

Job Development Mentors Project **(JDMP)**

The Job Development Mentors Project is designed to create a state-wide infrastructure for professionals who are responsible for developing jobs for individuals in supported employment; while at the same time, working towards increasing the pool of well-trained job developers around the state of Wisconsin. For the first year, this project begins by having three seasoned job developers serve as mentors to job developers in three areas of the state. The role of the mentor is to assist the job developers in using a person-centered approach to create innovative employment opportunities. The mentor/job developer pairing works side-by-side to incorporate new approaches to job development in businesses and industries that have previously been unattainable for supported employment. On-going training and feedback is a critical component in the mentor relationship.

The Job Development Mentors Project is an opportunity to breathe new life into supported employment and to recognize the importance of community-based employment as a critical component to community inclusion. The task of developing employment in the community is frequently a lonely job. The job requires the job developer to have an expertise in human services and the business world. The job developer needs to have the ability to generate a professional and social network with members of the community. It can take many years of persistence, patience and creativity, before a person becomes a seasoned job developer.

This initiative is sponsored by the DHFS and the Pathways Project. The Job Developers Mentors Project is sponsoring three state-wide gatherings a year focused specifically on job development. Together, job developers will participate in discussions in addressing the barriers to the job development process and generating tips from those who have shared similar experiences.

Current JDMP sites are Riverfront Inc. in Rock, La Crosse, Juneau, Monroe, Buffalo, Jackson counties, Ventures Unlimited in Washburn, Sawyer, and Barron counties, Careers in Racine and Kenosha and on a limited basis, Chippewa River Industries in Chippewa County.

The Wisconsin Job Developers' Network Web-site

The Wisconsin Job Developers' Network web-site is designed for professionals who obtain employment for individuals with disabilities in the general workforce. The purpose of this web-site is to build connections among job developers in Wisconsin by exchanging information that result in inclusive employment.

The Wisconsin Job Developers Network is a unique way to share job leads, news, information and resources. Items posted onto the web-site can be shared among the membership. Joining the network allows for:

- Immediate and fluid communication between members;
- Discussion boards that address challenges and trends in job development;
- Sending Help requests to others in the network for resources and assistance;
- Dialog with experienced job developers who have more than twenty-years of knowledge on job development strategies and approaches; and
- Links to on-line job postings, trainings, and organizations.

Currently site is up and running. See www.jobdevelopers.net and check WI to see our site. We are always looking for success stories, training opportunities and resources for this site. If you have anything you want to add please contact Tammy Hofmeister @ hofmetc@DHFS.state.wi.us