

FY08 New Look Final Report

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Title of your New Look Project: Finding the Way to Employment – Dupage Cares

Partners:

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Special Populations Targeted: (check all that apply)

X Individuals with Disabilities

Implementation Date(s): October 01, 2007 to June 01, 2008

Goals:

A. List long and short-term goals for your New Look Project.

1. The long-term goal of the "Finding the Way to Employment" Program is to establish an expanded and receptive employer base to hire qualified individuals with disabilities. Through these "Business Partners" we will create paid internships and/or employment opportunities.

2. The Illinois core indicators will include: Placement in Employment and Continuing Postsecondary Education.

3. The core indicators will be impacted 100% for those projected to be served and/or engaged over the term of the activities stated above. Numerically speaking, this means that we will have three (3) Business Partners join the project and five (5) students with disabilities will meet the five (5) target short-term goals enumerated below.

4. There are numerous short-term goals of the project. (a) We will establish as "business partners" three (3) Dupage County employers. These employers will be trained in disability awareness, Americans with Disabilities Act, Internal Revenue Services incentives, and how hiring persons with disabilities can positively affect your "bottom line".

(b) The students selected will be immersed in activities of skill acquisition and competency preparatory to community based employment. They will be expected to pass all of their College of Dupage courses. Training for the students will also consist of their involvement in appropriate ancillary activities. This will include: job fairs, mock interviews, seminars, soft skills workshops, posting a resume on-line, and developing an employment portfolio. These are excellent precursors to finding employment.

(c) As appropriate, students will engage in various career interest, skills, aptitude, and personal values assessments available through the College of Dupage Library. These assessment instruments include the Discover, Horizons and the Sigi Plus. Using the results of these assessments will serve as a guide for improved career decision making for the student.

(d) Near the end of the spring 2008 semester we will hold a Recognition Event for the Business Partner Employers and the successfully employed students.

(e) A fifth goal will be to utilize consultation services to develop a student database using the ACCESS software. This will give us short-term and longitudinal contact with the students to measure the success of our interventions and support provided.

The long-term goal is met with the placement of students with disabilities into employment or an internship with the "Business Partners". Our measurement of success comes from the criterion of five (5) students meeting the five (5) targeted short-term goals. Those goals include: passing grades in COD coursework, attendance in programs to elevate their employability skills, engagement in a least one (1) assessment instrument, completion of their employment portfolio, and becoming employed.

Success in the short-term goals will get us to our long-term goal of community based employment for individual with disabilities. There are a host of "Community Partners" (aka, adult service agencies) of which we have an established relationship. Available for support, consultation, and assistance are such agencies as: Fox Valley Project with Industry, the COD Employer Advisory Council, Dupage WorkNet, AbilityLinks of Marianjoy Rehabilitation Hospital, Parents Alliance Employment Project, Dupage Workforce Board, DisabilityWorks, and others. This project will serve as a prototype of success exemplifying partnerships but most importantly getting our target population of students with disabilities employable and employed. Working together we can accomplish more.

B. Explain how those particular goals were aligned with your New Look Project.

The goals stated above were the focus of this New Look Project. Developing employability skills and the employment of College of Dupage (COD) students with disabilities was the driving force of the Project.

C. How did you plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the project in meeting the stated goals?

Through the establishment of Dupage County employers, student participation in career interest inventories and the "Employment Expo", and the placement of students with disabilities in community based employment. While no funds were required from New Look we did create an ACCESS database of students served in the COD "Linkage to Careers Program". That was a targeted goal.

D. Describe plans for sustainability and for accomplishment of the long-term project goals.

The marvelous education, networking, training, and mock interviews will continue under the aegis of the "Employment Expo" event. We have made more individuals aware of the career assessment capabilities located at COD.

Activities:

Describe activities implemented and/or products developed. Submit samples if applicable.

Through various networking activities and engagements along with "cold calls" we met with prospective business employers to promote hiring job seekers with disabilities. We take a fairly assertive, but professional, approach in getting employers and HR people to talk about hiring those with disabilities. Sometimes there is no other way to meet people. The Employment Expo is a large event with over 300 people attending. Employers are invited to attend and also to set-up displays and promotional materials in an exhibition hall. This is another opportunity for professionals and the job seeker to network with employers and for us to make businesses a part of our AbilityLinks database.

The Linkage to Careers for Individuals with Disabilities at the College of Dupage actively recruits and works with students with disabilities. This is a mechanism to assess their employment history, aspirations, and skills. Also, it is a place where we can guide them to appropriate educational and job search resources and opportunities. In the larger picture the College of Dupage along with its partnerships offers a comprehensive array of services to the job seekers with disabilities.

It is through our partners that we are able to offer the "Outstanding Employers Recognition Event". This event was made even more special with funding from the New Look Award.

The reader is also referred to the radio advertisements and brochures which are contained on the flash drive.

Evaluation:

A. What evaluation methods and tools were used in assessing your New Look Project? Please submit a copy of your evaluation tool, if applicable.

The evaluation strategy was to meet the numbers as described in our goal statements. Those were numbers of new employers and new job seekers gaining employment. Having done that we moved on to planning the Employment Expo which had outgrown the available space at COD. Fortunately the DoubleTree Hotel and Guest Suites donated space for the event. We found the "Discover" career assessment instrument available through the COD library to be more than adequate even for the diverse population of students with disabilities that we have.

B. What conclusions were drawn during your assessment? Did you meet your short-term goals? Did you make progress toward meeting your long-term goals?

Finding receptive employers to hire person with disabilities is a major challenge. A great deal of education in "disability awareness" needs to continue with the Human Resources Community, large corporations, and with small businesses. We met our goals but it was not an easy task.

C. What plans do you have for utilizing evaluation feedback in planning for similar activities?

We will continue with the multi-agency consortiums for the "Employment Expo" and the "Outstanding Employer Recognition Event". Building upon these successes and making them even better will be essential.

D. What outcomes or changes occurred to your program as a result of the project?

Using the New Look funds we were able to get many more COD students with disabilities to the "Employment Expo" and to "professionalize" the "Employer Recognition Event".

E. Which of the following Illinois Core Performance Indicators did your project assist your program in reaching? Check all that apply.

Postsecondary

X 4P1 Student Placement

F. Please provide information regarding the impact of your project, including: collaborating agencies, total number of students served, total number of educators served, materials distributed, and other pertinent quantitative information.

Thanks to the Illinois Center for Specialized Professional Support and the New Look Award we were able to bring the vitality of employment to job seekers with disabilities. Three receptive employers were found, more than the five projected job seekers found employment, 60 COD students and prospective students attended the Employment Expo, and twelve outstanding employers were recognized at that event. In total the Employment Expo had 200 job seekers, 50 service providers (educators), and 30 business employers. Copies of printed registration and promotional materials will be found on the flash drive. Information on the New Look Award was shared during a presentation at the Transitions Conference held in March of 2008.

G. Provide feedback received from organizers, participants, and/or observers on the effectiveness of your program or product.

In addition to many very nice thank you letters from student attendees at the "Employment Expo" we received the following from the Marianjoy Foundation. "Thank you for supporting the AbilityLinks Consortium Employment Expo on March 20, 2008. Your support enabling 60 job seekers to participate in the event, supporting 4 service provider registrations, and paying audio-visual event costs further demonstrates College of Dupage's support and commitment for directly assisting job seekers with disabilities. Based upon feedback received from participants, the event was voted highly successful and exceeded our attendance expectations.

Thank you also for sharing in our collective vision to create strong, lasting partnerships by bringing job seekers with disabilities and business employers together to help shape the future of a diverse workforce. Steve thanks so much for your leadership and support. Signed Paul P. Pyrcik, Jr."

H. Based on the results of your evaluation, feedback, and personal reflection, what modifications could be made to improve your New Look Project?

We need to get our Employer Advisory Council more highly committed to finding and educating employers on the value of hiring individuals with disabilities.

Dissemination:

A. Describe plans for dissemination of the project accomplishments, including record of or plans for statewide conference display/presentation. Please provide copies of your activity(s)/product(s) (e.g. promotional materials, educational products, and program descriptions). Electronic samples are preferred.

You will find these products attached.

B. Also, if applicable, provide photos of students participating in your event or using your product. (Digital photos are preferable.) Finally, if you received press coverage of your project, please include news clippings, web addresses, or contact information.

The "Employment Expo" was covered by two radio stations, WBBM and WDCB. The reader is again referred to materials attached that demonstrate student and employer participation.

Technical Assistance Feedback:

A. In general, your experience with the FY08 New Look Project was ...

Excellent

B. The most valuable aspect(s) of the FY08 New Look Project was...

The financial support

C. Did you request any technical assistance for your FY08 New Look Project?

Yes

D. Overall, how was your experience with your Technical Assistance Liaison?

Excellent

E. If anyone were to ask you if the money devoted to the New Look Project has made a difference in your institution's ability to serve special populations, what would you say?

Without reservation the answer would be "yes".

F. Will you consider applying for another New Look Project in the future?

Yes

<u>FY08 New Look Final Budget</u>	<u>FY08 Final Budget</u>
Beginning Balance	<u>\$1500.00</u>
General Supplies and Materials	<u>\$433.98</u>
Other Expenditures* (See Below)	<u>\$1066.02</u>
<u>Total Award Expended</u>	<u>\$1500.00</u>
* Provide detailed description of any expenses listed in the "Other Expenditure" category. Meeting Expenses for the Employer Recognition Event Registrations for students to attend education and career training	