

Fredrick County Workforce Development Board Virtual Job Board for a Multi-Employer Worksite

The Fredrick County Workforce Development Board recognized that employment opportunities in that Maryland county were dominated by the Fort Detrick army base and was determined to facilitate the match between job opportunities and job seekers. The task, however, was complicated by the fact that Fort Detrick wasn't a *single employer*, but rather a *location* housing six cabinet-level agencies and dozens of contractors, subcontractors, and independent businesses, all of which operated their own human resources function.

When the WIB first began meeting with the Fort Detrick employers and some of the Fort's various associations, it was considering opening a one-stop center on or near the Fort's premises or convincing the Fort's employers to organize their employment opportunities. Eventually, though, the WIB realized that neither of those options was viable, and it began searching for its own solution. In the end, the WIB developed the Fort Detrick Employment Guide (http://www.frederickworks.com/fortdetrick_landingpage.php), a website within its one-stop center's website (Fredrick County Workforce Services - www.frederickworks.com), with information on all of the Fort's employers and links to the employers' own websites and job listings.

The Employment Guide organizes the employers' jobs information, and makes it available to the public in a systemized way. It also has other features to help individuals in their job search, including information on how to apply for jobs at the Fort and how to obtain a security clearance, as well as links to the WIB's site and its general information on job search strategies. The WIB has added a live feed with up-to-date information on jobs available anywhere in the Fort and a survey tool to gather information on how to improve the site.

It took the WIB two years from when it first started working with the Fort until it was able to launch the site, but much of that time was spent determining what the best approach was. Once the WIB decided to create the site, it took seven months for research, design, and content development. Maintaining the site requires 10 percent of the webmaster's time to keep the site current and accurate; more when she develops improvements.

In developing the Employment Guide, the WIB met with all of the organizations that would have a stake in the site. Once the WIB explained how the site would work, the organizations all came on board, and formal agreements were not needed. The employers recognized that the WIB was improving access to the information that was already publicly available on their own sites, and increasing their outreach to potential employees.

Since the Guide was launched in May 2008, it has been viewed over 48,000 times by nearly 30,000 unique visitors. According to the online survey that had been added to the site, 85 percent of respondents indicated that after visiting the Fort Detrick Employment Guide, they learned more about employment opportunities on the Fort than they had known previously. Sixty-three (63) percent said that they were able to find job openings that met their interests.

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