

On The Job Training Program Provides Lasting Benefits For Business, Job Seekers

Through a unique public/private sector partnership, the on-the-job training program is providing invaluable to employers and job seekers in the east Multnomah and Washington County areas.

Over the past 2½ years, the program has assisted over 1500 job seekers and hundreds of businesses. Funded by the Multnomah-Washington Private Industry Council (through the Federal Job Training Partnership Act or JTPA) and managed by the Beaverton, Gresham and Hillsboro Chambers of Commerce, the program focuses on providing an effective workforce for employers while defraying the cost of training employees.

There are several employer incentives for using the program including reimbursement of half of employees training wages. The type of job and the qualifications of the employee determine the length of the training periods, which run from 30-180 days. These programs are tailored to fit the needs of both the employers and the employees. Employers also reap the benefits of being able to streamline the hiring process and receiving pre-screened applicants. Businesses retain total control throughout this process and make all decisions related to hiring, firing, etc.

One of the many success stories from the OJT program is Tracey Turner of Gresham. Tracey is a single parent with two children who until recently had been a homemaker for seven years. When Tracey and her husband divorced, she was faced with the problem of supporting herself and her two children. Tracey did receive child support, but \$400.00 a month was not enough for her family to survive on. The welfare cut off for a family of three is \$397.00, just three dollars less than she was receiving in child support. Tracey went to the Gresham Chamber of Commerce for help. The Chamber helped her enroll in Project Self-Sufficiency, a program for single parents through which she was able to obtain a "housing voucher", which helps pay the rent each month.

With additional support services in the form of transportation and job counseling, Tracey was able to find an on-the-job training position as the assistant manager of Patti's Bridal Decor and More in Gresham. Tracey has learned a variety of new skills including planning, catering and customer service. She is now able to support her family and is looking forward to the future with renewed hope.

Tracey wasn't the only winner in this situation. Patti's Bridal Decor and More got an enthusiastic and committed new employee and received a 50% reimbursement for Tracey's training wages. On-the-job training provides lasting benefits to employers and employees.

To qualify as a participant in this program, applicants must meet certain income requirements (specified under the JTPA) and must be 18 years of age. Employers wishing to hire a trainee from this program must pay an approved hourly wage, must employ the trainee for at least 32 hours each week and must display a commitment for a long-term employment situation.

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