



IN COMMON

Information for the Common Good

Vol. 1, No. 1

April 1998

Supported by

*The Ohio Department
of Education, Division
of Vocational and Adult
Education*

*The Ohio Department
of Human Services*

*The Ohio Bureau of
Employment Services*

*The Ohio One-Stop
Program*

*The Ohio Department
of Development*

*The Ohio Board of
Regents*

*The Ohio Department
of Alcohol & Drug
Addiction Services*

and

*The Ohio State
University Extension*

For the Common Good: Building Linkages Since 1990

“For the Common Good” is a statewide project that has been facilitating the formation of interagency linkage teams throughout Ohio since 1990. The enclosed fact sheet, “Local Interagency Linkage Team Overview,” provides background information about the project, including a list of agencies represented on the State Team and contact information for the 29 active Local Linkage Teams (LLTs).

Since April 1990, when the first Institute was held for the purpose of forming local interagency linkage teams, the political context has changed. Collaboration among agencies is no longer considered a luxury but, instead, is seen as a requirement for funding. The teams that attended the early Institutes recognized the importance of voluntarily initiating or formalizing linkages among local agencies in their communities. Many of these Common Good LLTs used their linkages as the foundation for other efforts, including formal collaboration around One Stops, Even Start, Welfare Reform, Welfare-To-Work, Ohio Family and Children First, and other state and local level workforce and economic development initiatives. This collaboration has led to better integrated and more seamless service delivery to common customers of agencies’ services.

Just as LLTs have had to adjust and adapt to the changing environment, so has the State Team. Recently the State Team has been focusing on ways it can continue to support and sustain the active LLTs. One result is the development of this newsletter, *In Common: Information for the Common Good*. Designed to bring innovative ideas on collaboration to the attention of local teams, each issue will feature articles that will inspire LLT members to innovate and to collaborate. Two LLTs are featured in this first issue and some regular features, designed to provide information about state initiatives and resources, are introduced.

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Common goals...

Common customers...

Common needs...

Common challenges...

Insight: Gallia-Jackson-Vinton-Meigs Linkage and Coordination Team

The Gallia-Jackson-Vinton-Meigs Linkage and Coordination Team was formed in 1991, originally with members from agencies in Gallia, Jackson, and Vinton counties. Meigs County team members were added by 1993. The team coordinator is Mike McPherson from Buckeye Hills JVS in Rio Grande. The current mailing list includes about 70 persons representing over 40 agencies in the area.

When asked about innovative activities the Linkage and Coordination Team has been involved in, Mike didn't hesitate to answer with two examples. The team has built, with the aid of a government grant, an information and referral network that electronically links the four rural counties. Geographically spread over about 1,500 square miles, this network has allowed the 40 to 45 agencies involved with the team to communicate easily and efficiently. Over time, and with additional help from One-Stop, the system has been refined and is now used as a model for various Ohio Bureau of Employment Services systems throughout the state. Another innovation has been service provider fairs, a sort of "interagency training" that brings together several agencies

so that they can share information for better serving customers in need of multiple services.

Mike credits the success of the team to several factors, not the least of which is the willingness of the members to work together. The team works closely and effectively through consensus-building. Every issue that the team addresses is discussed until consensus is reached. The process works--from the beginning of the collaboration in 1991, the Linkage and Coordination Team has met on the first Tuesday of each month, and they haven't missed a month yet! But their collaboration also works for other reasons, including:

- Ease of communication, especially through the use of e-mail;
- Interagency agreements that allow each agency to maximize services available to customers;
- Willingness to work closely together to identify and deal with important issues that would otherwise lie beyond the scope of individual programs; and
- Access to funds from a variety of sources (such as ABLE, JTPA, and One-Stop, among others) that would otherwise be unavailable.

The primary impact of the Gallia-Jackson-Vinton-Meigs Linkage and Coordination Team is that services are easier to obtain for customers within the target populations. Through the interagency agreements, Mike has been able to help students at the JVS when they needed assistance from other agencies by setting up the appointments and making sure they have the necessary materials.

Although the team can certainly be proud of their own accomplishments, the successes of their customers also confirm the hard work of the team members and their agencies. Mike gave several examples of students who had achieved educational and employment success from a 40-hour program in vocational assessment and career exploration that the local Department of Human Services and Department of Education had established together (which went well beyond the 10-hour state minimum): One student who identified an interest in social work has earned a bachelor's degree in social work and is now working as an evaluator. Several other students have successfully completed programs to become Licensed Practical Nurses, and another ABLE student went on to the University of Rio Grande through the Crossroads student retention program, was later hired by one of the Team's participating agencies, and now teaches in a literacy program.

The Linkage and Coordination Team is actively involved in a number of programs and initiatives, including One-Stop, School-to-Work, and Welfare-to-Work. Mike believes that the success that the team has experienced in working together on these and other activities can be credited to the assistance and support of the Common Good State Team, but the Gallia-Jackson-Vinton-Meigs Linkage and Coordination Team should certainly give themselves a pat on the back!

Resource Corner

Are you looking for a new approach to needs assessment? Information from the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) Institute might be the answer. Because they took issue with the traditional focus of service providers on "needs and deficiencies of neighborhoods," John McKnight and John Kretzmann, founders of ABCD, developed the asset-based approach to community development. With this approach, community building begins with the process of locating the assets, skills, and capacities of residents, citizens, associations, and local institutions and connecting them in ways that multiply their power and effectiveness. More information on this approach is available in McKnight's and Kretzmann's *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets*, published in 1993. The book can be ordered from ACTA Publications, 4848 North Clark Street, Chicago, IL 60640; telephone (800) 397-2282; fax (800) 397-0079. The \$15.00 cost covers shipping and handling.

Part of Northwestern University's Institute for Policy Research, ABCD also has a web site (URL: <http://www.nwu.edu/IPR/abcd.html>) that features information about other publications and an electronic discussion group that connects community builders around the country who wish to share their experiences and exchange ideas. The Capacity Inventory and instructions in its use can be accessed through this web site.

Insight (continued)

For more information about the Gallia-Jackson-Vinton-Meigs Linkage and Coordination Team, please contact Michael McPherson, Buckeye Hills JVS, PO Box 157, Rio Grande, OH 45674; Phone: (740) 245-5334; E-mail: mmcpherson@eurekanet.com.

Insight: Greene County Agency Coordinating Team

The Greene County Common Good Local Linkage Team, now called the Agency Coordinating Team (ACT), was formed in 1992 by the directors of Greene County's offices for JTPA, OBES, the Greene County Career Center (JVS), and Human Services. They were later joined by representatives from the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation, Children's Services, MR/DD, Head Start, and the Family and Children First Council. Through the Family and Children First Council, ACT now works with over forty agencies in Greene County. The current Team coordinator is Carol Shaw.

Paul Brown, manager of the Tecumseh Workforce Development Board and a member of the State Common Good Team, and Carol Shaw, coordinator of the Greene County ACT and a teacher at the Greene County Career Center, focused on four aspects of ACT that they felt were especially innovative or important in the development of interagency collaboration in Greene County. The first to be mentioned was the annual agency inservice day. Now in its sixth year, the event was originally held to acquaint the four founding agencies with each other's services and to explore means for developing interagency collaborations. It was so successful that they have been holding it every spring to continue to provide information and support for interagency involvement.

The agency inservice day, however, has not been the only means for fostering collaboration. Another success has been the recent development of a common electronic application form by Human Services, JTPA, OBES, and the Greene County Career Center. The form, still undergoing revisions, provides the means for electronically registering and sharing appropriate information on common customers. An information and referral manual has been developed in conjunction with the form.

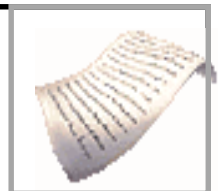
Perhaps the most notable achievement of the Greene County ACT has been its success in being one of the first Common Good local linkage teams to formally collaborate with OBES. By doing so, Greene County paved the way for other counties to involve OBES in their interagency activities.

The best result of the Common Good Team formation has been that barriers between agencies have been broken down. Rather than each agency defending its own "turf" and customers, involved agencies now concentrate on assisting "our"

customers. Services have become more personalized, both for the customers and for the staff. Frontline staff are now assisting each other on a much more frequent (sometimes daily) basis. In Greene County, such interaction has been greatly enhanced by the physical location of several of the agencies. At the same time that the Greene County Team formed, the county commissioners' office bought an abandoned strip mall and relocated the offices for Human Services, OBES, JTPA, Children's Services, and MR/DD there to form the Greene County Social Services Center. Now agencies are located across halls instead of across town, enabling the agencies to assist their common customers in a more timely and efficient manner.

Interagency collaboration is alive and well in Greene County. This year's agency inservice day was held on Friday, March 13 (what a lucky day!) and honored Susan Imel and Jeff Gove, coordinators of the State Common Good Team, for their leadership and support on behalf of the common good of Ohio.

For more information about the Greene County ACT, please contact Paul Brown, Manager, Tecumseh Workforce Development Board, 571 Ledbetter Road, Xenia, OH 45385; phone (937) 372-3381; fax: (937) 372-7640; e-mail: dod_kclmi@obes01.al.ohio.gov; or Carol Shaw, Greene County Career Center, 2960 W. Enon Road, Xenia, OH 45385; phone: (937) 376-7579.

NEED TO KNOW***Tax Credits for Employers of Qualified Job Seekers***

Two tax credits--the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) and the Welfare-to-Work Tax Credit--are available to employers, courtesy of Congress and the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997. The WOTC is for up to \$2,400 per new qualified employee who begins work before July 1, 1998. The Welfare-to-Work Tax Credit, good for up to \$8,500 per new hire, may be available to employers who hire long-term welfare recipients between December 31, 1997 and May 1, 1999. For further details on qualifications and the application process, visit the WOTC website (<http://www.doleta.gov/wotc.htm>) or contact Carolyn Casper-Du Vall, Coordinator, WOTC, Employment Service Division, Ohio Bureau of Employment Services, 145 South Front Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215; telephone: (614) 644-7206; fax: (614) 752-9236.

For the Common Good is supported by funds from the Ohio Department of Education, Division of Vocational and Adult Education. For further information, contact Susan Imel, Center on Education and Training for Employment, 1900 Kenny Road, Columbus, Ohio 43210-1090; (614) 292-4353, or (800) 848-4815, both extension 4-7684; E-mail: imel.1@osu.edu.

Web Site Under Construction:
<http://literacy.kent.edu/CommonGood/>



Coming Up:



Common Good Follow-Up Meeting: May 14, 1998

Holiday Inn West

I-270 and Roberts Road

Columbus, Ohio

8:30-9:30 a.m.--Registration and Continental Breakfast

9:30-3:30 p.m.--Program (including lunch)

For the Common Good

Center on Education and Training for Employment

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