



# IN COMMON

## *Information for the Common Good*

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### **Following the Follow-up: Workforce Development**

Workforce development is a hot topic these days, especially in light of the publicity that Welfare Reform, Welfare-To-Work, and School-To-Work, among others, have received recently. The Common Good Follow-Up Meeting, held on May 14 in Columbus, took advantage of the times and asked Jim Mermis, Chief of Staff of the Office of The Lieutenant Governor, and Nancy Mossholder, co-owner of Express Personnel, a Columbus-based private employment placement service, to represent two current public and private views on workforce development.

From Jim Mermis's point of view, the workforce development issues facing the state of Ohio have nothing to do with politics—whoever is governor will have to face these issues as a top priority. Mermis's "overview of current Ohio workforce development issues" included a summary of the results of the field hearings sponsored by the Governor's Workforce Development Board and the Legislative Service Commission for Workforce Development. Several themes emerged from the 350 testimonies that were provided at these hearings, including a need for responsiveness to employers, improved reporting, improved performance measures, improved coordination, single point of access, simplicity, dealing with local issues, transportation, and child care. In addition to the hearings, four focus groups were conducted with employers in Mansfield and Columbus; these produced responses similar to those aired at the hearings. Following the hearings and focus groups, a task force was identified to develop a report that would outline and identify the legacy of the current administration, identify the accomplishments that are possible in the remaining seven months of the administration, and propose steps for preparing for the next administration. Mermis identified four initiatives affecting workforce development in Ohio that have been systemic in nature with a broad-based impact: One-Stops; Ohio Works First; School-To-Work (STW); and For the Common Good. All of these initiatives, along with the current administration and the economy, have contributed to the present condition of workforce development.

Nancy Mossholder explained her perception of workforce development issues through a detailed description of how her business matches employers and job seekers, and follows up with both to assure a good match. Issues that are particularly important are those related to job seekers' understanding of employer expectations and the awareness of employers of the skills, abilities, and attitudes held by the new employees.

The two "Insight" columns in this issue of *In Common* came from the challenges and successes that were shared by the members of the twelve Common Good teams who attended the Follow-Up Meeting. The CARS program in Clermont County received a very favorable response, so information for setting up similar local programs is outlined in the "Need to Know" section that immediately follows the "Insight" on the CARS of Clermont County. Several teams reported their involvement with local One Stops, and the Fairfield County team shared a draft of the new brochure for the Fairfield County Interagency One-Stop. Fairfield County's story is only one of many in which a Common Good team's involvement with the One-Stop initiative has resulted in an evolution into a different entity serving the common good.

*Common goals...*

*Common customers...*

*Common needs...*

*Common challenges...*

## ***INSIGHT—Fairfield County Interagency One Stop***

The Fairfield County Common Good team was originally formed in 1991 with representatives from the Fairfield Career Center, Fairfield County Human Services, the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services, the Drug and Alcohol Recovery Center, Lancaster High School, Community Action, Fairfield County Health Department, Fairfield County Children's Services, and Adult Basic and Literacy Education. There are now approximately thirty agencies represented in the Fairfield County Interagency One Stop, which is the result of the merging of the Common Good Team with the existing Interagency Task Force and the Fairfield County One Stop initiative. The contact person for the Fairfield County Interagency One Stop is William Finn.

The Fairfield County Interagency One Stop has been engaged in a number of successful initiatives and activities, including:

- developing a universal brochure to market One Stop to area employers;
- utilizing the computers purchased by Common Good to promote and secure employment for all customers;
- planning and coordinating various annual Job Fairs and Job Expos;
- developing and maintaining monthly meetings;
- working together to produce a resource guide for agency and customer use; and
- using the Internet to post jobs, find job openings, and make referrals.

Monthly meetings are used by the Fairfield County Interagency One Stop for informing and updating member agencies about various services, regulation changes, and special projects, discussing common problems, and finding ways to make program operations more efficient and less duplicative. Many agencies have restructured their service delivery systems to be more generic and "In Common" in order to link together more efficiently. Together the agencies of the Interagency One Stop are trying to take a "holistic" approach to case management to address a full range of customer needs in an efficient manner that is simple to administer and easy for the customer to access regardless of what agency they go to for service. The Fairfield County Interagency One Stop is continually evolving and developing new projects to meet the needs of common customers.

Among the new projects currently under development is a new monthly meeting designed specifically for area employers. This project, to begin in July, is called L.E.A.N. – Lancaster Employment Assistance Network. The purpose of L.E.A.N. is to work with area employers face to face as a group to determine their needs and to use the Interagency One Stop as the primary vehicle for linking them with Interagency One Stop customers. Working as a team will eliminate redundancy with regard to employer contacts and job development.

Another new interagency project currently being implemented is one that focuses on the areas of pre- and post-employment services. The pre-employment component will assist common customers in becoming job ready, and several employers who are working with the project will hire those clients who complete the pre-employment courses. The courses are offered through the local vocational school. The post-employment piece will focus on helping customers move from entry-level positions to higher paid positions with their employer through management/supervisory training and other courses to be delivered through Ohio University-Lancaster. Retention services to the employers will also be offered because of a high turn over rate among new employees. To keep the employee on the job, these services will include arranging for secondary child care, finding alternative transportation, counseling, and other services as necessary.

### **RESOURCE CORNER**

Are you looking for family support resources and services? You may want to take a look at the publications and services of the **Family Resource Coalition of America**. The Family Resource Coalition of America "is a membership, consulting, and advocacy organization that...builds networks, produces resources, advocates for public policy, provides consulting services, and gathers knowledge to help the family support movement grow."

The FRCA makes available to both members and non-members a number of books, fact sheets, resource guides, curricula, policy papers, reports, posters, and other products and services for persons and programs "who provide community-based, preventive, culturally relevant resources for families." Items of interest include "Building Villages to Raise Our Children," "Common Purpose: Strengthening Families and Neighborhoods to Rebuild America," "Programs to Strengthen Families: A Resource Guide," and "Together We Can: A Guide for Crafting a Profamily System of Education and Human Services."

Membership in the FRCA includes the following benefits: a free subscription to the quarterly *FRCA Report*; a free subscription to the bimonthly newsletter *Connection*; publication discounts; and optional membership in FRCA affinity groups such as the African American and Latino Caucuses.

Membership is available to both individuals and organizations and publications may be purchased by non-members at a slightly higher cost. A "Publications and Services" catalogue can be obtained from The Family Resource Coalition of America, 20 N. Wacker Drive, Suite 1100, Chicago, IL 60606; Phone: (312) 338-0900; Fax: (312) 338-1522.

The Fairfield County Interagency One Stop is also working on a new drug and alcohol piece which will allow the current program to expand to provide more comprehensive services to those customers who are dealing with substance abuse and co-dependency issues. These particular issues have become more evident now than ever before because most easy-to-serve clients have left the system and the Interagency One Stop is now serving mostly hard-to-serve individuals, many of whom have multiple barriers to overcome.

Last but not least... The Fairfield County Interagency One Stop is also trying to fit one last piece into the puzzle by developing a project that will address the employment needs of the absent parents in the community, especially those fathers who should be paying child support and don't. As Bill points out, "If these individuals were mandated to attend our job club, chances are they would become employed. If they become employed, they would be able to pay support. If they pay support, many of the single mothers on public assistance would be able to leave welfare behind due to the income they would receive from the absent parent." The Interagency One Stop is working with Community Action, child support enforcement agency, and the county courts to make this project mandatory for all non-paying absent parents.

Bill sums up the work of the Fairfield County Interagency One Stop very neatly: "We think each of these projects in conjunction with each other will build a strong service delivery net under our customers to move them toward self-sufficiency."

For more information about the Fairfield County Interagency One Stop and its various projects and activities, please contact William Finn, Fairfield County Department of Human Services, 121 E. Chestnut, PO Box 890, Lancaster OH 43130-0890; phone: (740) 687-6817; e-mail: billf@greenapple.com. The Fairfield County Interagency One Stop is also accessible through the World Wide Web at <http://www.bright.net/~osscsco/>.

### ***INSIGHT—The CARS of the Clermont Employment Services Network***

The agencies of the Clermont Employment Services Network have been collaborating as a Common Good team since 1991 and have worked together since January 1990. Founding agencies include the Clermont County Department of Human Services, Clermont Educational Service Center, Ohio Bureau of Employment Services, JTPA, JOBS, Live Oaks Career Resource Center, Grant Career Center, and the Chamber of Commerce. Other agencies participate according to the project or initiative, such as One-Stop, School-To-Work, and the Clermont Automobile Recycling Service Project (CARS). CARS is administered through Clermont County Community Services, which was not part of the original Com-

mon Good team but attended regularly. With the assistance of Legal Aid of Cincinnati, Clermont Community Services took on the administration of CARS. This "Insight" column will focus on the CARS project.

The Clermont Automobile Recycling Service Project was developed and implemented about six years ago to provide private transportation to low-income participants in the JOBS program, JTPA program, and now TANF. Donated and purchased used vehicles that have been inspected, repaired (if necessary), and approved for use are made available for leasing to eligible participants through Clermont County Community Services. Participants must apply through an approved agency, which actually submits the application on behalf of the participant. A selection committee, comprising an insurance agent, a banker, a representative from Legal Aid, and a community agency representative (Mark Paduk, who provided the information in this article), reviews the applications to determine the recipients of leases and the conditions of each lease (including monthly payment, length of time, insurance costs, and type of vehicle).

The primary goal of the CARS program, as stated in the project's goal statement, is "to enable agency clients to achieve self-sufficiency by eliminating transportation as a barrier in obtaining employment, continuing education, accessing medical services and acquiring independence from an abusive relationship."

The key to the program's success has been the collaboration of the sponsoring agencies to create the CARS program and the leadership and administration of Clermont County Community Services. If you are interested in creating a similar program, see the "Need to Know" box on page 4 for more information.

#### **WEB SITE UPDATE**

Have you visited the web site for "For the Common Good"? Take a look at <http://literacy.kent.edu/CommonGood/> Please remember, though, that it is still under construction!

**LOCAL TEAM PAGES:** Did you know that each active local linkage team has a page available at the Common Good web site? Right now, only the team coordinator's name, address, and phone number are listed. But each team can add much more—team rosters, activities, success stories, anything you want other people to know about your team!

To place information on your team's page, contact Nikki Strader by e-mail at [strader.1@osu.edu](mailto:strader.1@osu.edu) or through mail, phone, or fax at the Center on Education and Training for Employment, 1900 Kenny Road, Columbus, OH 43210-1090; phone: (800) 848-4815, ext2-7033; fax: (614) 688-3729.

## NEED TO KNOW

Are you interested in developing and implementing a car-leasing program in your area? Here are some things to consider as you plan the project.

➤ **Be willing to take a risk:** One of the agencies on the team needs to be willing take the risk of leading the program.

➤ **Determine the need:** What is the current transportation situation in your county? What services are provided by public transportation services, car-pooling projects, independent nonprofit transportation agencies, and private taxi services? Who is and is not being served? A needs assessment for the county and/or surrounding geographical area can identify the problems in quantifiable terms that will help you determine the extent of the need and its possible solution(s).

➤ **Establish applicant eligibility:** The CARS project limited participation to those customers who took the initiative to talk to a sponsoring agency (JTPA, JOBS, YWCA House of Peace) and who fit the qualifications of the sponsoring agency, the selection committee, and the legal requirements for driving in Ohio. The needs assessment will also help guide which customers to target.

➤ **Outline and develop an organizational framework:** Who will be in charge of administering the program? Who will own and/or oversee the storage lot? Who will review the applications? Who will distribute applications or sponsor applicants? How will the program be supported?

➤ **Identify potential sources of automobiles and automobile repair:** Individuals and businesses alike may be willing to donate used vehicles as tax deductions. Also consider low-cost purchases. Be willing to bargain if necessary. Partner with a mechanic will will inspect and repair the cars. Set a limit for how much may be invested in each car.

➤ **Develop an application process:** Participating agencies may want to collaborate to develop a common application form and uniform application procedures.

➤ **Determine conditions of the lease agreement:** Legal assistance may be necessary to develop the general terms of the lease agreement, including monthly payment terms, termination of lease, insurance, vehicle licensing and registration, use of vehicle, and statement of warranty.

For more information about the CARS project, contact Jim West or Joyce Booth at Clermont County Community Services at (513) 732-7182 or Mark Paduk at Clermont College, 4200 Clermont College Dr., Batavia OH 45140; phone: (513) 732-5331; e-mail: Mark.paduk@uc.edu



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