Ready to Work!
County of Venango/Erie Career Link

Transcript of Webinar

YouthBuild Webinar Series

Meet the Workforce Innovation Fund Round Two Grantees:
Grant Project Presentations

Wednesday, February 17, 2016
THOMAS KIDD: Thank you, Rachel. A little bit about us. The County of Venango is the fiduciary agent that has the grant, but the Greater Erie Community Action Committee or called GECAC is who I actually work for. And we are the program – project managers for this and the program manager. We had a funding level of $3 million, and it's an implementation study with outcomes and cost allocation analysis. And IMPAQ International is our evaluation firm.

What we're looking to do is we're looking to increase service delivery to job seekers and area employees. So we're doing that by providing innovative and intensive case management, education, and mentoring services to reduce and eliminate real and perceived work barriers.

So what we're doing there is we're basically delivering some different occupational career readiness training that will increase the participant's confidence and skill building and increase their job readiness. And like others talked about, it's to develop a pipeline of industry certified job ready, career ready people and that will give them the potential – give potential employees in the healthcare and manufacturing sectors.

Some of the project components that we have is our target populations are comprised of individuals that we see with one or more workforce barriers. And what we're planning to do is we'll take those clients through a number of various assessments to determine their skill levels and areas for improvement and then we'll take them and create individual employment plans for each of those folks and we will work them through those plans over the course of a few months.

Each will be individualized so it will be different timing for different individuals. But simultaneously we will create or work with them on the workforce career readiness training, whether it's in manufacturing or healthcare.

Some of our key partners in the workforce development are working with the WIBs up in this part of the state of Pennsylvania, many of the social service agencies in Northwest PA, dealing with issues from mental health to housing to educational issues. They're working with us. Then with business community, working with the different advanced diversified manufacturing partners in Erie and the regional manufacturing partners and also different various healthcare organizations.

MR. KEATING: And, Tom, could you just speak up a little bit? We're getting some feedback about that.

MR. KIDD: Okay. Is it better?

MR. KEATING: That sounds okay to me.

MR. KIDD: Okay. Sorry. I'm not sure why. So then we're also working with a number of educational partners to talk to them about the different components of this, whether they're in healthcare or whether they're in manufacturing.

Some of our outcomes, we hope that 90 percent of our participants will attain at least one career enhancing credential or certificate. We also hope that 70 percent of the participants will secure
some sort of related employment within 90 days of completing the training modules identified in their IEPs. And then we also hope that 70 percent will achieve 12-month retention, which then they will no longer need their TANF or their UC benefits. And from the employer side, we hope that they report cost savings due to reduced training costs and less turnover for our employers.

Some of the big successes we've had is just building relationships with a lot of these organizations in the area, whether it's been business or social services, and we've had a great buy-in from a lot of the employers in the area to say they would love to hire folks that would go through these training programs with us.

And some of the challenges, though, that we have been facing is just getting to implementation, which I know a lot of you are faced with. And then the challenge will also be recruiting and keeping the individuals motivated as we move them through the program because this is a long haul career enhancing experience for them. So look forward to talking with everybody else. Thank you.