

## **HELP AND FUNDING IN HIRING – EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT CAREER RESOURCE CENTERS**

As the economy recovers, businesses large and small will be hiring. Whether this decision is driven by sales, production or manufacturing demands, attrition, business growth or additional products and services, it can be a financial risk. We all know that “hiring smart” is important. It means implementing the due diligence to pre screen and effectively interview applicants before making a decision. This task can sometimes be daunting, time consuming, and can be costly if the new employee does not work out.

One tool that is helpful is to utilize your state’s employment development department’s resource center to get some of that work done for you. These “career resource centers” are located all across the United States. If someone becomes unemployed, they simply register at their local center. They are then issued a card which entitles them to utilize any of the resource centers across the nation, whose sole purpose is to assist clients in finding gainful employment.

Funding comes to these centers from such sources as the Federal Government’s Work Investment Board, Department of Labor, Department of Education, and Veteran’s Administration. Some of these funds are funneled down from that source through state and county agencies. Since the stimulus plan has been implemented, the Work Investment Board budget in the county I live in has been doubled to assist with the rising unemployment rate of 2009.

Whether you work for a large corporation or you are running a small business, this agency can serve as a support in good hiring. They do pre screening for skill set, legal citizenship, legal work visas and background checks. As an employer, you can submit the job requirements and they can match it up with any potential clients. Before you meet them they know a little bit about your company and the job and you know a little bit about them. Should you find your own unemployed candidate, you can ask them to sign up with the resource center and let the center know that you wish to hire that person.

Sometimes funding is available for the general worker in the form of ETP (Employment Training Program) funds or OJT (On the Job Training Programs) or WIA (Work Investment Act) funding. You can request information about the availability of such funding by inquiring at your local resource center. The most common funding available is for new hires.

The program awards 50% of the gross wages to the employer for the first 90 days of employment. The requirements of the employer are (1) to show documentation of the fact that they are a viable business (via copies of business license, workers comp insurance, and business liability insurance, (2) to provide a list of duties and a job description (3) to plan to keep the employee for one year if it works out (You are not obligated to do this but have that intention) and (4) to document a plan for the training that will be done to cover the amount of hours being funded (i.e. 20 hours of safety training, 16 hours of training on frame measuring equipment, 30 hours of training on the paint system, etc).

There are many other programs, such as funding for I-Car classes of a displaced worker as part of the training program, and customized training programs. Our collision repair facility did a customized

training for metal identification of boron, aluminum, and high strength steel, proper repair methodology of the different metals; and all of our technicians and estimators were certified in welding. This was done by an industry specific vendor that was referred to me. I then referred them to the Work Investment Board for approval and we were able to get 80% funding for that training which was done in house.

The fact is, there is a lot of financial support available that businesses can tap into with just a little effort made in return. Whether we agree with the stimulus plan or not, the opportunities are being made available to us and this is a time for Carpe Diem.

For information in your geographical area, you can log on to the website of your employment development department and look under employment resources to locate your local office by zip code. You can then call to inquire, or make an appointment with the business outreach person to inquire about hiring and funding opportunities, which vary from region to region. Another option is to contact your local Work Investment Board to explore with their business outreach person on how you can improve your business with available allotments. One option is to optimize available funding by hiring veterans who are returning from their tour of duty. If they had certain benefits in place, they come with plenty of personal funding for continuing education in the field of their choice. These benefits can be coordinated with Work Investment Board Funding, as they have a Veterans Administration interface.

These are interesting times that are unique to history and require new and creative ideas. These agencies must spend these funds or they will not get re-funded. If it is not your company it will be someone else's who benefits. This is your government and you can only benefit from it if you reach out to do so.

*Should you have any questions about this information, you can contact Kathy Mello, Vice Chair WIN 2009, TGIF Body Shop, Inc. Fremont, CA 510 490 1342 Office 510 364 3623 Cell*