much of this was restored in 1997 legislation;
- ☒ Requiring single people with no dependents between the ages of 18 and 50 to work at least an average of 20 hours per week in order to receive food stamps. These individuals can only receive food stamps for 3 months in a 36 month period [check];
- ☒ Requiring that teen parents must take part in educational activities and allowing states to require that they live at home or with an adult;
- ☒ Barring anyone who has been convicted of drug felony from receiving benefits;
- ☒ Either eliminating or reducing benefits if the recipient does not cooperate with establishing paternity.

Caseload Declines

Since PRWORA was enacted, welfare caseloads have plummeted almost in half. In the first year after PRWORA, all states, with the exception of Hawaii, saw decreases in their welfare numbers. Presently, all states have seen reductions with a national average of 40%, or 4,906,000 fewer individuals on welfare⁵.

⁵ US Department of Health and Human Services, <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/news/stats>

Number of Recipients and Families on TANF since enactment of 1996 Welfare Reform law



Source: US Department of Health and Human Services (1999)

Different states, however, have had varying results. Idaho, for example, has seen an 87% decrease in its welfare numbers since PRWORA, while Rhode Island has only seen a 5% drop. California and New York, the two states with the highest number of people claiming assistance, have seen drops of 30% and 28% respectively.

But Are People Working?

Politicians and other supporters of welfare reform often point to caseload decline as THE indicator that welfare reform is a success. However, if people are not actually moving FROM welfare and INTO work, then caseload decline is meaningless.

Some studies are showing that many people are moving from welfare and into work. A recent study by Pamela Loprest of the Urban Institute (1999), for example, claims that the most common reason for leaving welfare IS work—almost 70% of the “welfare leavers” she interviewed (Other reasons for leaving include: administrative/hassle- 10%; no need/not interested- 7%; change in family situation- 6%; income from other source- 5%; moved to new county/state- 4%; other- 6%).

About two-thirds of the jobs welfare leavers were employed in included service, sales, or clerical/administration occupations, with about three-quarters in service or trade industries. As for earnings, Loprest argues that those transitioning off welfare are making \$6.61 an hour on average.

Sanctions

Some critics of welfare reform are claiming that much of the decline is due to sanctions, or punitive measures that push people off of the rolls for lack of compliance to TANF and state rules. For example, 27% of Florida’s closed caseloads in the second half of 1997 were due to people not complying with regulations⁶.

⁶ Vobejda, B and Havemann, J (1998) ‘Sanctions: A Force Behind Falling Welfare Rolls’ *Washington Post* 25 March 1998

In this system of more stringent work requirements and times limits, sanctions have a role to play. It is not clear, however, what is happening to these individuals who are dismissed from the rolls in this manner. States have different regulations but many allow recipients to come back on the rolls again after a specified time. It has also been speculated that recipients are probably relying more on their families and friends as a means of support. However, it is not known for certain. When recipients are denied TANF because of non-compliance, they can often disappear. Depending on the state and its welfare administration, they can be completely thrown out of the system with no follow-up of any kind. It is not until they re-apply that their case is re-opened. Where they are and how they are supporting themselves is often up to speculation.

Challenges and the Unfinished Business of Welfare Reform

While there are many successes as a result of welfare reform, there also exist many challenges in the transition from welfare to work. While there are no doubt more, the following are key:

✘ *Are there jobs and do they pay enough?*

One of the biggest concerns regarding moving people from welfare and into private sector employment is whether there are really jobs there, and if so, whether they pay enough to lift people out of poverty.

As many industries are reporting job shortages, there is still concern that “job gaps” exist. A survey by the US Conference of Mayors’ Task Force on Welfare Reform Implementation (1998) stated that 92% of the cities surveyed said that there were not enough low-skilled jobs to meet the supply of welfare recipients expected to come off the rolls. While all cities said employers were willing to hire welfare recipients, there was nonetheless a substantial job gap. Other local surveys support this view and it remains a vital issue in transitioning welfare recipients into work. For example, a study released by the California Budget Project states that:

“. . . analysis suggests that despite the vibrancy of California’s recent recovery, the number of job seekers significantly outstrips the number of new jobs. Statewide, job seekers exceed the number of projected new jobs on an annual basis . . . Job seekers exceed available jobs in every California county except Alpine County. Competition will be particularly keen in those California communities where the unemployment rate remains higher than the state average and welfare rolls are also high. In 24 California counties, ten or more job seekers compete for every projected new job in the next year, not counting high school and college graduates and new arrivals to the state. In an additional 23 counties, between five and nine job seekers will

compete for every new job. A number of these counties have high seasonal unemployment rates, declining employment in the most recent year, or higher than average rates of welfare reciprocity” (p. 3).

While many dispute the findings of job gap studies (see Mead, 1992), others are saying that those who do go into work will more than likely earn low wages that will not lift them out of poverty (see Blank, 1995 and Burtless, 1995). According to Blank (1995):

“. . . changes in the U.S. labor market are not leading to the elimination of jobs for less-skilled workers, but to the reconfiguration of those jobs into lower-paid positions that provide fewer opportunities for advancement into higher-wage positions. The good news is that less-skilled persons can still find work. The bad news is that their long-term earnings opportunities have eroded, and there is little reason to believe that these changes will be reversed in the near future” (p. 63).

Transportation, childcare, and health care

As more welfare-to-work programs are initiated, problems relating to transportation, childcare, and health care are being seen. Since much of the employment generation in the US is occurring outside the city-centers and in the suburbs, transportation is becoming an important issue for those moving from welfare and into work. In a study by Ong and Blumenburg (1998), it was found that many welfare recipients lived in “job-poor” areas and therefore had to commute to other communities for jobs that were suitable for them. They found that unlike other workers, welfare recipients who have to commute long distances earn less than those who do not. This negative relationship between wages and commuting is partly due to financial costs of travel as well as opportunity costs.

Another major concern is childcare. As women are pushed into the workforce, childcare becomes increasingly important. While childcare is a contentious issue for all working families regardless of income level, those on the lowest rung of the income ladder will surely fare worse if adequate childcare cannot be provided. The same United States Conference of Mayor’s survey mentioned above, for example, stated that 71% of the cities surveyed said that state re-imbursments did not cover the average cost of childcare in a day facility, and 62% said it did not cover home-based care. Some firms and intermediary organizations provide childcare services but it still remains a concern.

Health care is also a major concern for those transitioning off of public assistance to work. Again, according to the United States Conference of Mayor’s survey, 27% of low skilled jobs that welfare recipients would take do not have health care. Without health care as an occupational benefit, recipients could spend a sizable proportion of their earnings to acquire it. Many families still qualify for Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) after leaving welfare. However, there

has been some evidence that once a family is “out of the system” they either do not know about the many benefits still available to them or feel like they do not want to be bothered with the system anymore.

1 FYI- Transitional Benefits

Many welfare recipients transitioning off welfare and into work STILL qualify for a number of benefits including food stamps, Medicaid, Children Health Insurance Program (CHIPs), to name but a few. For more information, see the “Welfare to Work Resource Guide” in this report.

Characteristics of the Welfare Population

What does the welfare population look like? There are many stereotypes, but what is the reality?

Whatever the stereotypes, the welfare population has many and varied characteristics. Presently, there are 7.3 million adults receiving welfare (2.6 million families)⁷. According to the Washington-based non-profit, non-partisan research organization the Urban Institute, the “typical” welfare recipient is a single mother with 2 children. She is very likely to live in an urban area as 44% of all recipients live in inner city areas. She could be from a variety of ethnic backgrounds as 37% are African-American, 36% are Caucasian and 21% are Hispanic. She would most likely have recent work experience as 75% have worked in the last year. She would probably have a high school diploma or its equivalent as 58% of all welfare recipients have at least this.

As for time on welfare and welfare dependency, LaDonna Pavetti (1996), expert on the US welfare population, stated in hearings before the House of Representatives’ Committee on Ways and Means’ Subcommittee on Human Resources on welfare reform, that there are basically 2 categories that people fall into:

“In sum, the majority of families who *ever* turn to the welfare system for support will use it for relatively short periods of time, but the majority of families receiving assistance *at any given point in time* (i.e., the current caseload) will eventually receive welfare for relatively long periods of time. While these statements often seem contradictory, both are accurate and both are necessary to present a complete picture of time on welfare” (p.2).

According to Pavetti’s testimony, about 50% leave the rolls within a year, 70% within 2 years, and by 5 years almost 90% have left. However, many return. Within a year, 45% return to the rolls and 70% do so within 5 years. Pavetti also notes that of those currently on the rolls, 90% will eventually be receiving benefits for more than 24 months and 76% will be on welfare for more than five years. The distinction is that many come on the rolls and

⁷ US Department of Health and Human Services, <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/news/stats>

leave in a relatively short amount of time, some return, but if one was to look at the welfare population today, many of them have been on welfare for some time. In the words of Pavetti, “the welfare system is an extremely dynamic system” (p. 1).

Chapter 2

“Doing Their Part:” The Employer’s Role in Welfare to Work

“And I’d like to say especially to every employer in our country who ever criticized the old welfare system, you can’t blame that old system anymore, we have torn it down. Now do your part. Give someone on welfare the chance to go to work.”

—President Clinton, 1997 State of the Union Address

“Welfare to work is not charity or philanthropy. Businesses are instituting welfare to work programs because they have real hiring needs, and they are sticking to these programs because they work.”

—Eli Segal, President and CEO, The Welfare to Work Partnership

For welfare reform to be a success, people coming off the welfare rolls must be placed into lasting and gainful employment and generally in the private sector. Since the enactment of PRWORA, employers across the nation have favorably responded to President Clinton’s call to “do their part” by developing programs and initiatives that help transition people off welfare and into work.

Employer-Led Welfare to Work Efforts

PRWORA has brought business-led welfare to work programs to the fore. While many companies throughout the country were devising their own programs pre-PRWORA, the imposition of time limits on public assistance have forced both the federal and state governments to try to maximize the successes and examples of the initial programs. Through these employer-led programs, federal and state governments, as well as groups like The Welfare to Work Partnership, National Alliance for Business, and the US Chamber of Commerce and its local branches, to name but a few, have marketed and learned from the experiences of previous business-led welfare to work efforts.

Business-led programs vary greatly reflecting the differing needs, situations, resources, and intentions of the private sector, as well as regional demographics and issues such as the local labor supply and characteristics of the welfare population. However, some general trends can be illuminated.

“In-House” or “Multi-Party” Hiring Strategies

Through research of business welfare to work programs, two types of strategies stand out: “In-house” or “Multi-Party.” While a certain initiative could be composed of each, by identifying these two types of strategies we can begin to see in an organized way how businesses hire people from the welfare rolls.

The “**IN-HOUSE MODEL**” is characterized by encompassing all aspects of the welfare to work program within an organization. Recruitment, training, support, and retention services are all provided “in-house.” While interactions may indeed transpire between the business and the public sector and/or non-profits that work closely with the welfare population to identify suitable participants, almost all aspects of the welfare to work program are located in the existing framework of the firm.

One example of the In-house Model is Marriott International’s ‘Pathways to Independence’ project. Marriott, a food and hotel service organization with over 190,000 employees in the US, established its program in 1990. Located in 13 communities nation-wide, Pathways selects participants from non-profits and other community groups that they contract with. Once selected and placed, participants attend a 6-week training course. This course consists of 60 hours of soft skills training and 120 hours of job related training in the hospitality industry. If demanded at a specific Pathways site, other supportive education will be given, including GED and English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. After successful completion of the course, participants are then hired as full-time staff. In order to help retain their new employees, Marriott has set up an “Associate Resource Line” where 12 social workers using 16 languages can assist employees with problems that might arise. This line is not exclusively for those on the Pathways program but it nonetheless assists them in their transition to work.

According to The Welfare to Work Partnership’s *Blueprint for Business: Reaching a New Workforce*, the In-House Model is advantageous because:

- It allows firms to have complete control over training and work readiness programming;
- It allows firms to utilize subsidies from federal and state governments for training and hiring welfare recipients;
- It allows employees who go through the program to have easier contact with trainers post-program “who can offer a ready support system” (p. 12).

There are, of course, disadvantages from the employer’s perspective. These include more commitment in terms of funding, current employee time, and overall support from the organization. Also, all risks are concentrated in the organization so if problems arise, flexibility might not be as feasible as desired.

Most business-led welfare-to-work programs follow the “**MULTI-PARTY MODEL.**” This model is characterized by a collaborative approach to employing those from the welfare rolls. This collaboration can extend to all facets of the process including recruitment, basic skills training, work specific training, mentoring, retention services, and counseling, to name but a few.

Businesses use this model because it is a great way to make a commitment to hire welfare recipients without creating an in-house program that generally deals with all aspects of the hiring, training, and retention process. In this Multi-party Model, many different organizations are involved, all with a special interest in moving people from welfare to work. Risks are pooled and all do a part to ensure a quality transition.

The Multi-party Model generally includes a partnership between the business who wishes to hire welfare recipients and either a non-profit, community-based organization or for-profit intermediary organization and/or the public sector who locates and trains welfare recipients. This partnership can take different forms and occurs at different levels but the point is that companies work in unison with other organizations that aim to move welfare recipients into the workforce. In this venture, business' job is to hire while the other organizations are to supply qualified participants.

From the perspective of many businesses, working in concert with many different organizations makes good business sense. Creating an in-house program, while ambitious, can be quite costly. The Multi-party Model enables companies, of whatever size, to work with an organization whose prime responsibility is to make its clients more employable.

Role of Service Providers/Intermediaries

Service providers, or intermediaries or brokers, are essential to the Multi-party Model. Either private non-profit or for-profit, these organizations work with those from disadvantaged backgrounds in order to prepare them for the world of work. Giving the soft skills training in areas such as professional demeanor and dress, self-esteem, dealing with family issues and emergencies, attitude, and the like, the aim of these intermediaries is to place and individuals into lasting employment.

One example of an intermediary is the for-profit organization America Works. Based in New York City but with branches in Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Indianapolis, America Works has placed over 15,000 welfare recipients in private sector employment in its eleven years of existence.¹ Through referrals from the local welfare offices, America Works accepts participants on a first-come, first-served basis, with stringent attendance rules. Once accepted, participants go through a six-week training of the soft skills where a personal counseling and assistance component is provided to help with issues relating to the family, childcare, transportation, and benefits. According to Nye (1996), who conducted a study of the effectiveness of the America Works program, “[t]he idea is to remove all barriers which would prevent them from starting work” (p. 14).

After training, participants are then placed into positions in the private sector for a four-month trial period. At the end of this period the employer can decide whether or not to keep the participant on. During this trial period, America Works pays the participant's salary, that is set at the minimum wage.

America Works is a performance-based organization and receives funds for every successful candidate it places and keeps in employment. Therefore, America Works only gets paid if its participants do. Most of the funding for America Works comes from the government who contracts to them. Employers do not pay at all.

America Works claims that 68% of their participants are hired full time by employers and that 90% of these individuals are still employed one year later. This success, however, is not unique to America Works. Rather, many intermediaries, both private and non-profit, are

¹ Nye, R (1996) *Welfare-to-Work: The America Works Experience* London: The Social Market Foundation

administering similar programs that attempt to enhance the employability of the welfare population and are doing so with success. Major organizations such as Goodwill Industries International, Inc. and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and its local branches, as well as various community based organizations, have become involved, acting as a bridge between the public and private sectors. For example, the Metropolitan Tulsa Chamber of Commerce in Tulsa, Oklahoma, set up the Industrial Exchange, Inc. (IndEx) program. IndEx provides training and education, and facilitates job placement in the private sector. Participants spend 4 hours a day in education activities such as GED preparation, computers, and basic and soft skills. They then spend another 4 hours a day working on manufacturing and packaging goods that have been contracted from local firms. During the program, participants are not paid but continue to receive TANF. So, IndEx seeks to integrate training and practical work experience.

After a participant completes the program (there is no official time limit that participants must spend in the program but IndEx staff state that the average is about 6 months), they can be placed into private sector employment. This placement is on a temporary basis for 60 to 90 days, after which an employer can decide to keep the participant on. IndEx claims to have a 90% success rate of placing participants into permanent, paid positions².

Employers find service providers increasingly attractive as they reduce the risk of taking an employee on and frequently reduce recruitment costs as well as raise retention rates. Many service providers act as an “employer of record” thereby giving them real work experience and references that employers can utilize in making a decision to hire a certain participant. The intermediary/multi-party approach offers employers a chance to frequently hire work ready employees while being able to easily adjust their commitment level.

The Role of the Public Sector

Employers who are looking to hire can also partner with the public sector in order to obtain employees who are on welfare. Programs through the US Department of Labor (USDOL), state welfare offices, and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) are all possible points where eligible workers can be sought. The public sector training programs generally focus on the same employability issues as intermediaries. Soft skills training and help with problems such as childcare, transportation and health care are frequently given. While some states are better than others at training and placing their welfare population in private sector employment, the public sector is a possible partner in helping business to hire an appropriate workforce.

What Kind of Businesses Are Involved?

The majority of highlighted business-led welfare to work programs in the media tends to be from large corporations. In reality, however, most job creation in the US is in small and

² Brown, A et al. (1998) *Business Partnerships: How to Involve Employers in Welfare Reform* New York: MDRC and Buck, M L (1997) *Tulsa's IndEx Program: A Business-Led Initiative for Welfare Reform and Economic Development* New York: MDRC

medium size businesses. In fact, in the mid-1990s, almost over 75% of all new jobs created were small businesses³.

In welfare to work, large corporations have taken a lead in many respects. For example, all 5 founding members of The Welfare to Work Partnership⁴—the national, independent, nonpartisan effort of the business community to help move people on public assistance to jobs in the private sector—are large multi-national corporations. Many of the early “best practices” are from innovative corporate initiatives.

By looking at The Welfare to Work Partnership’s membership base, however, we begin to see that the majority of those involved in welfare to work are small business. For example:

- 78% of The Partnership’s Business Partners have fewer than 250 employees;
- 45% of The Partnership’s Business Partners have fewer than 25 employees.

This role of small business is important to note as their needs for technical assistance varies greatly from large corporations. Most are without large, established human resource departments and need a system that is seamless as possible. Also, when community groups conduct business outreach, they should begin to think more about this often untapped source of jobs.

Why is Business Involved in Welfare to Work?

Businesses are conducting welfare to work programs for a variety of reasons. One major reason for some is that they wish to invest in their own communities. Business in the US has a long history of being involved in the community and for devising solutions to social problems. Therefore, their extension into welfare to work is conceptually not far fetched. Businesses have seen the benefits of community investment. These benefits often extend beyond pure altruism to things such as better employee and customer bases and safer working environments. According Felice D. Perlmutter, Professor of Social Administration at Temple University, and author of a book chronicling a business-led welfare to work program:

“All businesses are directly affected by the world in which they operate; their ultimate well-being is affected by their community’s well-being. If social problems are severe enough in a particular setting, the corporation will find that it cannot function. Specifically, is there a workforce available? Are there customers for the products? Is the community a safe place to live and work.”⁵

³ US Small Business Administration, <http://www.sba.gov>

⁴ The founding members of The Welfare to Work Partnership are Burger King, Monsanto, United Airlines, United Parcel Service, and Sprint.

⁵ See F. D. Perlmutter’s book, *From Welfare to Work: Corporate Initiatives and Welfare Reform* p. 20.

The most important reason, however, why business has begun to get involved in welfare to work is because of a robust economy that has helped create a tight labor market, where there are many job openings with fewer and fewer qualified applicants. With a 4.2% (September 1999) unemployment rate and an economy that is creating many jobs each year, businesses are finding it difficult to recruit for many positions at many different skills levels. This specific need of the business community has been marketed by organizations like The Partnership. According to The Partnership's *Blueprint for Business*, business "can leverage these real social policy changes to maximize potential for their companies. This can be a positive net effect on the bottom line. It just takes a modest level of discovery, planning, and action."⁶ For many businesses, welfare to work has proven to be a smart solution to their hiring needs.

1 Tax Credits

The federal government, as well as some states, provide financial incentives to employers to hire welfare recipients. For more information of federal tax credits (there are 2 of them: the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) and the Welfare to Work Tax Credit) go to the Department of Labor web page at <http://www.doleta.gov> and click on "Welfare to Work," then look for tax credit information. For more on state programs, go to the Welfare Information Network web page at <http://www.welfareinfo.org> and scroll down to the state links.

What Businesses Look for in An Employee

There are a few studies that illuminate what businesses are looking for in employees. This can be helpful as community workers begin to develop welfare to work programs that are responsive to the needs of welfare recipients and businesses alike.

In a study by researchers Moss and Tilly (1995), employers indicated that the so-called "soft skills" are the most important. Moss and Tilly have identified 2 clusters of soft skills:

"The first, interaction, has to do with ability to interact with customers, and co-workers. This cluster includes friendliness, teamwork, ability to fit in, spoken communication skills, and appearance and attire. A second cluster we call motivation, taking in characteristics such as enthusiasm, positive work attitude, commitment, dependability, and willingness to learn."

Any employee, whether recruited from the welfare rolls or not, is expected to possess these soft skills. When an employer does find an employee with them, he or she is invaluable to the firm, as these skills are all-important from an employer's perspective.

⁶ See The Partnership's *Blueprint for Business* p. 4.

Similarly, in a study from the Urban Institute's Assessing the New Federalism project (1998), researchers claim that:

“Employers indicate that the limited education and job training that many welfare recipients bring to the labor market may be compensated for by positive attitudes, reliability, and motivation. At least in today's tight labor markets, many employers are willing, and in some cases even eager, to hire people leaving public assistance *if* they present an array of positive personal characteristics that companies value highly.”⁷

Many companies conduct on the job and industry specific training themselves, and find soft skills to be the key to a valuable employee. While many are afraid that stereotypes regarding welfare recipients will prevail and prevent their hiring, the preceding indicates that this is not so.

1 Not just jobs...

It is important to note that business is not just providing jobs in welfare to work...they are also providing capital for Individual Development Account (IDA) and Micro-enterprise development programs. For more information on IDAs and/or Micro-enterprise development and welfare to work, see Appendix B for a list of some organizations doing this with AmeriCorps*VISTA.

⁷ See <http://www.urban.org>

More Business Examples...

Kirkwood Insurance Service Company, Inc. St. Louis, MO

Kirkwood Insurance Service Company, Inc. employs 60 individuals and has hired and retained 3 welfare recipients, some with mental disabilities. Partnering with the Independence Center, an employment training program, Kirkwood insurance has found welfare to work to be a smart solution to their hiring needs in a city with a very tight labor market. The program at the Center provides counseling and a trial employment period in "low-stress" positions and is a stable broker between the worlds of welfare and work. Kirkwood Insurance President Rick Kalina was so impressed by the partnership with the Independence Center that he is now on their board.

Legal Employment Action Program (LEAP) San Francisco, CA

The Legal Employment Action Program (LEAP) is an innovative welfare to work project unprecedented in the legal community. This nationally recognized program unites San Francisco Works, the Bar Association of San Francisco's Volunteer Legal Services Program, City College of San Francisco and over 30 local law firms to help individuals on welfare gain and retain full-time employment in the legal services field. LEAP is distinguished among welfare to work programs by its extraordinary level of employer involvement, its customized hard skills training, an intensive life skills component, and a focus on mentoring, retention support and career advancement services.

For more information on these programs, contact The Welfare to Work Partnership at 202-955-3005 ext. 325. Also check out their web site at <http://www.welfaretowork.org> and click on "Success Stories."

CHAPTER 3

“GETTING THINGS DONE:” NATIONAL SERVICE AND WELFARE TO WORK

“Service will help solve the nation’s unmet education, public safety, environmental, and other human needs.”
—Goal One, Corporation for National Service Strategic Plan

“I will get things done for America...”
—from the AmeriCorps Pledge

Goal One of the Corporation for National Service¹’s (the Corporation) *Strategic Plan* is to have national service “help solve the nation’s unmet education, public safety, environmental, and other human needs.” No where is this goal more relevant than in welfare to work. As discussed in a previous section, there are many challenges associated with welfare reform and its welfare to work policies. Many of these challenges are not being addressed in communities and there is need for assistance to ensure that an effective transition from public assistance and into employment is guaranteed. The power and role of national service in this arena cannot be understated.

Understanding this, the Corporation at the national level has made welfare to work one of its programming priority areas, meaning that all programs should seriously think of how to integrate this issue into their portfolios. Every stream of service can have a role to play, each utilizing the unique features of its program.

The one stream of service that is especially well suited to deal with welfare to work—and has taken the lead in many respects—is AmeriCorps*VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America). AmeriCorps*VISTA members serve in low-income communities for at least one year, developing programs that address one of the following programming emphasis areas:

- ✪ Education;
- ✪ Housing/homelessness;
- ✪ Community/economic development;
- ✪ Health and nutrition;

¹ Created in 1993, the Corporation for National Service oversees three national service initiatives—AmeriCorps, which includes AmeriCorps*VISTA, AmeriCorps*National Civilian Community Corps, and hundreds of local and national non-profits; Learn and Serve America, which provides models and assistance to help teachers integrate service and learning from kindergarten through college; and the National Senior Service Corps, which includes the Foster Grandparent Program, the Senior Companion Program, and the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP).

- ✪ Services for individuals with special needs;
- ✪ Public safety;
- ✪ And the environment.

AmeriCorps*VISTAs are placed in an array of community based organizations to help them build organizational capacity to better deal with social various ills. The goal of AmeriCorps*VISTA is empowerment—once the project is closed (generally AmeriCorps*VISTA projects are on a 3 year implementation plan) it becomes institutionalized and operates without AmeriCorps*VISTA participation, improving the community at the local level for years to come.

VISTA² members have been developing community based anti-poverty programs for over 30 years and the success is well documented. For example, in 1997, according to a study conducted by the independent research organization Westat, 3,368 AmeriCorps*VISTAs in 700 projects:

- ✪ raised an additional \$84 million dollars for the organizations they were based in (\$34 million in cash and \$45 million in-kind with \$24,000 per AmeriCorps*VISTA);
- ✪ and generated over 140,500 volunteers (42 per AmeriCorps*VISTA).

In terms of welfare to work type activities:

- ✪ 1,400 businesses agreed to hire 2,600 unemployed individuals;
- ✪ 770 businesses were created or expanded;
- ✪ 430 individuals and businesses obtained capital for development;
- ✪ and 3,700 individuals were placed into employment at an average wage of \$6.77.

In general, Westat estimates that over 5.5 million people benefited from AmeriCorps*VISTA service.

These impressive achievements are especially noteworthy given the need of community based organizations to expand programming to meet the challenges of moving large numbers of individuals off welfare and into work. Community based organizations can greatly benefit from AmeriCorps*VISTA service by developing a myriad of programs. This need of community based organizations definitely renders AmeriCorps*VISTA as a very important piece of the welfare reform puzzle.

² VISTA became part of AmeriCorps in 1993 as a result federal legislation that created the Corporation for National Service.

Some of the various ways (but by no means the only ways) that AmeriCorps*VISTA projects can—and are already doing so in many communities—contribute to welfare to work include:

Conducting employer outreach	Creating community task forces
Establishing job training programs	Establishing Self-sufficiency programs
Developing clothes closets	Developing mentoring initiatives
Creating transportation networks	Developing child care programs, including collaborative and/or micro-businesses
Developing programs that address health care needs	General outreach and PR
Fundraising/grant writing	Developing Individual Development Accounts programs
Micro-enterprise Development	Developing job search initiatives
Establishing career planning programs	Establishing programs that deal with a multitude of housing issues
Developing mutual support networks	Conducting needs/assets assessments
Developing Parenting classes	Developing “Life-Skills” classes
Establishing financial planning/budgeting courses	Developing skill/job banks
Sponsoring job fairs with key employers	Setting up round tables, town meetings, or other user satisfaction feedback exercises
Act as an “in-between,” “broker,” or “change agent,” for government, non-profits, and welfare recipients	Developing programs to fill in “gaps” of services
Developing programs for “hard to serve” populations: i.e., long-term welfare dependents, substance abusers, ex-offenders, etc.	Developing programs in almost any area where there is an unmet need

AmeriCorps*VISTA State Level Support

Corporation State Offices (where most AmeriCorps*VISTA money is funneled through) have a major role to play in the development of welfare to work projects. A number of innovative states began developing projects almost immediately following the 1996 welfare reform law. In Maine, for example, the State Office worked with the state Workforce Development Centers to develop a multi-site “Welfare to Work VISTA Initiative.” Similarly, the Texas State Office worked with state comptroller’s office to expand a mentoring program called “Family Pathfinders.” Also, in Delaware, the State Office collaborated with the Delaware Technical and Community College to develop a project aimed at helping 300 people make the transition from welfare to work. These AmeriCorps*VISTA projects are profiled at the end of this chapter.

Presently, State Offices all over the country are assessing what their role in welfare to work can be. Many State Office staff have been researching the issue on their own to see where

AmeriCorps*VISTA can fit. In Pennsylvania, the State Office is working with the Mayor's Office and local Private Industry Council to possibly develop a project that will fill in gaps of services to local welfare recipients. In Puerto Rico, the State Office has developed a "Welfare to Work Corporation State Office Advisory Committee" where representatives from different groups involved in welfare reform, such as government agencies, community groups, and employers, serve to help staff develop welfare to work projects on the island that are appropriate to the local situation.

AmeriCorps*VISTA National Level Support

While many State Offices have been major players in developing welfare to work program in local communities, AmeriCorps*VISTA at the national level decided to put even more resources into the effort by developing a \$3 million national welfare to work grants program in October 1998. This effort enables the following 6 national non-profits to provide AmeriCorps*VISTA members to local community based affiliates in order to expand welfare to work activities:

- ✪ ACCION International;
- ✪ Corporation for Enterprise Development;
- ✪ National Alliance to End Homelessness;
- ✪ National Association of Workforce Boards (formerly National Association of Private Industry Councils);
- ✪ National Community Reinvestment Corporation;
- ✪ And Seedco.

For a more detailed description of each individual project, refer to the Appendix B in the back of this report.

Other ways that AmeriCorps*VISTA at the national level has supported the idea of welfare to work programming has been through the development of a summer AmeriCorps*VISTA welfare to work pilot program (AmeriCorps*VISTAs are placed in a community based group involved in welfare to work initiatives during the summer), siting of the Inter-agency Working Group on Microenterprise Development, as well as by forming and keeping alliances with key groups involved in welfare to work including The Welfare to Work Partnership, Department of Labor, Small Business Association, and Department of Health and Human Services, to name but a few.

AmeriCorps*VISTA as a Key Resource

As can be seen from the above, AmeriCorps*VISTA has a key role to play in this major social policy challenge. As it has in the past, AmeriCorps*VISTA is already rising to the occasion to develop programs that move people from welfare and into work in a dignified and creative manner. By leveraging the expertise and spirit of AmeriCorps*VISTA to “get things done,” communities will be much better equipped for the challenges of welfare to work.

National Service Itself as a Welfare to Work Strategy

National service has proven an effective avenue to move many people from welfare and into work. It is a good first step for many on the road to self-sufficiency. This study, however, is more about using national service to build welfare to work programs rather than as a welfare to work program itself. There are many success stories to be told and this would be a very interesting topic of for anyone interested in doing further research.

AmeriCorps*VISTA Welfare to Work Promising Practices

The following four AmeriCorps*VISTA welfare to work projects represent some of the best in the field:

- ✪ Delaware Technical and Community College;
- ✪ Texas Family Pathfinders;
- ✪ Workforce Development Centers;
- ✪ Alternatives Federal Credit Union.

For this Fellowship, many projects were interviewed and these four were asked to provide more detailed answers to the following questions:

- ✪ What is your mission?
- ✪ What are the tangible results and accomplishments of your project thus far?
- ✪ What are some of your “lessons learned?”
- ✪ What are some of the challenges you faced/are facing?
- ✪ What kind of advice would you give to new AmeriCorps*VISTA welfare to work projects?

The answers to these questions can be found starting on the next page. What is included is more or less their own words, providing a unique opportunity to learn from their early successes and challenges. At the top of each promising practice is the name of the main contact who either answered the questions themselves or coordinated the answers from their teams. Also, a contact name for those interested in more information is provided.

Delaware Technical and Community College Delaware Statewide AmeriCorps*VISTA Project

*Main contact for questionnaire: Laura Axtell, AmeriCorps*VISTA Program Manager*

The goal of the statewide AmeriCorps*VISTA Welfare to Work Project at the Delaware Technical and Community College is to help 300 people make the transition from welfare to long-term self-sufficiency. During the first 9 months of the project, AmeriCorps*VISTA members were stationed in 3 counties to develop projects leading to employment for unemployed or underemployed persons. Delaware Tech has 4 campuses statewide and serves as one of the workforce training contractors for the state of Delaware.

Tangible Results and Accomplishments

- ★ Between August 26, 1998 to February 25, 1999, 20 classes were presented and attended by 132 different people in Sussex County, which has a large Hispanic population. Seven classes were covered by *Hoy en Delaware*, a statewide Spanish/English newspaper and one by Channel 47;
- ★ AmeriCorps*VISTAs have worked with local businesses to determine what they are seeking in employees so that they can communicate this information to participants and provide training where needed. Some of this was accomplished through a questionnaire;
- ★ Developed a database of 200+ employers that could be contacted to job fairs and connected to potential employees;
- ★ Developed and conducted numerous job fairs and employability workshops;
- ★ Provided public relations work that included the development of:
 - a tri-fold brochure that explains services provided to participants;
 - a newsletter and brochure for parents and teens to promote summer youth employment opportunities for low income families;
 - a newsletter that contains “hot jobs” that goes out to participants seeking employment;
 - a newsletter that will provide information to 150 churches on welfare reform and its impact on church members, their local missions, and the community.
- ★ 2 AmeriCorps*VISTAs served as technicians and guest coordinators for a twice weekly cable television show called “A Better Chance...in the Workforce.” This show touches on many programs and services for participants and includes a job listing;
- ★ Developed an Employment Resource Center that provides information on how to do a resume, access job sites on the Internet (which is also available from the Center), and updates the “hot jobs” list weekly. Every temporary agency in the area was also contacted and regular requests for employees are collected and passed on to participants;
- ★ Another employment center is being developed in a local church that will be staffed by volunteers and will allow local residents to access these resources without having to travel;
- ★ Questionnaires were also developed for clients to find out what their needs and barriers are that will be used for the development of workshops;
- ★ Development of a Garment Center that will solicit professional clothing from staff at the College to provide a free resource to participants who are interviewing and obtained employment, but don't have money for an office wardrobe;

- ✪ Have helped organize neighborhood summits to obtain input from residents and to develop leadership in the communities;
- ✪ In the near future, one AmeriCorps*VISTA will be working to expand an Interagency Council in one county.

Lessons Learned

- ✪ That it is hard to set up a program;
- ✪ That it is hard to work when others have another agenda;
- ✪ There are many problems associated when you deal with different levels of government;
- ✪ People are resistant to change even if it is for their benefit;
- ✪ The importance of newspaper coverage, especially within the second language community;
- ✪ Things are learned through “word of mouth;”
- ✪ The need to know and use institutional procedures, forms, and protocol all of which are difficult to assimilate in the short time of one year of AmeriCorps*VISTA service;
- ✪ There are a lot of valuable resources and services (usually free) available to help the community to take advantage of. Good and appropriate marketing is a must;
- ✪ State and federal dollars help to overcome barriers for participants;
- ✪ Many people do not understand what it is like to be low income and sometimes programs are designed without input or understanding;
- ✪ It takes time to do each step in the development of a project.

Challenges

- ✪ Gaining confidence as a new AmeriCorps*VISTA member to meet and deal with reactions from participants. Sensitivity and flexibility are needed;
- ✪ It is difficult to keep track of participants once they are in the process of change. AmeriCorps*VISTAs need to go where the people are instead of asking participants to come to programs;
- ✪ It is often difficult to market programs and services creatively;
- ✪ AmeriCorps*VISTAs often have to put themselves in participant's shoes to get a better idea of what can be done to accomplish the goal;
- ✪ To get programs up and running faster. AmeriCorps*VISTAs have a short time to develop and implement;
- ✪ To design programs that suit the people and not the idea;
- ✪ To design programs that can be adjusted. Programs have to be flexible to allow the coordinator to make changes if conditions require;
- ✪ Find more effective ways to encourage people to become involved;
- ✪ Some programs do not include everyone and people fall through the cracks. Be able to modify programs so that special circumstances do not exclude people;
- ✪ Getting other organizations to share information. Many seem to hold on to important information to make themselves look good. We all need to realize that our goal is to assist participants in anyway possible so that they can find a job and become self-sufficient!;

- ⊛ All of these issues can be overcome but it takes time and patience:
 - You have to do an assessment and get to know the "players" before you develop new programs so there isn't duplication of effort;
 - Getting input from participants and their "buy-in" from the beginning;
 - Making sure that information actually gets to clients;
 - AmeriCorps*VISTAs may need training to accomplish their goals -computer, writing skills, presentations, etc.;

Advice to New Projects

- ⊛ Provide programs near participants - include food, transportation, and childcare when possible;
- ⊛ Marketing programs is critical - it is really helpful when there is a AmeriCorps*VISTA who can provide marketing services to the project;
- ⊛ Make the process for getting things approved as quick and simple as Possible;
- ⊛ Ensure that the sponsoring organization has a good understanding of what AmeriCorps*VISTAs can provide, and utilize their strengths and talents to meet the goals of the project;
- ⊛ Build in the ability to change and get feedback so that AmeriCorps*VISTAs have a means of judging their effectiveness;
- ⊛ AmeriCorps*VISTAs have to remember that for the clients this is a life issue and if people don't care about the people then the job is not right for them.

Welfare to work and welfare reform is a huge and very complicated issue. Sponsoring organizations and site supervisors should have a very good understanding of the programs in order to help in the development of projects.

For more information, please contact:

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Family Pathfinders Texas Statewide AmeriCorps*VISTA Project

*Main contact for questionnaire: Jennifer Clark, AmeriCorps*VISTA Leader*

Family Pathfinders, a program administered by the Texas Department of Human Services (TDHS), is a partnership between state government, community organizations and local businesses working with welfare families to help free them from public assistance. Our program matches each family with a trained volunteer team of four to eight people from a religious congregation, business or civic group that mentors and supports that family in its move towards self-sufficiency.

The Texas Department of Human Services provides financial, health, and human services that promote the greatest possible independence and personal responsibility for all clients.

Tangible Results and Accomplishments

- ✪ Over 2,600 volunteers trained and matched to more than 500 families on welfare in almost 80 Texas communities;
- ✪ 75 Family Pathfinders volunteer teams recruited by AmeriCorps*VISTAs;
- ✪ TDHS reports that of the 447 families served in the first two years, *more than 73 percent* are no longer receiving cash welfare benefits;
- ✪ Selected from a pool of more than 1,600 applicants, Family Pathfinders named one of 98 semifinalists for 1999 Innovations in American Government Award;
- ✪ Vice President Al Gore deemed Family Pathfinders as a model program to be replicated across the United States; 5 states have implemented a program based on the Pathfinders model;
- ✪ Spring 1998, Family Pathfinders received the Daily Point of Light Award;
- ✪ Tarrant County year one AmeriCorps*VISTA raised \$47,000 for the Tarrant County Family Pathfinders program; upon completing her year of national service as an AmeriCorps*VISTA, Kate Hephner was immediately named Director for Tarrant County Family Pathfinders. Kate also collaborated with Al Thompson of Texas Air Care to create a “Wheels to Work” program for Tarrant County. Kate drafted and submitted a “Wheels to Work” grant proposal to the Texas Workforce Commission for \$50,000 that was awarded in Fall 1998;
- ✪ Dallas site awarded over \$3000 in funding through Deloitte Consulting;
- ✪ Tarrant County Family Pathfinders will be the focus of upcoming Catholic Charities USA teleconference on welfare to work programs and their success with faith-based organizations;
- ✪ Family Pathfinders Abilene AmeriCorps*VISTA nationally recognized as Singles Role Model and was selected as Outstanding TDHS Regional Volunteer for Regions 02/09.

Lessons Learned

- ✪ We have learned that the gap between those who have achieved self-sufficiency and those who have not depends upon the support of people who care and advocate for families;

- ✪ Knowing all the various agencies and contacts working on any level with welfare and welfare reform would have been beneficial when first beginning to download the program into our communities. We have learned to familiarize ourselves with our host agencies as quickly as possible, because they are our most important connections to our communities and clients;
- ✪ We have also learned that there are so many organizations competing for a limited pool of volunteers. Information or a training provided at the beginning of our year of national service on how to sell a program would have been helpful;
- ✪ STAY OUT OF POLITICS!

Challenges

- ✪ Clients are so overwhelmed by the system that sometimes they have no faith in “new programs.” The hardest issue to overcome is to gain the families’ faith in the program and to ensure that teams and families make a good, strong connection. Along the same lines, keeping the families and teams motivated to continue the program can be challenging;
- ✪ Recruitment of team volunteers is one of the biggest challenges. AmeriCorps*VISTAs struggle with the span of time that elapses to process through the chain of command within churches as well as frustration when calls are rarely returned. Some larger churches may take up to four to five months to connect with the right person and schedule a recruitment presentation. While Family Pathfinders has the capability of selling itself, we compete with hundreds of other volunteer opportunities presented to groups. Overcoming this recruitment challenge is “try, try, try again” until you find a willing participant;
- ✪ Networking the existing help and resources presents some degree of difficulty. So many resources exist that it is difficult to bring all of these resources together. Even after identifying all agencies and groups providing support, it is a challenge to keep up with the changes within each program;
- ✪ Transportation and child care (or lack of) go hand in hand with the success of any welfare-to-work initiative. These issues must be addressed if welfare reform is to become a reality;
- ✪ Continuing training is essential to the success of the volunteer teams, but the psychological aspects of living in the low-income bracket are the most difficult concepts to train volunteer teams in;

Advice to New Projects

- ✪ Provide more than sufficient training to volunteer teams, include mentoring and client advocacy aspects along with a lot of role playing;
- ✪ Proper matching of teams with families is crucial to a successful relationship. Enlisting the assistance of the referring case manager when the team and families first meet is vital to both sides understanding their roles during their Family Pathfinders year;
- ✪ Get as much of the community involved as possible. Be sure to have an active, committed advisory council and sponsor organization in place. Strong, active support from advisory council members and sponsor agencies plays an important part in the long term success of the program within a community;

- ✪ Most people want to get out into the job market. Programs that tie employment with further education (technical or traditional) will see more long term success;
- ✪ Tapping into the community beyond the traditional social service/human service agencies that help is key to any welfare-to-work program. Utilize the resources and skills of civic groups, religious congregations, businesses, etc. Not only will you create advocates for individual families, but you will educate the public of welfare reform issues and ultimately create advocates who communicate with their legislators about welfare reform;
- ✪ Networking will prove profitable in the end and effective media promotions will also help raise the awareness;
- ✪ Be FLEXIBLE! Do not expect quick results! Remember that this is a long, tedious and sometimes monotonous job and sometime you just have to live with it. Mostly, however, you need to pound the pavement, enthusiastically promoting the program.

Advice for statewide welfare to work projects:

- ✪ AmeriCorps*VISTAs and statewide project sponsors must be on the same path. “Too many cooks spoil the soup,” especially when poor confusion becomes an issue. Effective, clear communication between sponsor staff and AmeriCorps*VISTAs is vital.
- ✪ Statewide project sponsors must realize that different sites are going to use different tactics to recruit teams and clients. Things are going to be done differently at each site, but in the end the results are what matter.

For more information, please contact:

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Workforce Development Centers Maine Statewide AmeriCorps*VISTA project

*Main contact for questionnaire: Mica Slaven, AmeriCorps*VISTA Leader*

Workforce Development Centers are located in a 12 county service delivery area throughout Maine. The “Welfare-to-Work VISTA Initiative” places members in nine centers throughout the state. AmeriCorps*VISTA members plan and develop new strategies for providing welfare recipients with greater access to job readiness, job placement, retention and career advancement services. Traditional education and training services provided before work are being revamped to become work-based (training while working versus training then placement). The project is attempting to assist communities with identifying where gaps in services exist and to coordinate community-based services such as childcare and transportation to accommodate the work participation requirements faced by welfare recipients. Activities needed to accomplish this work involve extensive outreach and development of expanded services, and the mobilizing of community volunteers to provide post-employment services.

Tangible Results and Accomplishments

- ✪ New Workforce Development Center office created in remote and undeserved part of Maine that is now serving up to 100 people per week.
- ✪ Development of “York Succeed,” an adult mentoring program that enlists community volunteers to support and coach TANF recipients during the transition to employment and self-sufficiency.
- ✪ TANF Support Groups created at four sites.
- ✪ A childcare training program to license childcare providers was created.
- ✪ Development of “Charity Cars,” a car donation program to close transportation gaps in a rural county.
- ✪ Development of a new day care center in a rural county.

Lessons Learned

- ✪ There is a disconnect in people’s minds about the folks who serve and those who are served. They do not need to be in separate camps. Get recipients involved! Get recipients involved! Get recipients involved!
- ✪ A lot of welfare recipients want to work and they just need help managing the transition, both internally and externally.
- ✪ The first five days at a new job were the most crucial to whether the TANF recipient remained employed, and to increase job retention (and hence, opportunities for promotion) there needs to be personal support that includes coaching and coping as well as training.
- ✪ The minimum wage does not create a livable income, which is why it is so important to get folks employed sooner on their road to economic independence. The challenge for the service provider is to create support services that keep folks working and moving forward.
- ✪ Within TANF populations there are cultures with their own values and beliefs. For example, raising children yourself is valued as very important.

- ⊛ Second and third shift workers do not have the child care and transportation resources that nine to five workers do.
- ⊛ Employers want to be involved and are struggling to draw trainable and committed workers from the workforce.

Challenges and Strategies to Overcome Them

A) People do not believe in time limits

- ⊛ The average person is unfamiliar with welfare reform and even recipients and workers in the field who are familiar with it are not convinced that time limits are real. The culture needs to change.
- ⊛ Say “checks” instead of “months”, as in “You have 15 checks left, how’s that job search going?”
- ⊛ The common message throughout this change is: employment. People need to hear this over and over again: Temporary Aid to Needy Families means *everyone* works.

B) Engaging agencies in collaborative efforts in the midst of so much change

- ⊛ Cross-stream training.
- ⊛ AmeriCorps*VISTAs playing a neutral role as cross-informers.
- ⊛ AmeriCorps*VISTAs are conveners and facilitators, creating opportunities for community-based organizations to come together to tackle important issues.

C) Reversing 61 years of history

- ⊛ Welfare reform has essentially moved the alleviation of poverty back into the communities. It is important to inform the public that there is no longer a federal safety net such as welfare as we knew it. Communities today need to be informed and empowered in order to implement a local, broad based model.

Advice to Other Projects

Systematic training and capacity building at all levels is critical. Partnerships must be expanded and must be real. The system needs to stop focusing on various turf issues and come up with better coordination strategies. The service provider arena needs to make room for community-based mental health, substance abuse, domestic violence, housing, and transportation programs.

For more information, please contact:

Steve Duval

Workforce Development Centers Administrative Office

124 State House Station

Augusta, ME 04333-0124

207-287-3378

Alternatives Federal Credit Union Individual Development Account (IDA) Program, Ithaca, NY

*Main contact for questionnaire: Ed Ryan, AmeriCorps*VISTA*

Alternatives Federal Credit Union (AFCU) was established in 1979 as a non-profit, community development credit union. Over the years, Alternatives has grown to a financial institution with over \$27 million in deposits, while maintaining its commitment to socially responsible banking, personal service, and provision of financial resources for small businesses, non-profit organizations and underserved segments of the community.

This AmeriCorps*VISTA Individual Development Account (IDA) program began in May 1997, with the first account opened in February 1998. It is a partnership, with Alternatives providing financial expertise, capital, account management, and an IDA Coordinator. The partners bring complementary strengths: the expertise, support and education of their given fields. Partnerships have been established with the Community Enterprise Opportunities (CEO) and Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services (INHS). CEO offers classes on starting a small business and INHS classes for first-time homebuyers. All participants must deposit at least the minimum monthly deposit into their account for one year, up to a maximum of four years. Up to \$500 a year of individual savings will be matched 3:1. Upon completion of the necessary training, matching funds are paid directly to the asset vendor when ready to purchase their asset. At Alternatives, 20% of the IDA accounts are reserved for youth between the ages of 13-18, who receive separate money management training and are members of "Dollars for Dreams," a youth credit union, run for, and by youth.

Tangible Results and Accomplishments

- ★ There are 91 participants to date, 13 of whom are youth. As of April 30, 1999, 93 participants (2 participants have dropped out) have saved \$23,589.18 which leverages \$67,940.97 in matching funds for a total savings balance of \$91,530.15.
- ★ Authorized and completed 5 authorized withdrawals: 2 for microenterprise, 2 for home purchase, and 1 for home repair.
- ★ One of 13 sites selected out of an applicant pool of 100, to participate in a national policy demonstration testing the efficacy of IDAs as an anti-poverty strategy sponsored by the Corporation for Enterprise Development
- ★ Developed an in-house money management and economic literacy program, "Money Wise, Money Whys," that offers participants the opportunity to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to discuss, react to and act upon the events that shape the economic well-being of themselves and their families. Successful completion is required for participation in the IDA program.
- ★ Hold mandatory, monthly continuing education classes that reinforce lessons learned in the "Money Wise, Money Whys" classes. Participants use these sessions to learn about topics that will help them in achieving their goals. The group chooses topics and speakers, and participants decide what level of involvement is necessary.
- ★ Participants, all of whom are 200% of the federal poverty level and many on public assistance, are saving regularly.

Lessons Learned and Advice

- ✪ Be patient- some people are not good with responsibility. Some hand-holding in the beginning may have to take place until a participants get on a regular deposit schedule. This is the beginning of a change of mindset for some.
- ✪ Keep participants involved- make sure they are aware of the purpose of the program and their responsibilities. This may help avoid future problems. It also gives you a chance to hear how the program works from their perspective.
- ✪ Be aware of participants' own limitations.

Challenges

- ✪ There has been some difficulty in filling the youth slots. Originally, only one account per family was allowed. However, after hearing participant feedback, and due to the lack of response from the general public, the youth accounts were opened up to current IDA participant family members. Now, one adult and one youth account are allowed per family.

For more information, please contact:

Ed Ryan

Alternatives Federal Credit Union

301 W. State Street

Ithaca, NY 14850

607-273-3582, ext. 840 607-277-6391 (fax)

eryan@alternatives.org

<http://www.alternatives.org>

PART II

RELATIONSHIPS THAT WORK

CHAPTER 4

National Service and Business in Welfare to Work

As can be seen from the preceding chapters, both business AND national service play key roles in moving people off public assistance and into jobs in the private sector. One of the hoped outcomes of this project is to make sure that both business and national service begin to work better together given the important contributions both make. The time is right for this to happen and no opportunity should be wasted. Consider the following:

Both business and national service efforts compliment each other

The private sector needs to hire and often looks to community groups to locate suitable hires. National service members are “in the community” with potential hires, helping them become work-ready, deal with various life issues, and develop career plans that make the transition from welfare to work happen.

Welfare to work works for business

Welfare to work has proven a smart solution to the problem of finding qualified applicants for many vacant jobs. Businesses report over and over that welfare hires make good, productive workers. Some are also reporting hiring than average retention rates (when compared to “traditional hires”). Therefore, employers are more and more likely to hire from the welfare rolls and community groups can use this to their strategic advantage.

Time is of the essence

In a booming economy with tight labor markets, employers are looking to applicant pools they never would have a few years ago. Much of this is driven by the CURRENT economic situation and when a recession does occur—and it always does—it is not clear what business’ role will be. Much of their effort, as discussed in a previous chapter, is predicated on the fact that business has a REAL hiring need NOW. It is NOT about creating jobs in order to transition those coming off the welfare rolls. Therefore, time is of the essence to make sure people get real work experience that enables them to be more qualified and stable when a recession hits.

Alliances have been formed

The Corporation for National Service has formed many “alliances” to help it better do welfare to work (see Chapter 3). For one, as a result of this Fellowship and other outreach efforts, a strong alliance has been forged with The Welfare to Work Partnership. The Partnership is ready and willing to work with national service programs to help them get in contact with businesses where possible. (It is important to note that the President and CEO of The Partnership, Eli Segal, was the founding CEO of the Corporation for National Service and AmeriCorps, and has repeatedly expressed his support for national service efforts in welfare to work.)

Another “alliance” important to the topic of this Fellowship is with the US Small Business Administration (SBA). SBA has been a key advocate for doing outreach to small business in welfare to work and is a key resource for national service programs. They have many welfare to work contacts across the country and national service programs are encouraged to contact them.

The two preceding alliances as well as others mentioned in Chapter 3 exhibit how there are resources available for national service programs involved in welfare to work. For more information on any of them, please consult the Welfare to Work Resource Guide in this report.

Involving Employers from the Beginning is Key

Since the goal of an employment program is ultimately to place and retain participants into gainful employment, it is essential to have employers (i.e., those doing the hiring) have their say and give expertise on how to get people to work. Employers are more and more looking towards community groups as potential partners in hiring welfare recipients and many are more than willing to consult on the development of welfare to work programs in local communities. Also, various organizations claim that when employer involvement occurs at the beginning of a project, success is more likely (i.e., The Welfare to Work Partnership, Private Industry Council, Center for Employment Training, and the National Alliance to End Homelessness).

Business brings resources and unique perspectives

Business can bring resources and unique perspectives to the table. Whether it is financial resources for a project, space for meetings, or political contacts and clout, the private for-profit sector brings with it different resources than is available with the non-profit or governmental world. Similarly, a “business” perspective on any project can be beneficial, bringing expertise that may not be present.

Business is part of the community

Business can often be seen as some monolith entity, completely separate and sometimes opposed to the community at large. In reality, however, business is a key part of the community—providing jobs as well as goods and services that enrich everyone’s lives. They have much to gain in having the community be productive, healthy and safe, as they are stakeholders in it as well. When devising welfare to work programs, it is beneficial to have their input.

National Service and-Business in Welfare to Work Promising Practices

The following are two great examples of national service-business relationships

Highbridge Community Life Center Bronx, New York

The Highbridge Community Life Center is a community based organization in the Bronx that deals with welfare to work on a daily basis. Seventeen AmeriCorps*VISTA members are assigned to economic development activities in this neighborhood where 44.3% of the population is on welfare. Some of the accomplishments include:

- The development a Job Bank database of close to 200 businesses that matches them with local, employable residents;
- Educated businesses on the advantages of employing local residents in this Empowerment Zone (EZ) (i.e., the tax credit and other economic benefits that are associated with EZs as well as the exception skills of the trained, employable residents);
- Assisting in the development and implementation of the United Parcel Service (UPS) Training Program:
 - Raised funds and wrote grant applications for this program;
 - Secured support from UPS;
 - Recruited over 262 applicants and selected 25;
 - All 25 graduated and were offered positions with UPS;
 - 23 remain in their jobs or were promoted six months into the program;
 - Plan on developing a “Next Step” training program that will include computer literacy as well as assistance in receiving a commercial driver’s license that will put participants in line for a promotion.
- Assisting in the development and implementation of the Nurse Aide Training Program:
In a year, 55 people have been placed in jobs;
Over 300 people are on the waiting list.
- A newsletter was developed and since then private donations to Highbridge doubled, enabling them to fund portions of the training programs themselves.

Employment Connection Greater Homewood Community Group Baltimore, MD

The Employment Connection’s mission is to connect job seekers and people on public assistance in Greater Homewood, an area in Baltimore, to job training and other work activities. One AmeriCorps*VISTA is assigned to this project.

So far, this project has accomplished the following:

- Conducted 2 “Connection” meetings where approximately 150 people from the community attended. At these meetings, a representative from the Department of Social Services delivered a talk about time limits, and more than 20 employers, training vendors, and health and child care providers set up recruitment and informational booths.
- Established a partnership with Catalyst Associates, a non-profit organization started in the summer of 1998, that provides incentives for nascent technology companies to create white collar jobs to be filled for unemployed Baltimore residents.
- Began to develop a mentoring component to the project.

Chapter 5: Is National Service Utilizing the Business Connection?

IS NATIONAL SERVICE UTILIZING THE BUSINESS CONNECTION in welfare to work?: This is one of the major research questions for this Fellowship. The answer to this question is important for welfare to work programming but also sheds some light on how public-private partnerships develop within the Corporation.

Interviews and surveys were conducted with:

- ✧ Various AmeriCorps*VISTA welfare to work projects (AmeriCorps*VISTAs, AmeriCorps*Leaders, and project supervisors);
- ✧ AmeriCorps*VISTA Welfare to Work National Grantees;
- ✧ Corporation State Offices (Directors and State Program Specialists);
- ✧ A few AmeriCorps*State/National Projects;
- ✧ AmeriCorps*VISTA national staff;
- ✧ Various Corporation staff at all levels of the organization;
- ✧ And a few national service projects not welfare to work related but conducting business outreach.

Also, a literature review on partnership and collaboration building, especially in regards to business, was conducted.

As a result, it can be said that:

- **National service-business partnerships in welfare to work do not happen organically;**
- **If they do exist, it is generally when all other resources are exhausted and not from “Day One” of the project;**
- **There is an interest in developing these partnerships;**
- **These findings are supported by literature.**

National service-business partnerships in welfare to work do not happen organically

Respondents indicated that national service/community based partnerships in welfare to work—and in other program emphasis areas as well—do not happen organically. While working to collaborate with other community groups can still be a challenge, there is much more of a “network” already in place. Community groups more or less speak the same language, travel in the same circles, and deal with the same issue on a daily basis. Therefore, most partnerships with them evolve very naturally and can be easier to maintain (this is not to say that partnerships between community groups are not full of friction and competition at times).

Connecting with business, however, can be more challenging. It takes more effort and creative outreach to bring them into the community organization. Some of the key reasons for this include:

- ✂ Different missions and agendas- one for profit, the other not-for-profit;
- ✂ Not traveling in “chamber of commerce circles;”
- ✂ Staff with lack of business expertise;
- ✂ Not feeling comfortable going into the “for-profit” world;
- ✂ They speak different “languages;”
- ✂ Perceptions and stereotypes about the “other world,” i.e., business’ ONLY motive is money, non-profits ONLY know how to ask for money);
- ✂ Lack of resources that guide the way (i.e., information on how to we approach employers, how to act, etc.)

If they do exist, it is generally when all other resources are exhausted and not from “Day One” of the project

When these partnerships do develop, they seem to do so only after other partnerships and initiatives have taken place. For example, an employer training program would develop all it relationships with other community groups and government agencies first, then connect with business only when they need employers. This is understandable given the fact that respondents indicated the many challenges involved. They will more likely attempt to build relationships in arenas where they are most comfortable and this will most likely be in the non-profit world.

As argued in another chapter, however, business involvement needs to happen from the beginning in order to design a welfare to work program that meets the needs of employers and participants alike. While there are many examples where national service programs are

utilizing the business connection from the beginning, they are the exception rather than the rule. **Making connections with employers' needs to happen from "day one" of the program, NOT a few months into it.**

There is an interest in developing these partnerships

Those surveyed are **VERY interested in developing these partnerships**. While there is some apprehension when people begin developing partnerships, there is a sense that they need to happen. Respondents felt that they would benefit from more guidance on how to develop beneficial and sustainable relationships with business. This could take the form of manuals, brochures, information on the web or listservs, and/or more business specific training at Pre-Service Orientations (PSOs) and Early Service Trainings (ESTs).

These findings are supported by literature

These finding are supported by literature on partnership and collaboration building. For more information, please refer to the "Readings" section of the Welfare to Work Resource Guide in this report. One recent work that supports the above is a book by Shirley Sagawa and Eli Segal (1999) entitled *Common Interest, Common Good: Creating Value Through Business and Social Sector Partnerships*. In this work, Sagawa and Segal give examples of successful business and social sector partnerships, as well as give insight into the partnering process, based on their experiences in both the social and business sectors. According to Sagawa and Segal:

"[Our] experiences . . . have convinced us there is a need to demystify cross-sector partnerships. The majority of individuals in these sectors have little to do with one another. They travel in different worlds, and usually deep suspicion exists. Even organizations with extensive experience developing partnerships and collaboration within their own fields have difficulty applying those lessons across the sectors."

The disconnect that exist between national service programs and business in welfare to work is not isolated. Rather, it is, as Sagawa and Segal would say, one that is complicated because they are in different "sectors."

One could argue, then, that these finding shed some light on the frustration that many in the national service network often feel, not just regarding welfare to work, but in ALL programming areas: how do we better build relationships with all sectors, including business. The above indicates that it is just NOT EASY, and requires much thought and strategic planning.

Chapter 6

A Framework for Thinking About Business-National Service Relationships

How do we attempt to cure the disconnect between national service programs and business in welfare to work described in the previous chapter? This chapter begins to do this by:

- ↻ Exploring how these type of partnerships should develop;
- ↻ Promoting the creation of Employer Advisory Groups (EAGs) to help eliminate the disconnect;
- ↻ And by giving recommendations how the Corporation can help rid the disconnect.

The Continuum of Engagement

A helpful way to think about how relationships between national service and business should develop is the “**Continuum of Engagement**” (see Figure in this chapter).

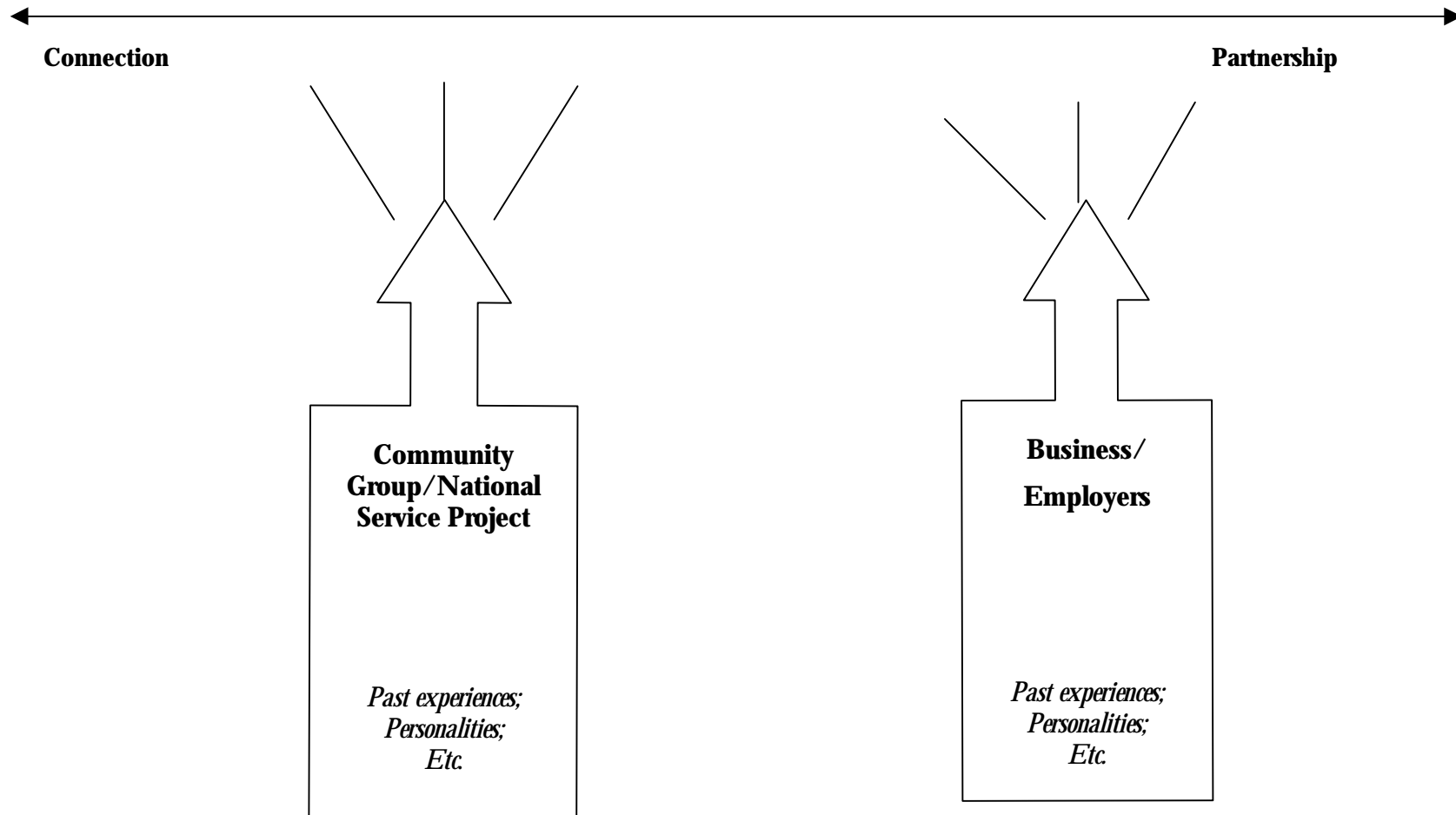
On one end of the continuum is a **CONNECTION**—or the most basic forms of a relationship. A connection is a relationship where a community group/business seeks to make contact with the other with little or no formalization. Both the community group and the business ask very little from each other and expectations are limited.

A possible example of a connection is an organization that wants a business/employer perspective while it develops its welfare to work training program and asks for feedback from a number of prominent business people in the area. The plan is distributed to those who responded that they would be glad to help and either meet a few times or submit their feedback via phone, e-mail, or mail. This is a one time deal, with no immediate plans to continue the consultation and relationship. However, business input was received. Another example of a connection could simply be asking an employer to set up a booth at a job fair. While it is expected that they show up and participate, no major relationship results, just a connection.

On the other end of the continuum is a **PARTNERSHIP**. A partnership is a full-fledged, formal relationship between a community group and business. Both get large amounts out of the relationship and expectations on outcomes are high.

An example of a partnership could be a business who contracts with a community group to train and support welfare recipients that will be placed into their firm. Their relationship is formal with both getting a lot out of the relationship: one getting qualified employees, the other placing their clients. Where a connection is more episodic, a partnership is more long-term and consistent.

Continuum of Engagement



On this continuum, a relationship can develop at any level. This level of “engagement,” however, is determined by a number of “influencing” factors. Business’ desires and capacity to deal with an outside relationship, attitudes towards the non-profit world and welfare recipients, as well as past experiences with connections/partnerships, will all influence the level of this engagement. Similarly, a community group’s/national service project’s desires and capacity to deal with an outside relationship, attitudes towards the for-profit world, as well as past experiences with connection/partnerships both with for-profit and non-profit, will all influence what level a relationship is forged at.

Every organization needs to internally determine what level they should be building relationships with business. This is not an “either/or” situation where it has to be a connection or partnership only. Many will fall in the middle or more to the connection or partnership side. The point is that organizations from both “worlds” realize that these partnerships develop and evolve, they just do not happen. Many factors are at work.

To determine what level an organization should be, some of the following questions should be asked:

- What kind of relationships have we had in the past and were they successful?
- What do we have to offer to business?
- Who will maintain the relationships on staff?
- What kind of businesses should we target?
- How will business contribute in a positive way to our mission?

Employer Advisory Groups (EAGs)

One practical way to cure the disconnect mentioned above is for ALL national service projects dealing with welfare to work to create an Employer Advisory Group (EAG).¹ EAGs are composed of employers in local communities that dedicate to give guidance on the development and implementation of a national service welfare to work project. Members of an EAG commit to help ensure a specific national service welfare to work program is successful. All recruitment takes place through the community group where the national service project is based. The level of engagement, again, depends on what the organization and businesses can and want to handle.

¹ Much of this came out of a discussion with Steve Berg of the National Alliance to End Homeless. At NAEH, they promote the formation of “Private Sector Advisory Groups” by all its AmeriCorps*VISTA welfare to work projects. The materials they use to promote this have been very valuable to this section.

What do EAGs do?

EAGs serve as a primary and organized resource to those developing welfare to work initiatives by:

- Keeping the project “work first” centered;
- Providing a unique perspective- i.e., on local labor market conditions, what industries are key, who is hiring, etc.;
- Advising next steps;
- And providing an “in” with a whole other “world,” (i.e., the business community).

Who should be on the EAG?

All types of businesses should be on an EAG. An organization needs to decide how much input they would like, but it should be composed of at least five to get broad feedback. It will also be helpful to recruit businesses who could possibly hire clients. For a list of where to find employers, see the text box in this section.

What will this accomplish?

Basically, as stated above, this will give a community organization an entry into the private sector, for-profit world. While the advice will guide an organization’s planning and implementation immensely, the power of having key allies on a board should not be understated. Once certain employers begin to “buy-in” to the mission of the organization (and this happens a lot!), a welfare to work project can really begin to take off.

An EAG could be formed similar to any advisory group for local national service programs. AmeriCorps*VISTA projects, for example, all have a “AmeriCorps*VISTA Advisory Council” made up of staff, clients, local community members, and other interested people. An EAG could be a sub-committee of this, or even a subcommittee of a general board of an organization.

National Level Support

As mentioned in a previous chapter, the Corporation, especially through AmeriCorps*VISTA, has committed a tremendous amount of resources to welfare to work. The following are suggestions on more ways that the organization as a whole can ideally help national service programs better integrate business:

- Providing more business specific training in Pre-Service Orientations and Early Service Trainings. This occurs in some trainings but not others. The unique differences between the non-profit and for-profit worlds render this type of training essential;
- Expanding internal resources regarding business partnerships and welfare to work (possibly in the National Service Resource Center). These resources should be widely publicized and distributed;
- Create an annual or quarterly “AmeriCorps*VISTA, Welfare-to-Work, and Business Partnerships Recognition Award” where successful programs would be highlighted;
- Create a better mechanism whereby welfare to work promising practices can be highlighted;
- Developing a “AmeriCorps*VISTA Welfare-to-Work” web page where information on projects, resources, news, funding, etc., can be obtained. This would serve the dual purpose as resource for the national service community and well as a vehicle to promote AmeriCorps*VISTAs welfare-to-work initiatives. Promising practices could be highlighted here.

1 FYI- Where to Find Employers

The **Welfare to Work Partnership** boasts over 12,000 Business Partners that have already hired, or who have pledged to hire, welfare recipients. In an effort to coordinate this, The Partnership, in cooperation with IBM, has developed a web-based database called the **Solutions Network**. Both businesses AND service providers can submit their information via an on-line form and search for other businesses or service providers in their area. For more information, refer to the information regarding The Partnership and the *Solutions Network* in the resource section of this report or go to <http://www.welfaretowork.org>.

Local chambers of commerce are the voice of the business community in local areas and can serve as an excellent resource for locating employers. Many local chambers, as well as the national US Chamber of Commerce, have been major advocates of welfare to work, and have acted as key players in the development of welfare to work programs. Look in your local phone book or consult the US Chamber's web page at <http://www.uschamber.com>.

Private Industry Councils (PICs), now newly named **Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs)** as a result of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), are composed of a majority of private sector firms that advise localities on workforce issue. Call the National Association of Workforce Boards at 202-289-2950 to locate a PIC/WIB near you.

Civic groups and professional associations are excellent sources to find employers. Examples include Rotary clubs, Lion clubs, Knights of Columbus, bar associations, and women groups, just to name a few. It would be beneficial to schedule a speaking engagement where you can "pitch" your ideas to them. Many of these groups have monthly meetings and are always looking for new and exciting speakers.

When looking for employers, be mindful of the fact that this does not just include for-profit entities. Be sure to look at **non-profits and government agencies** in your area as a possible partner in your program.

Co-workers, volunteers in your organization, friends, and family are all sources of information regarding possible employers. All have contacts that may mean a new contact for your organization.

Don't forget to assess the potential of **your own organization** to hire a former welfare recipient. Not only will your organization gain a valuable employee, it will also be able to show outside employers how this hiring strategy works for you.

Chapter 7

Ideas for National Level Relationships

It would be helpful from a programmatic standpoint to strategically develop relationships with business/business groups at the national level of the Corporation in welfare to work. These relationships would then trickle down to the field, helping them better deal with welfare to work. The Corporation could:

- ★ Develop an “executive or employee on loan partnership program” where staff of a certain business would serve as an AmeriCorps*VISTA. This may require a special kind of program with different incentives and length of service. This could possibly tie into the Summer Associate Welfare-to-Work Pilot project;
- ★ Develop relationships with businesses that could mentor or advise AmeriCorps*VISTAs on business issues. If buy-in could be established from the national level, local affiliates of interested business would be more interested in participating. This could be done with business school alumni groups;
- ★ Collaborating with other national service programs such as the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program where volunteers with previous business experience can be utilized;
- ★ Develop a more formal relationship with the Senior Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) where their knowledge of the business world can be leveraged;
- ★ Develop an even more formal relationship with The Welfare to Work Partnership: cross referencing databases in an effort to connect with their outreach cities would help both the Corporation and The Partnership. Also, jointly developing “how-to” materials targeted to community groups and national service programs regarding business participation would forward both organizations’ missions;
- ★ Work even more closely with the US Small Business Administration to assist national service members who wish reach out to small businesses in welfare to work.

Conclusion

Shifting from a welfare system based on entitlements to one based on the premise of “Work-first” is perhaps the most significant social policy tilt of our time.

With this comes many challenges that were mentioned in previous chapters. However, national service has brought its expertise and resources of tapping the power of civic service “to the table.” Similarly, business has positively responded to President Clinton’s call to “do their part” by hiring those coming off the rolls.

What needs to happen now is simple: a connecting/partnering or marrying of national service and business efforts in welfare to work. National service can take a proactive role and begin to forge relationships with the business community. Now is the time for the “New Age National Service member” to emerge, to bridge the gap between the two “worlds.” National service has done this in the past and can continue this in the welfare to work arena. National service members continuously bring positive change to communities and this is a great “service” they need to provide.

If this Fellowship and final report do nothing else, it is hoped that it stimulates people within the national service community to think about how to integrate business in their programming. While this Fellowship and report have been welfare to work specific, these lessons cross all streams of service.

PART III
NATIONAL SERVICE WELFARE TO
WORK RESOURCE GUIDE

IMPORTANT ORGANIZATIONS

The following organizations will be helpful to anyone wishing to learn more about welfare reform and welfare to work and business and national service involvement. A more detailed list of web sites is given in the “Cyber-Resources” section of this guide.

Corporation for National Service

Created in 1993, the Corporation for National Service oversees three national service initiatives—AmeriCorps, which includes AmeriCorps*VISTA, AmeriCorps*National Civilian Community Corps, and hundreds of local and national non-profits; Learn and Serve America, which provides models and assistance to help teachers integrate service and learning from kindergarten through college; and the National Senior Service Corps, which includes the Foster Grandparent Program, the Senior Companion Program, and the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP).

Corporation for National Service
 1201 New York Avenue, NW
 Washington, DC 20525
 202-606-5000 (phone)
<http://www.nationalservice.org>
<http://www.americorps.org>

The Welfare to Work Partnership

The Partnership is a national, independent, nonpartisan effort of the business community to help move people on public assistance to jobs in the private sector. The Partnership is made up of employees, known as Business Partners, that have committed to hire and retain former welfare recipients without job displacements. The Partnership provides information, technical assistance and support for businesses of all sizes, from all industries and from all areas of the country.

The Welfare to Work Partnership
 1250 Connecticut Avenue, NW
 Suite 610
 Washington, DC 20036
 202-955-3005 ext. 325 (phone) 202-955-1087 (fax)
<http://www.welfaretowork.org>

Friends of VISTA

Founded in 1981, Friends of VISTA has led national efforts to protect the VISTA program from funding cuts and to promote improvements and expansions in the program. They also offer support to current and future VISTAs via their web sites. On the web site there are many resources of interest, including general information about VISTA, a “living history” of the program, as links to welfare reform information.

Friends of VISTA

*1000 Wisconsin Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20007
<http://www.friendsofvista.org>*

Welfare Information Network

The Welfare Information Network (WIN) provides information on policy choices, promising practices, program and financial data, funding sources, federal and state legislation and plans, program and management tools, and technical assistance. WIN's web site provides one stop access to over 9,000 links on more than 400 web sites. IN is a foundation funded project to help organizations and individuals obtain the information, policy analysis, and technical assistance they need to develop and implement welfare reforms that will reduce dependency and promote the well-being of children and families.

*Welfare Information Network
1000 Vermont Avenue, NW
Suite 600
Washington, DC 20005
202-628-5790 (phone) 202-628-4206 (fax)
<http://www.welfareinfo.org>*

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities is a nonpartisan research organization and policy institute that conducts research and analysis on a range of government policies and programs, with an emphasis on those affecting low- and moderate-income people. The CBPP conducts a lot of research regarding welfare reform and welfare-to-work and publishes various papers on the topics, many of which can be accessed from their web site. The CBPP also has an e-mail notification service that updates interested individuals frequently on new publications. You can sign up for this via their web site.

*Center for Budget and Policy Priorities
820 First Street, NE, Suite 510
Washington, DC 20007
202-408-1080 (phone) 202-408-1056 (fax)
<http://www.cbpp.org>*

Urban Institute

The Urban Institute is a non-partisan research organization that investigates social and economic problems confronting the nation and analyzes efforts to solve these problems. Welfare reform and welfare-to-work have been a major part of their research in recent years, especially through the "Assessing the New Federalism" initiative. Most of their work can be accessed via the web. Also, they have an e-mail notification system for new publications.

*Urban Institute
2100 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037
202-833-7200 (phone)
<http://www.urban.org>*

Manpower Development Research Corporation

The Manpower Development Research Corporation (MDRC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan social policy research organization that is dedicated to learning what works to improve the well-being of low-income people. Welfare reform and welfare-to-work have been a central part of their study. More specifically, they have also been evaluating many private sector welfare-to-work programs and have even published a guide on how to partner with business in welfare reform. Most of their publications are available on their web site.

*Manpower Development Research Corporation
16 E. 34th Street, 19th Floor
New York, NY 10016-4326
212-532-3220 (phone) 212-684-0832 (fax)
<http://www.mdrc.org>*

Business for Social Responsibility

Business for Social Responsibility is a membership organization for companies of different sizes and sectors. BSR's mission is to be the leading global resource providing members with innovative products and services that help companies be commercially successful in ways that demonstrate respect for ethical values, people, communities, and the environment. BSR holds an annual conference for interested parties. Their web site is quite extensive, especially their "Global Resource Center." Check out information regarding "Employing Underutilized Workers" under the "Community Economic Development" section of the resource center.

*Business for Social Responsibility
609 Mission Street, 2nd floor
San Francisco, CA 94105-3506
415-537-0888 (phone) 415-537-0889 (fax)
<http://www.bsr.org>
<http://www.bsr.org/resourcecenter>*

Connect America

Connect America is a collaborative effort of a diverse group of national and local organizations--nonprofit organizations, civic associations, businesses, labor unions, fraternal--that are fighting back against "disconnection" by stimulating and supporting initiatives in which people "connect through service." Connect America is intended to be a "movement," a framework of shared beliefs within which individuals and organizations will take new actions to meaningfully engage in the lives of others through ongoing volunteer service. Connect America sees welfare reform as on key area where the need to fight this "disconnect" is essential. To learn more about this movement or to find out about local Connect America activities, contact them at the information above.

*Connect America- Points of Light Foundation
1400 I Street, NW Suite 800
Washington, DC 20005
202-729-8000 (phone) 202-729-8100 (fax)
<http://www.pointsoflight.org/connectamerica/connectamerica.html>*

US Small Business Administration- Welfare to Work Office

The mission of the Small Business Administration (SBA) is to maintain and strengthen the Nation's economy by aiding, counseling, assisting, and protecting the interests of small businesses and by helping businesses and families recover from disasters. One of its goals is to lead small business participation in welfare-to-work. SBA programs include Small Business Development Centers, Women's Business Centers, SBA Tribal Information Centers, Business Information Centers, Senior Core of Retired Executives (SCORE), as well as One Stop Capital Shops. The SBA has regional and district offices, as well as Welfare to Work Liaisons (see list in this guide). The SBA, with the US Chamber of Commerce and The Welfare to Work Partnership, published the *Workforce Development Program Resource Directory* listing relevant programs and contacts that are helpful to those developing welfare to work initiatives. Consult their web site for a variety of resources including an "On-line Welfare to Work Toolkit," as well as contact information.

US Small Business Administration- Welfare to Work Office
 409 3rd Street, SW
 Washington, DC 20416
 202-205-6706 (phone) 202-205-6903 (fax)
<http://www.sba.gov/w2w>

US Department Labor- Employment and Training Administration

The U.S. Department of Labor is charged with preparing the American workforce for new and better jobs, and ensuring the adequacy of America's workplaces. Through its Employment and Training Administration, the Department's welfare to work initiative is run. The welfare to work portion of their web site provides information to both employer and employee as well as information on its "Welfare to Work (WtW) Grants Program."

US Department of Labor- Education and Training Administration
 202-219-6666 (phone)
<http://wtw.doleta.gov>

US Department of Health and Human Services- Administration for Children and Families

The mission of the US Department of Health and Human Services is to enhance the health and well-being of Americans by providing for effective health and human services and by fostering strong, sustained advances in the sciences underlying medicine, public health, and social services. The Temporary Aid for Needy Families block grant program (TANF, AKA "welfare") is administered through its Administration for Children and Families (ACF). Their web site contains a variety of information about the welfare caseloads, as well as other relevant welfare to work information.

US Department of Health and Human Services- Administration for Children and Families
 202-619-0257 (phone)
 1-877-696-6775 (toll free)
<http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/news/welfare/wel899.html>

“Cyber” Welfare to Work Resources

This section introduces the reader to the many resources available via the internet. Information regarding pertinent web sites, previous National Service Fellows' reports, and listservs is given below.

WEB SITES

The web is a great resource for anyone who wants to learn more about the many facets of welfare reform and welfare to work. It has served as a key resource for this project. Below are the web site address of some of the more important organizations involved in welfare to work.

General Welfare Reform and Welfare to Work

ACCION- <http://www.accion.org>

American Public Human Services Association (formerly American Public Welfare Association)- <http://www.aphsa.org>

Aspen Institute- <http://www.aspeninstitute.org>

Assessing the New Federalism, Urban Institute Project- <http://newfederalism.urban.org>

Association for Enterprise Opportunity- <http://shoga.wwa.com/~aeo>

Brookings Institute- <http://www.brookings.org>

Catholic Charities USA- <http://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org>

Center for Community Change- <http://www.commchange.org>

Center for Law and Social Policy- <http://www.clasp.org>

Center for Public Policy Priorities- <http://www.cppp.org>

Center for What Works- <http://www.whatworks.org>

Children's Defense Fund- <http://www.childrensdefense.org>

Corporation for Enterprise Development- <http://www.cfed.org>

Dress for Success- <http://www.dressforsuccess.org>

Economic Policy Institute- <http://www.epinet.org>

Electronic Policy Network- <http://www.epn.org>

Goodwill Industries International- <http://www.goodwill.org>

Heritage Foundation- <http://www.heritage.org>

Hudson Institute Welfare Policy Center - <http://www.welfare reformer.org>

IDA Learning Network- <http://idanetwork.org>

Heritage Foundation- <http://www.heritage.org>

Independent Sector- <http://www.indepsec.org>

Institute for the Study of Civic Values (Welfare Reform Resource Page)-

<http://www.libertynet.org/edcivic/welfref.html>

International Union of Gospel Missions- <http://www.iugm.org>

Jobs for the Future- <http://www.jff.org>

Microcredit and Microenterprise Resources- <http://www.bus.utexas.edu/~talbotb/microcredit>
 National Alliance to End Homelessness- <http://www.naeh.org>
 National Association of Manufacturers- <http://www.nam.org>
 National Center for Children in Poverty- <http://www.nccp.org>
 National Center for Fathering- <http://www.fathers.com>
 National Coalition for the Homeless- <http://nch.ari.net>
 National Community Reinvestment Coalition- <http://www.ffhsj.com/fairlend/nrcr.htm>
 Policy.com- <http://www.policy.com>
 Public/Private Ventures- <http://www.ppv.org>
 Research Forum for Children, Families, and the New Federalism- <http://www.researchforum.org>
 Salvation Army USA- http://www.salvationarmy.org/t_usanat.htm
 Seedco- <http://www.seedco.org>
 Trickle Up Program- <http://vita.org/trickle/index.html>
 Urban Institute- <http://www.urban.org>
 Welfare Information Network- <http://www.welfareinfo.org>
 Welfare Reform Academy- <http://www.welfare-reform-academy.org>
 Women in Community Service- <http://www.wics.org>
 YMCA- <http://www.ymca.net>
 YWCA- <http://www.ywca.org>
 21st Century League- <http://www.libertynet.org/~21stcent/>

Business

America Works- <http://www.americaworks.com>
 Business Enterprise Trust- <http://www.betrust.org>
 Business Roundtable- <http://www.brtable.org>
 Business for Social Responsibility- <http://www.bsr.org>
 Catalyst Associates- <http://www.catalystassoc.org>
 Chicagoland Business Partners- <http://www.businesspartners.org>
 National Alliance of Business- <http://www.nab.com>
 National Association of Workforce Boards (formerly National Association of Private Industry Councils) <http://www.work-web.com/napic/home.htm>
 Senior Core of Retired Executives- <http://www.score.org>
 Students for Responsible Business- <http://www.srbnet.org>
 The Welfare to Work Partnership- <http://www.welfaretowork.org>
 Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative- <http://www.wwbic.com>
 Women's Online Business Center- <http://www.onlinewbc.org/docs/w2w.index.html>

National and Community Service

America's Promise- <http://www.americaspromise.org>
 Connect America- <http://www.pointsoflight.org/connectamerica/connectamerica.html>
 Corporation for National Service- <http://www.nationalservice.org>
 Family Pathfinders- <http://www.dhs.state.tx.us/communitypartnerships/familypathfinders>
 Friends of VISTA- <http://www.friendsofvista.org>
 National Service Resource Center- <http://www.etr.org/nsrc>
 National Student Partnerships- <http://www.nspnet.org>
 Points of Light Foundation- <http://www.pointsoflight.org>

Government/Government Related

Child Care Bureau- <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/ccb>

Empowerment Zones- <http://www.ezec.gov>

Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics- <http://www.childstats.gov>

Microenterprise Development Federal Interagency Workgroup-
<http://www.sba.gov/microenter>

National Conference of State Legislators- <http://www.ncsl.org>

National Governors' Association- <http://www.nga.org>

President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities- <http://www.pcepd.gov>

US Conference of Mayors- <http://www.usmayors.org>

US Department of Agriculture: welfare reform, rural-
http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ideas/idea_menu.html

US Department of Agriculture: Food Stamp Program-
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/Default.htm>

US Department of Housing and Urban Development- <http://www.hud.gov>

US Department of Transportation- <http://www.dot.gov>

US House of Representatives- <http://www.house.gov>

US Senate- <http://www.senate.gov>

US Small Business Administration- <http://www.sba.gov/w2w>

US Social Security Administration- <http://www.ssa.gov/welfare/welfare/html>

Vice President Al Gore's Welfare-to-Work Coalition to Sustain Success-

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/WH/EOP/OVP/Work>

White House Welfare Reform Page- <http://www.whitehouse.gov/WH/Welfare>

Workforce Investment Act- <http://usworkforce.org>

LINKS TO OTHER REPORTS ON WELFARE TO WORK AND NATIONAL SERVICE

The following 2 reports explore the role of national service in welfare to work and are available electronically:

Trina P. Barnes and Owen Heleen, National Service Fellows (1998) *Career Ladders, Community Service and Welfare to Work* Corporation for National Service
http://www.nationalservice.org/research/fellows_reports

Leslie Jarmon, Ph.D., National Service Fellow (1998) *National Service and Microenterprise Development as a Welfare to Work Strategy* Corporation for National Service
http://www.nationalservice.org/research/fellows_reports/jarmon.html

HOW TO GET FREE E-MAIL

Using e-mail can be essential as you communicate with business and others. If you don't already have an e-mail address, there are a variety of ways that you can get an address for free. One way is to talk to institutions in your community who may be willing to let you use their networks. For example, a university may be willing to give you the same e-mail privileges that it gives to its students. Similarly, the municipal government of your community may be willing to help you out. Another way to get free e-mail access is through a variety of web based e-mail services. You need to have access to the internet for this but this be helpful if your organization only has one general e-mail address. Check out many of the major search engines for details.

HOW TO ACCESS THE INTERNET FOR FREE

The internet is an important tool for those interested in keeping updated and doing further research into welfare to work. Many community groups, however, do not have the resources to provide this. This does not mean that you can't take advantage of what the internet has to offer. Public libraries, schools, universities, other community groups and centers, and internet cafes are all possible places where you can access the internet for free. There is one web site where you can search for free places to access the internet. Of course, you'll first need to be able to access the internet to view this web page so ask a friend with access if you can use their computer and go to <http://www.idealists.org/access/access.html> and follow the easy instructions.

AN AMERICORPS*VISTA's GUIDE FOR MOBILIZING INTERNET RESOURCES

Former VISTA Brian Geoghegan has produced a guide to the internet expressly written for VISTAs called *A VISTA's Guide for Mobilizing Internet Resources*. This guide will be helpful to anyone who has felt overwhelmed by the internet. This guide is available online at the Friends of VISTA web site at <http://www.friendsofvista.org/wbcont.html>

LISTSERVS

Another way to keep updated on welfare to work, as well as different topics in national service, is to join a listserv. A listserv is an "electronic community" where people interested in similar topics exchanges messages regarding different topics and subsequently share resources. Below is a list of some that will be of interest and instructions on how to sign up for them.

AmeriCorps*VISTA Welfare to Work Listserv

To join in:

- ◆ Go to the web interface at <http://lyris.etr.org/scripts/lyris.pl?enter+vista-w2w>
- ◆ Follow sign on instructions.

Welfare Reform Listserv (administered by the Institute for Women's Policy Research)

To join in:

- ◆ Address an e-mail message to: listserv@american.edu
- ◆ Leave the subject field blank (or "none")
- ◆ Type the following in the body of the message: subscribe WELFAREM-L Your full name
- ◆ You will receive an automatic confirmation via e-mail

VISTAnet Listserv

To join in:

- ◆ Address an e-mail message to: listserv@maelstrom.stjohns.edu
- ◆ Leave the subject field blank (or "none")
- ◆ Type the following in the body of the message: subscribe VISTAnet Your full name
- ◆ You will receive an automatic confirmation via e-mail

AmeriCorps Listserv

To join in:

- ◆ Go to the web interface at http://lyris.etr.org/scripts/lyris.pl?enter=acolist&text_mode=0
- ◆ Follow sign on instructions.



The Welfare to Work Partnership Can Help Your Welfare to Work Program

The Welfare to Work Partnership (The Partnership) is a national, independent, nonpartisan effort of the business community to help move people on public assistance to jobs in the private sector. The Partnership is made up of employers, known as Business Partners, that have committed to hire and retain former welfare recipients without job displacement. The Partnership provides information, technical assistance and support for businesses of all sizes, from all industries and from all areas of the country.

One way that The Partnership can be helpful to your organization is through its online **Solutions Network**. The Solutions Network, made possible by a grant from the IBM Corporation, allows service providers to connect with The Partnership's Business Partners in their community that have committed to hiring and retaining welfare recipients. Using The Solutions Network, service providers can:

- Post information about their organization in a searchable database accessible to businesses nationwide;
- Search for Business Partners in the community that may be interested in partnering with welfare to work organizations and hiring individuals moving from welfare to work; and
- Receive e-mail notification of entry-level job openings.

To access The Solutions Network, a service provider simply needs to fill out a survey describing the welfare to work services that they offer. There are no fees and no other commitments. The Solutions Network is an essential resource for every organization involved in training, placing, and supporting welfare recipients who are transitioning into the workforce.

Another way that The Partnership can be helpful to your organization is through its **CityLink** campaign. CityLink is designed to help impact welfare reform in cities with the highest concentrations of poverty in the nation. Presently, CityLink is targeting the following cities: Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Dallas, Denver, Detroit, Los Angeles, Miami, New Orleans, New York City, Philadelphia, Portland, San Antonio, San Francisco, Seattle, St. Louis, and Washington, DC. By contacting The Partnership, you can be linked with those in the above cities and help make welfare reform successful for your community.

For more information on The Partnership and how they can help you, call 202-955-3005, ext. 325.



Welfare to Work District Contacts

Anchorage, AK	Karen N. Forsland	907-271-4861	karen.forsland@sba.gov
Birmingham, AL	Raymond Hembree	205-731-1338	Raymond.Hembree@sba.gov
Little Rock, AR	Valerie Coleman	501-324-5871 ext. 236	Valerie.Coleman@sba.gov
Phoenix, AZ	Richard T. Ward	602-640-2294	Richard.Ward@sba.gov
Fresno, CA	Jim Henderdson	209 487-5791 ext. 113	James.Henderson@sba.gov
Los Angeles, CA	Dottie Overal	818-552-3202	Dorothy.Overal@sba.gov
Sacramento, CA	Dave Castaneda	916-498-6410	DCastan@sba.gov
San Diego, CA	Deloris Braswell	619-557-7250 ext. 1147	Delores.Braswell@sba.gov
San Francisco, CA	Gloria Minarik	916-498-6425	Gloria.Minarik@sba.gov
Santa Ana, CA	Vikki May	714-550-7420	Vicki.May@sba.gov
Denver, CO	Walter Lee	303-844-5231	Walter.Lee@sba.gov
Hartford, CT	Bernard M. Sweeney	860-240-4700	Bernard.Sweeney@sba.gov
Washington, DC	Cynthia D. Pope	202-606-4000 ext. 345	cynthia.pope@sba.gov
Wilmington, DE	Charles Fisher	302-573-6381	charles.fisher@sba.gov
Jacksonville (North FL), FL	Donna Padgug	904-443-1971	Donna.Padgug@sba.gov
Miami (South FL), FL	Gilbert Colon	305-536-5527	Gilbert.Colon@sba.gov
Atlanta, GA	David Perry	404-853-7673	dwperry1@sba.gov
Honolulu, HI	Kimberly Hite	808-541-3024	Kimberly.Hite@sba.gov
Cedar Rapids, IA	James Thomson	319-362-6405 ext. 203	James.Thomson@sba.gov
Des Moines, IA	Lori Walljasper	515-284-4761	Laura.Walljasper@sba.gov
Boise, ID	Rodney Grzadzieski	208-334-1696 ext. 233	rodney.grzadzieski@sba.gov
Chicago, IL	H. Sam McGrier	312-353-5429	Horace.McGrier@sba.gov
Springfield, IL	Curt Charter	217-492-4416 ext. 101	Curtis.Charter@sba.gov
Indianapolis, IN	Joyce C. Able	317-226-7272 ext. 243	joyce.c.able@sba.gov
Wichita, KS	Tom Means	316-269-6273	Thomas.Means@sba.gov
Louisville, KY	Jeri Grant	502-582-5971 ext. 224	Jeri.Grant@sba.gov
New Orleans, LA	Darnell Guidry	504-589-6685 ext. 230	Darnell.Guidry@sba.gov
Boston, MA	Donna O Connor	617-565-5576	Donna.Oconnor@sba.gov
Springfield, MA	Harold Webb	413-785-0484	Harold.Webb@sba.gov
Baltimore, MD	Martha S. Brown	410/962-2235 ext. 339	martha.brown@sba.gov
Augusta, ME	Patricia Knowles	207-622-8242 ext. 103	patricia.knowles@sba.gov
Detroit, MI	Connie Logan	313-965-1100 ext. 113	Constance.Logan@sba.gov
Minneapolis, MN	Mike Lyons	612-370-2343	Michael.Lyons@sba.gov
Kansas City, MO	Barbara Cadwell	816-374-6754 ext. 247	Barbara.Caldwell@sba.gov
Springfield, MO	Mary E. Fisher	417-864-7670 ext. 128	Mary.Fisher@sba.gov
St. Louis, MO	Patti Guttman	314-539-6600 ext. 255	Patricia.Guttman@sba.gov
Gulfport, MS	Adolf E. Hubmann	228-863-4587	Adolf.Hubmann@sba.gov
Jackson, MS	James McClendon	601-965-4378 ext. 249	James.McClendon@sba.gov
Helena, MT	Gail Hatch	406-441-1081 ext. 123	Gail.Hatch@sba.gov

Charlotte, NC	Martha Sanchez	704-344-6587	Martha.Sanchez@sba.gov
Fargo, ND	Mike Gallagher	701-239-5131 ext. 212	Michael.Gallagher@sba.gov
Omaha, NE	Dwight A. Johnson	402-221-7206	Dwight.Johnson@sba.gov
Concord, NH	Rachael Roderick	603 225-1400 ext. 127	Rachael.Roderick@sba.gov
Newark, NJ	Jesus Sanchez	973-645-4604	Jesus.Sanchez@sba.gov
Albuquerque, NM	Susan Chavez	505-346-6759	Susan.Chavez@sba.gov
Las Vegas, NV	Roger W. Hopkins	702-388-6650	roger.hopkins@sba.gov
Buffalo, NY	Donald D. Butzek	716- 551-5670	Donald.Butzek@sba.gov
New York City, NY	Ernie D'Addario	212-264-5667	Ernest.Daddario@sba.gov
Syracuse, NY	Mike Walsh	315-471-9393	Michael.Walsh@sba.gov
Cincinnati, OH	Debbie Harvey	513-684-2814	Deborah.Harvey@sba.gov
Cleveland, OH	Russ Miller	216-522-4180 ext. 203	Russell.Miller@sba.gov
Columbia, OH	Liz Taylor	803-765-5298	Elizabeth.Taylor@sba.gov
Columbus, OH	Janice Sonnenberg	614-469-6860 ext. 274	Janice.Sonnenberg@sba.gov
Oklahoma City, OK	Sandra Ransome	405-231-5521 ext. 247	Sandra.Ransome@sba.gov
Portland, OR, OR	Moe Mowery	503-326-5209	Marlin.Mowery@sba.gov
Philadelphia, PA	Ana Gallardo	215-580-2707	Ana.Gallardo@sba.gov
Pittsburgh, PA	Anita Ragin	412-395-6560 ext. 129	Anita.Ragin@sba.gov
Hato Ray., PR	Ana Marie Vera	787-766-5422	Ana.Vera@sba.gov
Providence, RI	Jean Sawyer	401-528-4592	g.sawyer@sba.gov
Sioux Falls, SD, SD	Darla Newborg	605-330-4243 ext. 38	Darla.Newborg@sba.gov
Nashville, TN	Nancy Braswell	615-736-5881 ext. 249	Nancy.Braswell@sba.gov
El Paso, TX	Suizie Aguire	915-633-7003	Ruth.Aguirre@sba.gov
Fort Worth, TX	Lavan D. Alexander	817-885-6502	Lavan.Alexander@sba.gov
Harlingen, TX	Gilbert Soliz	956-316-2610	Gilbert.Soliz@sba.gov
Houston, TX	Willianne Lewis	713-773-6500 ext. 222	Willianne.Lewis@sba.gov
Lubbock, TX	Vicky Norton	806-472-7462 ext. 241	Vicky.Norton@sba.gov
San Antonio, TX	Henry Cardenas	210-472-5928	Henry.Cardenas@sba.gov
Salt Lake City, UT	Loy C. Rasmuson	801-524-3207	loy.rasmuson@sba.gov
Richmond, VA	Tammy J. Proffitt	(804) 771-2400 x121	Tammy.Proffitt@SBA.gov
St. Thomas, VI	Carl C. Christensen	809-778-5380	Carl.Christensen@sba.gov
Montpelier, VT	Brenda Fortier	802-828-4422 ext. 206	Brenda.Fortier@sba.gov
Seattle, WA	Carol McIntosh	206-553-7315	Carol.McIntosh@sba.gov
Spokane, WA	Sharon Russell	509-353-2826	Sharon.Russell@sba.gov
Madison, WI	Ann Began	414-297-1178	Ann.Began@sba.gov
Milwaukee, WI	Ann Began	414-297-1178	Ann.Began@sba.gov
Clarksburg, WV	Sharon Weaver	304-623-5631 ext. 239	Sharon.Weaver@sba.gov
Casper, WY	Steve Parker	307-261-6506	Stephen.Parker@sba.gov

Check the SBA web site for the most up to date list at
http://www.sba.gov/w2w/w2w_contacts.html

Utilizing National Service Resource Center Materials

The National Service Resource Center (NSRC) is a unique resource for anyone serving or working on the following national service programs: AmeriCorps*State/National, Tribes and Territories, AmeriCorps*VISTA, National Senior Service Corps, National Civilian Conservation Corps, Learn & Serve K-12 and Higher Ed., America Reads, State Commissions, National Training and Technical Assistance Providers, and the Corporation for National Service staff.

Books, pamphlets, guides, videos, and the like are available for loan subject to some conditions. The NSRC sends you the materials for a specified time for free, and you are expected to mail it back by the due date. For a complete and updated list of NSRC materials, as well as information on conditions of use, call 1-800-860-2684, or go to the web at <http://www.etr.org/NSRC>. The NSRC is constantly updating so be sure to check the web often. Also, the NSRC is in the process of expanding the materials it holds on welfare to work and business partnerships.

READINGS

The following references will be valuable to anyone wishing to expand their knowledge of the topics discussed in this report.

A “*” indicates that the material is in the holdings of the National Service Resource Center (NSRC). See the previous for details on the NSRC.

Welfare Reform and Welfare-to-Work

*American Public Welfare Association (APWA) (1998) *Welfare Check to Paycheck: State Incentives for Businesses to Hire Welfare Clients* Washington: APWA

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Burtless, G (1995) ‘Employment Prospects of Welfare Recipients’ in Nightingale, D S and Haveman, R H (eds.) (1995) *The Work Alternative: Welfare Reform and the Realities of the Job Market* Washington: UI

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Transitional Benefits on the Road from Welfare to Work

It is vital that people moving from welfare to work utilize the many benefits that are available to them. There seems to be evidence, however, that many are not. Many speculate why this happens, but some say it is because once someone leaves welfare to work, they are far removed from the system and may not even realize that they still qualify.

Employers may find it helpful to educate their employees regarding these benefits, possibly using them as a retention tool.

The following is a listing of some of these support or transitional services with relevant web site.

Food Stamps

Food Stamps have been a vital tool in reducing hunger in the US for many years. As many people moving off welfare to take what could possibly be their first job, Food Stamps could provide the extra resources necessary to feed a family. For more information, go to <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns>

Medicaid

Medicaid is a jointly-funded, Federal-State health insurance program for certain low-income and needy people. It covers approximately 36 million individuals including children, the aged, blind, and/or disabled, and people who are eligible to receive federally assisted income maintenance payments. Visit their web site at <http://www.hcfa.gov/medicaid/medicaid.htm>

Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)

CHIP is a relatively new program of the federal and state governments to provide health care to the many children in the national that are uninsured. Many of these children are in families that make too much to still qualify for Medicaid but make too little to purchase their own health care. For more information, go to one of the following web sites: <http://www.insurekidsnow.gov> or <http://www.hcfa.gov/init/children.htm>

Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

The EITC is a tax benefit for working families who meet specified income requirements. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, it serves several purposes, including: reducing the tax burden of many workers; supplementing wages; and putting incentives in place that make work more attractive than welfare. For more information, go to the Center's page at <http://www.cbpp.org/pubs/eitc.htm> or the IRS at http://www.irs.ustreas.gov/prod/ind_info/eitc4.html

To find out about more transitional services (e.g., child care credits, housing vouchers, etc.) consult the "Cyber-Welfare to Work Resources" section in this resource guide under government/government related web site links.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Research & Methodology

A variety of methods were used in the research for this report. These include:

- Compiling a literature review of welfare reform and welfare-to-work, business involvement in social issues, including welfare reform and wtww, and general national service readings;
- Face to face interviews with groups relevant to the project including AmeriCorps*VISTA, Welfare-to-Work Partnership, Vice-President's Coalition to Sustain Success, US Chamber of Commerce, National Alliance of Business, and others.
- Face to face interviews with the majority of AmeriCorps*VISTA National Welfare-to-Work Grantees;
- Phone interviews with different national organizations involved in welfare-to-work;
- Phone interviews with different business involved in welfare-to-work;
- Phone interviews with AmeriCorps*VISTA projects involved in welfare-to-work;
- Administering a questionnaire regarding welfare-to-work to all Corporation for National Service State Offices;
- Attending and presenting at relevant conferences/meetings throughout the US.

Two past experiences were also relied upon and greatly contribute to the ideas formulated in this report. First, as an AmeriCorps*VISTA member at a coalition homeless organization, I began to see how working with different groups, especially business, brought varying ideas and experiences to the table that helped the project move forward. This act of “partnering” or “collaborating” did not happen overnight and was at times frustrating. The AmeriCorps*VISTA team, diverse itself, had a 6 month or so “learning curve” on how to work with business and other groups. It was thought that this project could contribute by helping to eliminate or shorten this learning curve by giving information on how partnerships with business could emerge.

A second experience that contributed greatly to this Fellowship was research I was conducting at the London School of Economics when the announcement for proposals was distributed. I examined how companies in the US were employing welfare recipients, especially in the wake of welfare reform, and applying “lessons to be learned” for the United Kingdom. At the time, the UK was in the early stages of its welfare-to-work strategy and wanted to engage business more. In the past, this did not happen frequently and looking at the American experience served as a sort of “best practice.” The thought was that this would also be of interest to the national service network.

Appendix B

AmeriCorps*VISTA Welfare to Work National Grantees

On October 8, 1998, the Corporation for National Service's CEO, Harris Wofford, announced the recipients of AmeriCorps*VISTA's 3 million dollar welfare to work national grants program. The following six national organizations were chosen:

ACCION International

ACCION International is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to reducing poverty by providing loans and other financial services to poor and low-income people who start their own tiny businesses. An international leader in the field, ACCION is an umbrella organization for a network of microfinance institutions in 13 Latin American countries and 8 U.S. cities.

The AmeriCorps*VISTA project at ACCION places 29 members across the country to:

- ❖ Expand programs which provide credit and technical services to microentrepreneurs who lack access to sources of business credit;
- ❖ Extend outreach to 500-700 new microentrepreneurs;
- ❖ Develop resource centers in each program and management information systems across the network.

*For more information on ACCION and its AmeriCorps*VISTA project contact:*

Catherine Collins

206-328-5454

ccollins@accion.org (e-mail)

<http://www.accion.org> (web page)

Corporation for Enterprise Development

The mission of the Corporation for Enterprise Development (CFED) is to foster widely shared and sustainable economic well being. CFED promotes asset-building strategies, primarily in low-income and distressed communities, that bring together practice, public policy and private markets in new and effective ways.

The AmeriCorps*VISTA project at CFED places 50 members across the country to:

- ❖ Promote asset building by developing partnerships with churches, civic groups, schools, businesses and financial institutions to develop and expand Individual Development Account (IDA) programs to allow low-income persons to save personal funds that are matched by either State or private funds. These funds can be used to either buy a home, pay for education, or start a business, and therefore help people escape poverty through accumulating savings and investment;
- ❖ Create a network among IDA programs around the nation.

*For more information on CFED and its AmeriCorps*VISTA project contact:*

Roberta Lamb/Tiffany Eng

777 N. Capitol Street, NE, Suite 410

Washington, DC 20002

202-408-9788 (phone)

Roberta@cfed.org (e-mail) Tiffany@cfed.org

<http://www.cfed.org> or <http://www.idanetwork.org> (web pages)

National Alliance to End Homelessness

The National Alliance to End Homelessness' (NAEH) mission is to mobilize all sectors of society in an alliance to end homelessness. The NAEH is a nonprofit membership organization dedicated to solving the problems of homelessness and to preventing its continued growth.

The AmeriCorps*VISTA project at the NAEH places 50 members across the country to:

- ❖ Research skills and knowledge required for jobs;
- ❖ Develop job-readiness training;
- ❖ Establish a job bank;
- ❖ Work with business leaders to help ensure that training matched business' needs;
- ❖ Assist in the preparation of business plans for small businesses operated by the host organizations.

*For more information on NAEH and the AmeriCorps*VISTA project contact:*

Steve Berg

1518 K Street, NW, Suite 206

Washington, DC 20005

202-638-1526 ext. 111 (phone) 202-638-4664 (fax)

sberg@naeh.org (e-mail)

<http://www.naeh.org> (web page)

National Association of Workforce Boards (formerly the National Association of Private Industry Councils)

The National Association of Private Industry Councils (NAPIC) represents the interests of the nation's Workforce Investment Boards, local public-private partnerships charged, under the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA), with planning and overseeing education, job training, and employment programs for low-income youth and adults as well as dislocated workers.

The AmeriCorps*VISTA project at NAWB places 48 members across the county to:

- ❖ Create systems to help the “hardest to place” welfare recipients obtain and retain employment by recruiting employers and welfare recipients, providing technical assistance and promoting the program through community outreach.

*For more information on NAWB and the AmeriCorps*VISTA project contact:*

Michelle Dickens

1201 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 350

Washington, DC 20005

202-289-2950 (phone)

National Community Reinvestment Coalition

The National Community Reinvestment Coalition is a nonprofit membership organization that seeks to increase fair and equal access to credit and banking services for lower income and minority communities. NCRC's purpose is to increase the flow of capital to underserved neighborhoods and reverse the disinvestment many of them have experienced. Further, NCRC promotes nondiscriminatory treatment of minorities in obtaining all forms of credit because discrimination is both unfair to those directly affected and detrimental to everybody's well-being.

NCRC promotes community reinvestment by building capacity to accomplish it among existing and emerging community organizations, and by creating the necessary understanding and support among business leaders, elected officials, and government regulators.

*The AmeriCorps*VISTA project at NCRC places 35 members across the country to:*

- ❖ *Support small businesses to serve as employment training resources for moving low-income people into work;*
- ❖ *Remove barriers to employment in locally based microenterprises and small businesses;*
- ❖ *Make services of banks and financial institutions accessible to credit-worthy low-income individuals seeking to start small businesses and microenterprises, or obtain other loans needed to facilitate employment.*

*For more information on NCRC and the AmeriCorps*VISTA project contact:*

Avis Allen

733 15th Street, NW, Suite 540

Washington, DC 20005

202-628-8866 (phone) 202-628-9800 (fax)

<http://www.ffhsj.com/fairlend/ncrc.htm> *(web page)*

Seedco

Seedco, a national private nonprofit corporation based in New York City, provides technical and financial assistance to community-based organizations and local anchor institutions that are working in partnership to revitalize low income communities. Anchor institutions, such as universities, colleges, and health systems, are critical sources of jobs, services, and business opportunities, and Seedco works to leverage their assets in support of community-based revitalization.

The AmeriCorps*VISTA project at SEEDCO places 43 members across the country to:

- ❖ Create workshops and presentation for prospective employers;
- ❖ Train employers on welfare-to-work issues;
- ❖ Create job and resource banks;
- ❖ Conduct small business/microenterprise training.

*For more information on Seedco and the AmeriCorps*VISTA project contact:*

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