

## **Anoka County Job Training Center Library Partnership MOU and Staff Training**

While an informal relationship existed prior to 2005, the Anoka County Job Training Center (the local WIB) and the Anoka County library system began building their relationship in earnest in 2005. With both systems providing services to job seekers, they recognized the importance of knowing each other's resources and capabilities so that they could make informed referrals and ensure clients received the best services available.

In 2005, in response to a state workgroup recommendation, the Anoka County Job Training Center designated an official liaison from the Minnesota WorkForce Center-Anoka County (the county's one-stop center) to the county library system. The liaison met with county library staff and together they agreed to a number of activities:

- The liaison provides tours of the one-stop center and its available resources, and trains library staff to use any of its resources that are available over the Internet. Tours and training opportunities are available for new library staff and as refreshers for existing staff.
- The liaison provides libraries with marketing materials detailing the one-stop center's available resources, as well as monthly workshop flyers, which library staff can download electronically and copy and disseminate at library locations.
- Library staff educates one-stop center staff about the library system's resources, trains them to use the library's website resources, and provides five temporary library cards, which are required to access these web resources.
- Library and one-stop center staff share information about the books and occupational reference materials each has. The libraries have ordered some of the more popular one-stop center resources for their locations, and the one-stop center has a shelf dedicated to providing library resources and library card application forms.

The liaison devotes only about two hours per month of her time, to the partnership, though the initial start-up of activities required more of an investment.

The WIB-library partnership has continued to grow. Management from each now meets quarterly to discuss ways to enhance the relationship and coordinate grant efforts. The one-stop center is planning to add the library system to the general memorandum of understanding (MOU) it has with all of its partner organizations, which is being renewed on June 30, 2010.

The one-stop center and library system also are working with the state to determine how library patrons can access the computer interface currently only available at all state one-stop centers, from library computers. This interface is an entry-point to valuable job search and career research resources. One-stop center customers are familiar with accessing these resources using this interface.

The one-stop center views the library system as a natural partner. There is only one one-stop center in the 424-square-mile Anoka County, and it is the state's busiest center, serving 400-500 customers per day. There are, however, eight county libraries (and two affiliate libraries, which participate in the partnership at a reduced level), which can provide self-service job seekers with significantly more access to the resources they need for their job search, and frequently have a shorter wait time for a computers as well.

The WIB recommends that all WIBs consider pursuing a library partnership. Libraries can help WIBs leverage their resources at a time of unprecedented demand for services. A good first step in establishing a relationship is conducting an assessment of library resources. Then move to cross-training staff and bringing the leadership together.

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