

# What Works!

## Job Strategies for Homeless People



## Video Training Package



U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
Community Planning and Development  
Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs

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***Job Strategies for Homeless People  
Video Training Package***

**Prepared by  
Abt Associates Inc.  
4800 Montgomery Lane  
Bethesda, MD 20814**

**Video Produced by  
Intersection Associates  
56 Chestnut Street  
Cambridge, MA 02139**

**Prepared for  
US Department of  
Housing and Urban Development  
Community Planning and Development  
Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs**

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# What Works!

## Job Strategies for Homeless People

### Video Training Package

#### I. INTRODUCTION

Supportive housing is a lifeline for homeless individuals. Over the past decade, the experiences in communities around the country have shown that a secure and caring home environment, combined with needed supportive services, is critical to improving residential stability and to reconnecting homeless people to friends, family, and the community at large.

In recent years, supportive housing providers and other agencies that serve homeless people have begun to focus on helping people move toward more independent living. In working toward this goal, **employment-related services** designed for homeless people have increasingly become an essential component of supportive housing programs in some communities. These services, often created through partnerships with private industry, foundations, and nonprofit organizations, round out the continuum of care that leads to recovery and independence.

#### **Purpose and Contents**

This training package (including video and notebook), has been developed to enable HUD Field Office staff to organize and lead training sessions for supportive housing grantees and other partners on the subject of integrating job strategies and services into supportive housing programs. The purpose of the training is:

- ! to call attention to the integral role that job services play in achieving independent living for individuals; and

- ! to encourage supportive housing providers and their partners to think about ways to provide or improve such services, either through partnerships with other institutions or by creating an in-house employment services staff.

The 35-minute video, ***“What Works! Job Strategies for Homeless People”*** is the centerpiece of the training. The video focuses on three innovative, well-run programs that provide employment services to homeless people, to illustrate how effective programs are planned and operated. These stories demonstrate:

- ! the ***range of activities*** that are often necessary to help a homeless individual get and keep a job;
- ! the ***strategies*** that homeless service providers have adopted to develop and sustain employment-related services; and
- ! the ***challenges and rewards*** that come from helping clients achieve greater self-determination through work.

The video can be used in one of two ways. First, if time is limited, the video can comprise the entire training session, and the resource materials in this notebook could be copied and provided to participants for later review. Thus, the video can be used as a “stand alone” program to be viewed from beginning to end without interruption.

Alternatively, this notebook contains a curriculum for a two- to three-hour training session. The curriculum is structured to allow for each of three segments of the video to be viewed and then discussed. By alternating the video and group discussion activities, the discussion can be directly linked to specific topics that are covered in each segment. The video contains natural transitions that indicate to the trainer where to start or stop the tape.

Presented below is a summary of the video and its main themes. The next section of this notebook presents the training curriculum and discussion guides. The last section provides resource materials, including overview sheets that outline the video’s main themes and detailed summaries of each of the programs featured in the video. If desired, these materials can be copied and distributed to participants.

## **Video Summary**

The ***“What Works!”*** video tells the story of how three organizations around the country have developed comprehensive job service programs for homeless people that are operating within supportive housing environments. The stories are told through interviews with the individuals who run these programs, their partners, and clients who have been served.

The programs include:

- ! the ***Jericho Project***, a supportive housing program in New York City, which works exclusively with recovering substance abusers, and seeks to motivate and empower them to regain independence and dignity through a combination of housing, supportive services, and job training; to provide job services, Jericho created an in-house vocational and educational department with a four-person staff; in addition to offering assessment, counseling, and placement services, Jericho provides work opportunities within the supportive housing buildings;
- ! the ***Center for the Homeless*** in South Bend, Indiana, which seeks to help a variety of homeless people (i.e., substance abusers, mentally ill, abused) improve their lives holistically—mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually—to break the “cycle of homelessness;” the Center has developed a unique, six-step process to help individuals move from emergency shelter to homeownership, with job preparation and placement as a central component; the Center has also developed many successful partnerships which allow for a truly comprehensive set of services to be provided for their clients; and
- ! the ***Options Program*** in Jacksonville, Florida, which is an employment program with a focus on “work first,” or the “place and train” model; operated by Goodwill Industries, Options delivers its comprehensive job services program on-site to a variety of local shelters and supportive housing developments.

While these three programs present very different models and somewhat different philosophies about helping homeless people join the workforce, they share some important characteristics:

- ! First, they all operate in settings that offer stable housing and are rich with other supportive services.
- ! Second, they rely on partnerships or coalitions with nonprofit agencies and businesses to make their programs work.
- ! Third, they have all adopted a counseling model that places as much emphasis on follow-up as it does on offering a wide range of assistance in locating that first job.
- ! Finally, they are all committed to helping homeless people find work that is both meaningful and financially self-sustaining in the long-term.

## **II. TRAINING CURRICULUM AND DISCUSSION GUIDES**

This section presents a suggested curriculum for the training, outlines steps to take in preparing for the video training session, and provides topics for discussion at selected points during and at the conclusion of the video.

### **Training Curriculum**

As noted in the first section of this notebook, the video ***“What Works”*** can be used as a stand-alone instructional piece or it can be part of a two to three hour training session where participants discuss the topics presented in the video and explore how the experiences of the three selected programs may be relevant to their work. The training curriculum presented below uses the video as the starting point for discussion. Participants view each of the three video segments (roughly 11 minutes each). After each video segment, there is a discussion of the information that has been presented. At the conclusion of the video, there is an opportunity to make some cross-site comparisons and to discuss more broadly the job services that the participants now provide (if they do provide them) and how they can be enhanced or developed.

**What Works!**  
**Job Strategies for Homeless People**  
**Training Session Curriculum**

- I. Introduction (5 minutes)  
(Trainer explains purpose of the session and the training format)
- II. What Works! Video  
First Video Segment: The Jericho Project (11 minutes)  
Discussion: The Jericho Project (15 minutes)  
(Key topics: comprehensive employment services, job preparation before job placement, building relationships with employers, on-site employment, and developing a nonprofit business)
- III. Second Video Segment: The Center for the Homeless (11 minutes)  
Discussion: The Center for the Homeless (15 minutes)  
(Key topics: the Center's holistic recovery process, developing partnerships, staffing services to encourage developed jobs not spot jobs, and supported employment and for-profit businesses)
- IV. Third Video Segment: The Options Program, plus video end (14 minutes)  
Discussion: The Options Program (15 minutes)  
(Key topics: providing employment services through a coalition that includes local employers, "work first" as part of the recovery process, managing "turf" issues, Job Junction, job coaching and follow-up, and other needed services)
- V. Final Discussion and Wrap-up (30 to 45 minutes)  
(Key topics: cross-site comparisons, employment and your agency mission, building an employment services program, developing in-house expertise or relying on partners, partnerships, defining "success," and addressing recidivism)

**Preparing for the Training Session**

In preparation for the training session, remember to take the following steps:

1. Watch the video and review the discussion guides and resource materials at the end of this notebook. While discussion guides are provided, some questions may not be relevant to your group, or there may be additional questions you wish

to add in order to emphasize a particular topic. Modify the discussion guides to suit the needs of your participants.

2. Send a letter of invitation to those who you wish to attend, describing the purpose and approximate length of the training session. A sample letter is presented on the following page. Ask invitees to RSVP if they will be attending.
3. Once you know the number of attendees, make room and equipment arrangements (television and VCR with a remote control).
4. Review the resource materials contained in the next section of this notebook. The summary sheets can be used to create overhead slides to assist with the discussions. There are also one-page summaries and detailed descriptions of each of the programs covered in the video. They can be copied and handed out at the end of the training session.
5. Prepare some brief introductory remarks. Explain the format for the training—video viewing of program segments, interspersed with discussion. You may wish to remind participants to consider some key questions as they view the video; for example: What are the key features of this program, including services provided, model for delivering services, and program strategies and issues? What aspects of this program would work for my agency or program?

Presented below are guides that can be used to lead participants in a discussion after each segment of the video has been viewed by participants.

### **Jericho Project: Issues for Discussion**

! *Comprehensive in-house employment services:* Jericho offers a wide range of employment services in-house. Review what these services are and discuss why each is necessary. Note that Jericho's services include:

- 1) assessment/case management (i.e., helping a client focus on what s/he can do);
- 2) pre-vocational activities (i.e., GED, ESL classes);
- 3) soft-skills development (i.e., communication, time management, appropriate dress, emotion/stress management);
- 4) job search training (i.e., interviewing skills and resume development, job search strategies);

**SAMPLE LETTER**

[Date]

[Agency]

[Street]

[City, State, ZIP]

Dear :

Over the last few years, communities around the country have found that offering homeless people a secure and caring home environment, combined with needed supportive services, is critical to improving residential stability and to reconnecting them to friends, family, and the community at large. As supportive housing providers and other agencies that serve homeless move toward helping their clients achieve more independent living, employment-related services have increasingly become essential. HUD encourages all supportive housing grantees to provide comprehensive services for the homeless, which include a strong employment services component.

With this in mind, I would like to invite you to participate in a training session titled, *“What Works: Job Strategies for Homeless Persons.”* The centerpiece of the training is a video describing several innovative programs around the country that are helping formerly homeless people to find and maintain employment. This seminar will be held on **[day of the week]**, **[month] [day]**, **[year]**, at **[location]**, from **[starting time]** to **[ending time]**. Even if your agency already provides some employment services, we encourage you to attend the session as a resource for new ideas to expand or improve your program.

Please call me at **[phone number]** by **[date one week before training]** to let me know whether you plan on attending. I look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

[Name]

[Title]

- 5) job development (finding jobs in a partner's organization that can be filled by clients);
- 6) job coaching or support (employment follow-up);
- 7) supported employment/site-based employment (jobs within the supportive housing setting); and
- 8) affirmative businesses (independent businesses, such as the Computer Learning Center, created specifically to provide sheltered employment and training opportunities to clients).

- ! *Job preparation before job placement:* Jericho places its first emphasis on helping clients to identify a job or a career that they want to pursue and assisting them in preparing for that job. Other programs emphasize a “work first” approach. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the Jericho model?
- ! *On-site employment:* What are the benefits and the drawbacks of providing in-house jobs for residents?
- ! *Developing a nonprofit business:* Jericho's Computer Learning Center is well-received by clients, but has yet to succeed from a financial or business perspective. What are the pros and cons of nonprofit businesses created with the primary goal of providing training opportunities to clients?
- ! *Building relationships with employers:* Jericho's job developer worked hard to develop connections with local businesses only to discover that the jobs that employers offered did not match the skills of the clients. This seems to be a common dilemma. How can it be avoided?

### **Center for the Homeless: Issues for Discussion**

- ! *The Center's holistic recovery process:* The Center's step-by-step process focuses on helping individuals to move up a ladder of independence, with employment as an intermediate goal and homeownership as the ultimate goal. What do you think of this approach? How does this compare with your agency's philosophy? Is homeownership an achievable goal for at least some of your residents? Why or why not?
- ! *Developing partnerships:* While the Jericho Project relies on its own staff to deliver services to its clients, the Center relies on partnerships with outside organizations to obtain the best services and resources for their clients. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each approach? How difficult is it to create and maintain partnerships over time?
- ! *Developed jobs versus spot jobs:* What are the benefits/drawbacks to spot jobs or “under the table” employment? How does the on-site presence of a staffing services company help the Center and its clients? Why is prescreening potential employers important?

- ! *Supported employment and for-profit businesses:* The Center appears to have been more successful than the Jericho Project in creating a successful business venture. What does it take to build a successful business?

### **Options Program: Issues for Discussion**

- ! *Providing employment services through a coalition:* The Options program was created by housing providers, local employers, and others who recognized the need for employment services and determined that they would best be provided to all by Goodwill Industries. What are the ingredients to making this type of service model work? What are the advantages to such a model? The disadvantages?
- ! *“Work first” as part of the recovery process:* Options takes a somewhat different approach than the Jericho Project in that job placement is their immediate goal. What are the benefits/drawbacks of “placing and training” individuals soon after they enter a homeless facility?
- ! *Managing “turf” issues:* Valerie Baham described how case managers and employment counselors sometimes disagree on what is best for a client. These kinds of issues often arise when more than one individual manages a client’s recovery. What can be done to alleviate “turf” issues?
- ! *Job coaching and follow-up:* How critical are these in terms of the package of services provided to homeless clients?
- ! *Other needed services:* Transportation is a particular problem in Jacksonville. What are barriers to employment in your community? How are they or can they be addressed?

### **Questions for Discussion Following the Video**

- ! *Cross-site comparisons:* The programs featured in this video have a number of common features as well as some differences. What are they? Which features are essential to an employment services program? [Some common features include: they all operate in settings rich with other supportive services; they rely on partnerships or coalitions; they have all adopted a counseling model that places emphasis on follow-up services; and they are committed to helping homeless people find work that is both meaningful and financially self-sustaining in the long-term.]
- ! *Employment and your agency mission:* How do employment services fit into your agency’s mission? [Note: If an agency’s primary purpose is to provide housing and supportive services to the homeless, it may be necessary to **revisit the agency’s mission**. Recent experience suggests that employment services need to be equal to and not a subset of other supportive services.]

- ! *Building an employment services program:* What employment services does your agency currently offer (either in-house or through other agencies)? [Encourage participants to think about the range of services that their organizations provide now and how they can develop a program that builds on these services so that they lead logically towards sustained employment.] What resources are needed to help people stay employed, such as transportation and day care?
- ! *Developing in-house expertise or relying on partners:* Will you develop internal staff capacity (i.e., hire new staff or train existing staff) or provide space for partner organizations to help residents with job training, search, and retention?
- ! *Partnerships:* Accessing community resources and creating partnerships with businesses and other institutions in the community may be key. What are some ways you can develop partnerships with local organizations that will be mutually beneficial? How do you identify organizations with missions/visions similar to yours?
- ! *Defining “success:”* How will you define what a “successful” or “effective” program is? The more disabled the population, the harder it will be to help people become stably employed. Will your definitions of “successful” and “effective” give you the courage to work with the tougher populations **and** help as many of your clients as possible live more independently?
- ! *Addressing recidivism:* Even under the best of circumstances, there may still be a high job turnover or rate of job loss among clients, due either to the client or external forces. How will you handle this, and how will you help your clients handle this?

### **III. RESOURCE MATERIALS**

The pages that follow contain:

- ! overview sheets that highlight the main themes of the video;
- ! one -page summaries of each program; and
- ! detailed descriptions of each of the programs.

All of these materials can be copied and distributed to training participants.

***What Works!***  
**Overview Sheets**

*What Works!*

*Job Strategies for Homeless People*

**Common Themes of the Three Programs**



- Stable Housing and Services
- Partnerships
- Follow-up Support

# The Jericho Project



- Client Assessment and Counseling
- Program Management
- On-Site Supported Employment
- Nonprofit Business
- Working with Employers

# Center For The Homeless



- Comprehensive Services and a Step-by-Step Recovery Process
- Partnerships
- On-Site Staffing Services
- Assessing Business Needs

# The Options Program



- Job Coaching
- Job Junction
- Working with Employers
- Follow-up Services
- Addressing Barriers to Work

# Program Delivery Models



## ■ Jericho

- In-house Vocational/Education Department (with own staff)

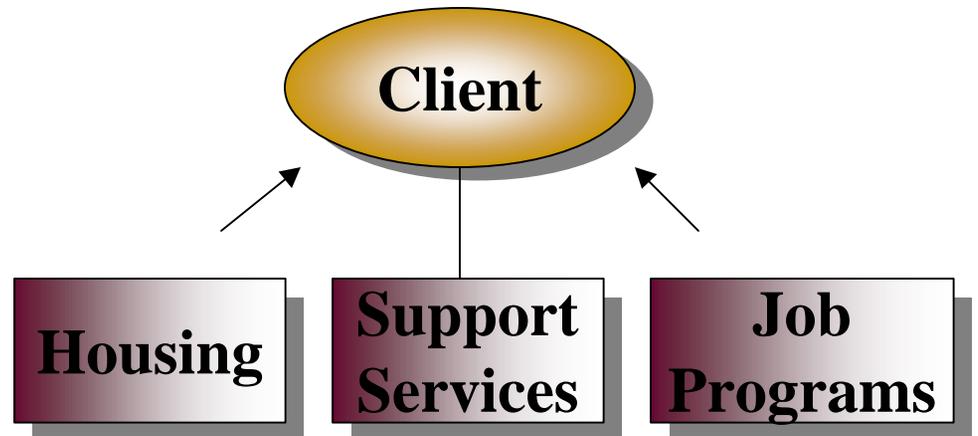
## ■ Center for the Homeless

- On-site Job Services Provided by Staff and Partner Agencies

## ■ Options Program

- Employment Program Deploys Staff to Supportive Housing Sites

# Role of Job Training & Employment in Supportive Housing



***What Works!***  
**Program Summaries**

## **The Jericho Project**

### **New York City, New York**

The Jericho Project, a supportive housing program in New York City, works exclusively with recovering substance abusers, and seeks to motivate and empower them to regain independence and dignity through a combination of housing, supportive services, and job training.

Founded in 1983, the Jericho Project provides permanent supportive housing to 238 homeless individuals at five sites in Manhattan and in the Bronx. In 1995, an in-house vocational and educational department was established at Jericho with a four-person staff. This program provides a range of job-related services, from assessment and counseling to job development and placement.

The Jericho staff tailor their program to the needs of the individual clients. Each client develops an individualized vocational plan, which outlines the steps they will take to reach greater independence. The vocational and educational department provides the supports that help them along the way. In working with clients initially, the department offers a series of workshops to help develop the skills necessary to look for and keep a job. Educational resources, (such as tutoring and GED classes), are also offered both on- and off-site.

For clients who are not ready for immediate employment, the department provides on-site transitional work opportunities through the Jericho Works Project (JWP). JWP enables clients to gain job experience at the supportive housing site by working as a receptionist or as a maintenance worker. This allows the client to improve on some of their “soft skills” and work habits—getting along with people, learning to show up for work on time—and it allows staff to observe client behavior in a work environment.

When an individual is ready for outside employment, the Jericho job developer steps in. The job developer works with employers to identify appropriate placements for clients. Jericho provides counseling and follow-up support once a client is placed.

In recent years, The Jericho Project embarked on the creation of a nonprofit business, the Computer Learning Center, which is located next to one of the supportive housing sites. The Center provides computer classes and business services (fax, copy services, etc.) to the general public, but it’s primary purpose is to provide a training facility for Jericho clients. While this facility is not financially self-supporting, it has already met the primary objective of providing clients with the opportunity to obtain needed computer skills. The Center also provides employment opportunities to clients participating in JWP.

## **The Center for the Homeless South Bend, Indiana**

The Center for the Homeless in South Bend, Indiana provides a wide array of services to help homeless individuals and families recover their lives and move towards self sufficiency. The idea that people need a holistic recovery, whether their homelessness is the result of substance abuse, mental illness, domestic violence, or any other reason, permeates the Center's overall mission: to "help people break the cycle of homelessness; bring together disparate groups so that each can discover the worth, dignity, and God-given potential of the other; and pioneer a service model worthy of replication." Staffed by 29 full-time and nine part-time staff, the Center can house approximately 140 men, women, and children.

The model of care established by the Center helps people move from homelessness to self-sufficiency in six phases. In the **first phase**, guests are given emergency shelter, introduced to the Center's programs and expectations, and referred to any outside services (i.e., substance abuse treatment) as necessary. The **second phase** involves personal development and education in the form of the Center's five-week Starting Over/Stepping Higher seminar, which focuses on issues, such as self-esteem and soft skills, which contribute both to recovery and job retention. Upon graduation from this seminar, guests move into the **third phase**, another five-week seminar (BRAVO!) which focuses on job training and placement and includes emphasis on both hard and soft skills. The **fourth phase** narrows in on job retention and budgeting issues (job club, consumer credit counseling, mentorship). In the **fifth phase**, guests who have found and maintained employment may move to financially supported housing, participate in an evening support group, and begin to volunteer as mentors for other guests at the Center. Finally, guests who have successfully maintained employment for one year enter the **sixth phase**—beginning the process of becoming a homeowner. Guests may still volunteer at the Center or in the community, as well as receive case management services.

Through key partnerships (identified by staff as critical to the Center's operations), the Center also offers many on-site services—available to all guests at any time—which contribute both to guests' well-being and their ability to maintain employment. These services include:

- ! The Play, Exploration, and Development Support (PEDS) program for children up to the age of three—this service frees working parents at the Center from the need to find day care;
- ! A Montessori class, run by a local school, for children ages three through six;
- ! A clinic staffed through a local hospital;
- ! Meal service, staffed by volunteers and guests of the Center, provided in a dining-hall setting;
- ! A computer center; and
- ! A chapel with religious services and meetings offered by several different organizations.

## **The Options Program Jacksonville, Florida**

The Options Program in Jacksonville, Florida, is an employment program operated by Goodwill Industries of North Florida. Options was created by a coalition of some 30 homeless service providers, private businesses and others who recognized that a comprehensive employment program was an important unmet need for homeless clients in the Jacksonville area.

Now entering its third year of operation, The Options Program delivers its comprehensive job services program on-site to a variety of local shelters and supportive housing developments. The Options staff include a full-time program manager and nine full-time employment specialists who are placed at various housing locations.

The Options staff offer the following services:

- ! individualized assessment and job search support provided on-site at residential centers;
- ! intensive job coaching for individuals requiring such assistance, especially those with psychiatric disabilities;
- ! training activities to orient newcomers, and make connections to potential employers; and
- ! assistance in overcoming barriers to employment, such as transportation or day care.

In addition, Goodwill is able to use its other employment programs to supplement what is provided by Options. For example, Goodwill runs “Job Junctions” sites at locations throughout Jacksonville. These employment service centers are a source of job announcements and have trained employment specialists to assist clients with resume preparation and job leads. Goodwill also runs HR Options, a customized recruitment and screening program for employers.

The Options program is dedicated to the notion of “work first” or the “place and train” model. However, once a job is obtained, Goodwill is committed to working with staff to find a job that may pay better and/or meet career goals. Follow-up is seen as critical. Employment specialists will typically follow newly-employed clients for one year to ensure a successful outcome. If a problem does arise, they work with the client and the employer to arrange a solution.

***What Works!***  
**Detailed Program Descriptions**

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# **The Jericho Project**

## **Vocational and Educational Program**

2013 Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard  
New York, New York 10027

### **Program Overview**

The Jericho Project was founded in 1983 to provide housing and full supportive services to homeless men and women with substance abuse problems. Jericho currently operates five single-room occupancy buildings, with more than 200 units. Jericho's core services include: socialization and living skills, substance abuse counseling, vocational and educational training, and family reunification and aftercare.

All of Jericho's clients are in various stages of recovery from alcoholism and drug addiction. Sixty percent of Jericho's referrals come from New York City shelters, 20 percent from treatment programs, and another 20 percent from community referrals. In order to reside at Jericho, prospective residents must have been drug- and alcohol-free for a minimum of three months.

While the Jericho Project has always supported the concept that jobs are critical to an individual's recovery and return to independence, a vocational and education department was not established at Jericho until 1995. Today, this department includes four staff members, including a program director, job developer, education intake coordinator, and vocational coordinator. The department is located at Jericho's largest supportive housing building, a single-room occupancy facility, in Harlem. Currently, residents at other Jericho buildings come to the Harlem site to receive vocational services.

The goals of the department are to:

- ! Make vocational/educational services known and easily accessible to Jericho residents;
- ! Increase the vocational training and educational opportunities for all Jericho residents;
- ! Increase employment opportunities for all Jericho residents; and

- ! Assist residents in developing a strong work ethic.  
Jericho provides the following training and vocational services to residents:
- ! Individualized vocational assessment, planning, and job search assistance;
- ! Jericho Works Program, which provides residents with the opportunity for pre-vocational training by working in various positions (maintenance, security, messenger, and front desk receptionist) at the supportive housing sites;
- ! In-house educational resources, including tutoring and evening classes;
- ! Job readiness workshops, which focus on the “soft skills” or basic life skills needed to interview for a job, as well as secure and maintain employment; and
- ! Supported employment through the nonprofit Computer Learning Center created by Jericho in 1998.

Jericho residents also have access to a wide range of educational programs available in New York City, including high school equivalency programs and community and four-year colleges. At any given time, roughly one-third of Jericho’s residents are enrolled in outside education programs.

### **Mission and Philosophy**

Jericho’s program is based on the philosophy that providing homeless people with a home, supportive services, and job training gives them the motivation and skills they need to regain independence and dignity. According to Executive Director, Gene Estess, a “holistic approach” is essential to the recovery of alcoholics and drug abusers:

*Generally speaking, drug programs. . .concentrate on the abstinence of substance. . .[and] don’t spend all that much time on financial management, on some of the life skills that are needed, so that when a person does and is able to become independent, is employed full-time, is off of welfare, is paying taxes, . . .they can manage their lives as well as manage their addiction problems.*

The services provided by the vocational/educational department are designed to help residents ultimately obtain livable wage employment with benefits. To get there, they focus on individual needs and vocational interests of each client, helping them to set meaningful vocational goals and obtain the job of their choice.

At Jericho, individual success is measured by accomplishment, not by time, and “graduation” occurs when a person voluntarily decides they are ready to move out and become fully independent. But even then, as Mr. Estess explains, Jericho encourages former residents to maintain their ties to the Project:

*Once a person. . .lives with us, they are entitled to all the services that we provide, . . .[even] after they leave. For example, if a graduate loses a job for one reason or another, they can come back to the vocational and educational department for help toward getting another job. We feel that's a lifetime commitment to any graduate. As a matter of fact, this morning I met a person on the street coming to work who left Jericho 10 years ago, . . .and he just lost his job. I said, 'Ron, we've come a long way since 10 years ago. We have a vocational and educational department. Here's my card, call me, let's get together. You'll bring your resume with you, and I will make sure the voc/ed department sees you and does anything that we can do to get you employed again,' and he was obviously delighted. But that's a lifetime commitment that we have. . . .*

## **Assessment and Counseling**

The vocational services offered at Jericho are described as “voluntary.” However, within two weeks of arriving at Jericho, most new residents are referred to the vocational and educational department by their in-house case managers. Lynette Choice, the department's director, advises that it is best to make new residents aware of available vocational services soon after their arrival. However, she also notes that these services cannot be pushed on any resident.

*. . .What I do is try [to] provide opportunities initially, within the first two weeks someone gets here, just to come down and say, 'Hi, hello, this is who we are. You don't necessarily have to use this, but these are some of the things we do,' . . .so they get used to being able to come in and realize that there are different levels of service that are available.*

*We are not trying to force anybody to do anything; you can't really force people to do anything. They must see it as something that they have an interest in and that they need, and see that your services are useful to them.*

When a client indicates a willingness to receive services, the vocational staff will arrange an initial appointment to begin the process of preparing an individualized vocational plan. The staff insist that this plan is *client-directed*. Fquira Johannes, the department's job developer, describes what this means:

*When we work with clients at Jericho, counseling in and of itself is a client-centered process. So, when we begin to talk to the clients about what it is they want to accomplish, that's where we begin to set a goal and maybe set about some plan and talk about how we can implement that plan, the steps to reach*

*that goal. . . . We try to [develop] a broad range of goals that people would like to accomplish in terms of living, social, financial. . . . but really the client decides what their goal is. . . .*

Once the plan is developed, the client will work with the counselor to meet his or her goals. For some, this may mean pursuing appropriate training and/or literacy programs. For others, it may mean beginning the search for employment. Again, the department does not like to push employment until the resident feels ready. At the same time, changes to welfare reform laws mean that staff and clients do not always have the luxury of time to train and choose just the right job. As Ms. Choice describes,

*People come here at different stages. . . . Some people may come into Jericho and say, 'I had completed a word processing course, but I never really had an opportunity to utilize this. And before I really go out there looking for a job, do you think I can do something that would help me to review those skills that I learned.' . . . So we'll try and access opportunities for them to do that. . . . and then after that they'll work with the job developer, and she will try and help them find appropriate placement.*

For those individuals who may have limited work experience or have been away from the world of work for a long time, Jericho offers opportunities for them to build their confidence and develop "soft skills." Through the Jericho Works Project, or JWP, residents can gain unpaid work experience by taking on an in-house job within their housing facility. The department staff will place residents as the front desk receptionist, or in security or maintenance positions. In doing so, staff are able to watch their performance, look at how they dress, how they act on the job, and general work habits. Weekly job readiness workshops, run by the department in the community room, offer an opportunity for staff to discuss basic work behavior and address issues that may have arisen as residents performed their duties.

Making vocational services easily accessible to residents is important according to Jericho staff. The fact that the department is located at Jericho's largest housing development is very beneficial according to Lynette Choice. Ms. Choice also works to make sure that the department is open and counselors are available whenever residents want to talk. To do this, she asks her staff to work staggered shifts. Ms. Choice also tries to have one staff member available to see clients on Saturday.

Jericho wants to increase the accessibility of vocational services to residents who live at its other four buildings. Currently, residents at the other sites must make an appointment with a vocational counselor at the Harlem site. In the next few months, Jericho plans to place a counselor at each of its sites. This will allow residents to become more familiar with their

vocational rehabilitation counselor and for the counselor to observe the clients in their environment.

Jericho's counselors work to establish rapport with their clients. According to Ms. Choice, this is essential if the counselor is to adequately address each client's needs:

*Another thing that becomes important in setting up vocational services is to work at engaging the client and building relationships and rapport. . . .In order for you to really help them to identify what may be an appropriate match, you're going to need to know information that, unless they trust you, [they] are not going to share. So you may come in [with] this job [which] is going to require that they have some reading skills, and they never tell you they never learned how to read because you haven't established that type of relationship with them.*

## **Program Management**

As noted previously, the vocational and educational department at Jericho is just four years old. Establishing a new department within an already existing program can have its challenges—most importantly, getting current staff to accept “the new kid on the block.”

Gene Estess offers two pieces of advice to those who are considering the introduction of a vocational and educational program into a supportive housing facility. First, is *staff education*:

*. . .The whole staff. . .[must] understand the importance of it. . . .Have meeting after meeting where you might bring in the headlines and say, 'Hey, this is it,' where you might send your staff to conferences—which we do all the time—that really define what is going to happen in a couple of years to these folks if they don't get to work, [or] if the work is not meaningful.*

*So I think number one is education of the staff, and number two, there has to be a leadership from the top of the organization. . . .Then, there has to be a search for staff people who will develop the trust of the rest of the staff. I think that all this is a very, very delicate balance, but I think at the core of it is that a staff has to be instructed. . . .as to the importance of work and work readiness. . . .If that's done, then at least the transition is a little bit easier. And then you have to keep having meetings once it's established because. . .turf issues do enter in, . . .but be that as it may, it is an ongoing educational process.*

## **Developing a Nonprofit Business**

In 1998, Jericho opened a nonprofit business, the Computer Learning Center, in a vacant storefront adjacent to their housing facility in Harlem. The Center offers computer classes and business services (fax, Internet/e-mail access, copy services) to the general public at modest cost. The Center's primary purpose is to teach Jericho clients much-needed computer skills. Jericho residents also have the opportunity to intern as customer service representatives at the Center learning business as well as interpersonal skills. Gene Estess explains more:

*. . .When we started the Computer Learning Center in our Harlem facility, it was done for two reasons. The main reason was so that our residents could attain the computer literacy that was necessary for them to attain. . .and to keep the jobs. As an adjunct to that, we run a not-for-profit business, but I will tell you that we have lowered the prices of the services to a point where, unless volume is mammoth, we're not going to make huge monies, if at all—and that has never really been my focus. Our focus is really on the residents and their jobs and their life. . . .*

As Mr. Estess notes, the Computer Learning Center is not self-supporting. He offers this cautionary note to those who are considering the formation of a nonprofit business:

*There seems to be a movement throughout the land in various private agencies, social service agencies, to start not-for-profit businesses. I think that's admirable in one degree, but in the other I would say to you that initially, most businesses fail. Therefore, to start a business with the thought in mind that the profits of the business will help fund the social service agency is generally speaking—there are some exceptions in the country—but generally speaking, it's pie in the sky.*

Jericho has also recently organized an economic development committee to search for funding for residents who might be interested in starting their own businesses. Part of the funding would pay for those individuals to obtain training in how to start, plan, fund, and maintain a business.

## **Working with Employers**

Jericho staff work to build relationships with employers who may be interested in hiring their residents. Jericho's job developer spends a good part of her work day reaching out to potential employers and maintaining communication with those who have used Jericho's services. She sells Jericho's program based on the following:

- ! Jericho staff will meet with employers to identify their needs and requirements;
- ! Jericho can save employers time and money by providing pre-screened and qualified candidates for the positions that need to be filled; and

! Jericho will provide supportive counseling throughout employment.

Fquira Johannes offers the following advice based on her experience at Jericho:

*. . .When I first began with Jericho Project, I was really gung-ho about establishing business referral partnerships and getting all these jobs flooded in, and what I've learned in that experience is, I was able to establish partnerships with these employers and get all these jobs coming in, but the clients were not ready for those jobs, and it weakened the relationship with the employers. It's always best to assess your population. . .and also to establish a type of relationship with employers that's not based on placement, but is based on the fact that we have a program here, and we can provide referrals. . . .*

Ms. Johannes also notes the importance of building a client's soft skills and selling this to an employer:

*When we contact an employer, it's always best to give them as much information on how qualified our people are. So in my package, I would include something that focuses on the building up of the soft skills, and when they see that, then they say, 'Oh, maybe this sounds really good.'*

*I don't know if an employer thinks of it in terms of soft skills or any of those technical things that we use. . .I don't know if he looks at it and says, 'Oh, I need that and this is just what I was looking for,' but my job would be to say, 'Look, I've thought about it and I think that you may need this, and we have it.' So, I would be responsible for helping them to see that is indeed a need, and this is a great thing that we're offering here.*

In order to ensure that Jericho is addressing employment needs, they have established a business advisory board. Periodically, the Jericho staff meet with a small group of employers who have hired their residents to gain feedback—to find out what works and what does not from the employers' perspective.

## What is Success?

Fquira Johannes describes success for residents as a process, not necessarily the achievement of a specific goal:

*One of the most important lessons that I've learned in my year at Jericho was just how the process is different for different people, that the process is not necessarily measured by success. Because a lot of times, we may set a goal and go through different steps and are not able to accomplish that goal and feel like it's failure. But it's not necessarily failure, because now you have some type of outcome to look over and see what worked, what didn't work, and something to build from there and go on and to establish another goal. . . .*

Ms. Choice has a slightly different view of success at Jericho:

*When dealing with the word success, it is important to us to have a very broad definition of what that is. Success to some people is college graduation, is some kind of professional work, whether it be in social services or something else. Success to others who might be learning disabled, who are not able to get their GED, who are not able to go to college, might be something other than that. I would think that success for us is that we view it as, number one, sobriety; number two, doing something gainful; number three, understanding their responsibilities as human beings, whether it be for their family and friends or for themselves.*

### **The Jericho Project**

#### **Factors to Consider in Assessing Readiness for Work**

- Chemical Dependency Status
- Medical/Legal Status
- Psychological Status
- Attainment of Basic Needs
- Anticipated Personal Needs
- Level of Responsibility for Self
- Desire to Work
- Alternatives to Work
- Pressure to Get a Job: Sources
- Expectations from Work

Contacts: Lynette Choice, Director of Vocational and Educational Services  
Gene Estess, Executive Director, Jericho Project  
212-222-1400 or 212-316-4700

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## Center for the Homeless

813 South Michigan Street  
South Bend, Indiana 46601

### Program Overview

The Center for the Homeless in South Bend, Indiana provides a wide array of services to help homeless individuals and families recover their lives and move towards self-sufficiency. The idea that people need a holistic recovery, whether their homelessness is the result of substance abuse, mental illness, domestic violence, or any other reason, permeates not only the Center's overall mission—which is to “help people break the cycle of homelessness; bring together disparate groups so that each can discover the worth, dignity, and God-given potential of the other; and pioneer a service model worthy of replication”—but applies specifically to their employment services as well. According to Lou Nanni, former Executive Director of the Center,

*. . . There's absolutely no question that work is essential to an individual's self-worth. Meaningful engagement in the workplace, being productive citizens is critical, to the way that we think about ourselves, and quite frankly, the way that others think about us as well. Just like anything it can be taken to its logical extreme. Many of us. . . when we go out socially, the first thing we ask people as we're meeting them is, 'So what do you do?' And we begin to, on the one extreme, equate a person's value with their work. The logical extreme of that is that if somebody is not doing anything, they are nobody. And the worst thing that we ever see down here is when people actually believe that about themselves. They believe, 'Since I'm not doing anything, I'm not working, I am nobody. I'm a loser, I'm a failure. . . .' It's devastating to the self-esteem. So work is a critical piece of the puzzle.*

At the Center, employment services are not about a resident simply finding a job. Rather, they are about helping people develop the skills to both find and keep a job, which plays an

important role both in the recovery process and in building towards self-sufficiency over the long-term.

## **Guest Demographics**

The guests at the Center for the Homeless make up a fairly diverse population, based on 1998 data. The Center can currently house 80 single men, 22 single women, and 15 families at a time; an average of 142 people are housed there each night. For the most part, guests at the Center are fairly well-educated: only about 34 percent of the guests do not have a high school diploma or GED; the remaining guests have either a high school diploma or GED (45 percent) or have some college or a college degree (21 percent). Racially, 49 percent of the guests are Caucasian, 45 percent are African American, 5 percent are Hispanic, and 1 percent are multi-racial. Just over half (55 percent) of the residents are between the ages of 19 and 40 years old; 26 percent are between 41 and 59 years; 17 percent are aged 17 or younger, and 2 percent are 60 years or older. In 1998, 74 adults completed the Center's employment services program, and 85 percent of them found jobs which paid well over the minimum wage.

## **Staffing**

The Center has a fairly unique staffing structure. While it has 29 full-time (and nine part-time) staff, whose responsibilities range from the administrative to the running of programs and overall operations, many of the Center's day-to-day activities are run by either guests of the Center or volunteers. Guests are expected, among other things, to keep their rooms or dorms clean, and help out around the Center with specific chores and on an as-needed basis (i.e., helping unload clothing from a donor's car). The Center estimates that between 400 and 600 volunteers help out at the Center each month.

## **The Center for the Homeless Model**

The Center's model for serving the homeless may be broken down into six phases, all of which have the goals of recovery and self-sufficiency in mind.

In the first phase, guests are provided with emergency shelter, when they first come into the Center. Within the first few days, a guest is provided with an orientation to the Center, including what services are offered and what will be expected of them (i.e., participation in programs and following rules). Guests may also receive crisis intervention and be assessed by staff to see what their needs are. Primary treatment referrals to on-site medical, mental health, and/or substance abuse treatment, case management, and/or relationship counseling are made as necessary.

The second phase of care involves personal development and education, in the form of the Center's five-week Starting Over/Stepping Higher (SOSH) seminar. In SOSH, guests of the Center focus on self-esteem issues and soft skills, such as forgiveness, healthy relationships, goal-setting, stress management, communication styles, team leadership, and employment economics and employer expectations—issues that contribute both to recovery and job retention. Once a guest has successfully completed SOSH—which includes a graduation ceremony at the Center's Monday night community meetings—s/he may begin the job training and placement phase, composed of the five-week BRAVO! seminar. This seminar focuses on both hard and soft skills, including skills assessment, handling job-related stress, interviewing and resume writing, and in-house job training. There is a community-wide graduation ceremony for BRAVO! graduates upon completion of the program and at the Monday night meetings as well. Staff have found that conducting program graduation ceremonies at the weekly community meetings encourages newcomers at the Center to stay and participate in the services offered.

The follow-up to the BRAVO! seminar is the fourth phase, where guests focus specifically on job retention and budgeting. This phase includes a job club, budgeting and consumer credit counseling, mentorship program with job placement, and quarter-way housing placement. From this point, guests who have successfully found and maintained employment may move to supportive (that is, financially supported) housing, which staff may help them find and finance; guests at this phase also begin volunteering either in the community or as mentors to other guests, and may participate in an evening support group.

Once a guest has successfully maintained employment for one year, s/he may begin the process of becoming a homeowner—the sixth phase. Staff work with residents to help them find a stable neighborhood and low mortgage payments. The resident may still be volunteering in the community or at the Center, and receiving case management services.

Not all residents make it through all six phases. Even so, the Center provides the opportunity for each guest to overcome the obstacles in their lives by growing mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually, strengthening the skills and attributes which will help empower them to lead a better, more productive life.

### **Other Services at the Center**

Through partnerships, the Center is able to provide its guests with many on-site services, which contribute both to guests' well-being and their ability to maintain employment. These services include:

- ! The Play, Exploration, and Development Support (PEDS) program for children up to the age of three—this service, which frees working parents at the Center from the need to find day care, is provided in conjunction with Memorial Hospital in South Bend. An occupational therapist and occupational therapy students are on staff and work with at-risk children with the goal of preventing developmental delay;
- ! A preschool class, run by the Montessori Academy at Edison Lakes, for children ages three through six;
- ! A medical clinic staffed through Memorial Hospital;
- ! The Madison Center and Hospital-supported Community Support program, serving the chronically mentally ill, and the New Passages program, serving the chemically dependent;
- ! AIDS Ministries/AIDS Assist, which offers on-site educational, testing, and counseling services once a week;
- ! Counseling and veterans services provided by the Veterans Administration once a month;
- ! Access to government benefits through bi-weekly visits from the Social Security Administration;
- ! The Turning Point program, offering individual, family, and group therapy, as well as psychoeducation, through the Genesis Program;
- ! Meal service, staffed primarily by volunteers and guests of the Center, provided in a dining-hall setting;
- ! An adult education and computer center; and
- ! A chapel with religious services and meetings offered by several different organizations.

One guest describes the Center as:

*. . .like having a healthy relationship with Mom and Dad again. . .someone that pays the bills, while I save my money. Someone that helps me get. . .just the basic stuff like soap and shampoo and toilet tissue. . .and food. Washing dishes, just things that in a . . .normal, everyday life that you have to do, that. . .takes so much of your time, that you forget about the other things in your life that you need to take care of, and when I came here, I felt like, now I have a Mom and Dad. Now I live at home again, you know? Now I can take care of my GED. Now I can take care of college. Now I can take care of me.*

## **The Importance of Partnerships**

The Center’s vision is similar to their mission: “Take the best resources the community has to offer and make them inclusive of our neediest citizens.” The key to fulfilling both may be described in former Executive Director Lou Nanni’s words as,

*. . .Partnerships, partnerships, partnerships. We know, perhaps, the single most important component to the success that we've experienced here at the Center for the Homeless, is in the recognition of our own limitations. . . .So we need to partner with those organizations in the community [who are the best at what they do].*

Mr. Nanni elaborates on the partnership theme, indicating five levels of partnerships are needed:

- ! Institutional partnerships;
- ! Development partnerships;
- ! Operations partnerships;
- ! Program partnerships; and
- ! Guest/client partnerships.

Below, these partnerships are described in more detail, along with advice from the Center in developing them.

### **Institutional Partnerships**

Institutional partners are those which are represented on the Center's board of directors. As board members, these representatives leverage support for the Center in the community. The Center recommends several criteria in selecting institutional partners. The organizations should:

- ! Have reputations which lend credibility to your organization;
- ! Have widespread support from the top level of their organization and throughout;
- ! Be able to power-broker in the community, and be able and willing to leverage partnerships at all levels;
- ! Provide a long-term commitment to develop and sustain your organization; and
- ! Have senior management represented on your board of directors.

### **Development Partnerships**

Development partners may be described as both as financial partners and as community partners. In one sense, these partnerships help fund the Center and the services it provides; the Center seeks to match every public dollar with four private dollars, so that the community can take ownership of the Center's work. But this cannot be done without cultivating personal relationships with key people involved in schools, civic groups, religious organizations, businesses, and local government, and as private citizens (i.e., volunteers and cash donors). In this sense, development (or financial support) and community relations are different sides of the same coin.

The Center recommends evaluating potential development partners in terms of whether they have progressive leadership and a strong community reputation, can provide long-term profitability, and have a demonstrated charitable interest in working with you.

### **Operations Partnerships**

Operations partnerships are those developed with organizations that provide in-kind, rather than cash contributions to your organization. In-kind services may include food and clothing donations, as well as free services, such as sanitation (free trash pick-up) or linen service. The Center suggests that these types of partnerships can reduce an organization's outflow of cash, as well as staff time in an operational area; connect community businesses with local volunteers; and provide training opportunities for both guests and clients. A word of warning, though: be careful not to create more work for your staff in developing these kinds of partnerships.

### **Program Partnerships**

Program partnerships may also be defined as service-related partnerships. These partners can provide direct services for your residents, such as health care or day care. For developing these kinds of partnerships, the Center for the Homeless recommends organizations who have a commitment to social service networking, and whose missions overlap yours. The Center also recommends that these organizations be community leaders in their selected service area, and have progressive executive leadership. Finally, the Center suggests that it is best to partner with service organizations that are financially self-sufficient.

### **Guest/Client Partnerships**

Guest/client partnerships are those developed between your organization and residents, particularly with the goal of developing leadership among current guests and building community in the process. The Center stresses that this is the most important partnership they have, and that it is founded on the principles of servant leadership, communication, and connection. It allows the guests to take ownership by participating in program development; trusting and investing in a system shaped by their peers; and supervising and executing internal chores. Center staff believe that through participation in Center governance guests will: shape their own destiny; see personal goals reached in concert with organizational goals; and assist new guests in transitioning beyond homelessness.

### **Initiating Partnerships**

The Center for the Homeless offers a number of suggestions for initiating partnerships with other organizations. Lou Nanni offers,

*How do you initiate partnerships? The greatest vehicle that you have at your disposal is. . .your mission and vision. If it is a mission and a vision which captures the imagination of the public, people are going to be likely to rally around it. What is it that sets you apart? What is it that distinguishes you in that mission and vision? Is it something that people can believe in? Does it make sense to them? And is it something that is bold?*

Once you have inspired others to work with you and educated them about your organization, you can begin to build a relationship with those organizations or individuals. The Center suggests that you assess the highest potential level to give, have the person “most difficult to say no to” do the asking, and later invite those organizations to become involved in other ways. Mr. Nanni explains:

*. . .When you're going to ask somebody to be involved, it is important that you do your research, formally and informally. . . However you're going to ask them to be involved, you want to get as much out of them as you possibly can. You don't want to ask for too low, too little, in another sense. When we go and ask for support the worst thing, the worst answer you can get is an outright 'no.' The second worst answer that you can get is an outright 'yes.' Because as soon as I get an outright 'yes' I'm thinking, 'Oh, I didn't ask for enough. They would have been willing to give more.' So you want to make sure on those levels that you're pushing for more. . . Second, . . .have the most. . .difficult person to say 'no' [to] do the asking. I'd say my first five or six years at the Center for the Homeless, I never asked anybody for anything. All I did was sing the song. I'd sing the song as best as I could about what the mission and vision of the Center for the Homeless was. But I always had somebody with me, who was already a supporter of the Center for the Homeless, asking the other person at the table, if they'd come on board as well. And many cases it might've been a representative from the University of Notre Dame who was asking, the head of the construction company, that was doing \$30 million of construction on campus at Notre Dame, 'Hey we're on board, we'd like you to come on board.' Very difficult for that person to say 'no' to the Notre Dame administrator. And then where were we, three weeks later? We were with the construction leader, asking some of his subcontractors, to come on board. . . .*

## **Sustaining Partnerships**

Once a partnership is established with your organization, you will want to make sure that commitment is sustained. The Center for the Homeless suggests that a successful partnership continues as long as:

- ! It begins small and grows gradually;
- ! The mutual need remains strong;
- ! Common objectives outweigh conflicts;
- ! Trust is maintained by working relationships;
- ! People at the interface believe in partnership;
- ! The partnership is championed at higher levels;
- ! Oversight is integrated and lines of communication are clear;
- ! Extensive formal and informal dialogue takes place between partners at all levels;
- ! You know your partner's objectives and help them achieve their goals.

### **Multiple Partnership Collaborations**

As your organization develops more partnerships with other organizations, it is likely that some overlap and further collaboration among them will develop for your agency's benefit. The Center for the Homeless shares the following lessons they have learned in multiple partnership collaborations:

- ! Take responsibility for expressing your organization's position fully;
- ! Listen attentively to all other team members, asking for clarification if things are unclear;
- ! Whether you agree with the decision or not, be sure that it does not compromise your values or your organization's mission; and
- ! The only acceptable statements of accord by team members are either: "I agree with the decision," or "I don't completely agree with it, but will fully support it."

The Center also emphasizes:

- ! Multiple partnership collaboration does not mean that everyone agrees that the best possible solution has been reached, but it does mean everyone can support the decision; and
- ! Be attentive foremost to the process so that the above-mentioned guidelines are practiced regularly.

### **Employment Partnerships at the Center**

As mentioned earlier, guests are prepared to take the BRAVO! seminar following graduation from the Starting Over/Stepping Higher seminar. The idea is that guests need the ability and means to stabilize and begin the recovery process, mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually, before they can focus on future plans, such as employment and self-sufficiency. As Katherine Dick, the SOSH facilitator, explains:

*. . . Our experience has been that people will come in for the short-term stay, and they'll get their job, and they'll get their food, and they'll get their clothes, and they'll go back out. But they haven't changed the core problem. They haven't really addressed what's really going on inside of them. So they go back out, and they replicate their own abuse. Their own self-abuse. They're back six months later. Or a year later, or even 18 months later, having really made no progress. So the question is not whether or not they can get a job, the question is can they keep a job? And can they select a job that really resonates with who they are?*

The BRAVO! seminar picks up where SOSH leaves off, building on the skills guests have developed, channeling them towards employment-related issues, and empowering them to find and maintain employment.

One of the primary topics of BRAVO! is goal setting. What does a guest want to do? What skills are necessary for that? Does the guest have some of those skills already? What will it take for those skills to be built? Once a guest has a particular employment goal in mind, s/he will then need the hard, practical skills to get there.

In the midst of figuring out what they want to do, guests learn hard skills, such as how to look for a job, write a resume, and be successfully interviewed. One structured assignment is for guests to go to different places they might like to work, and ask for, fill out, and submit to the potential employer an application. One guest, Taunja—whose experience with this assignment is atypical—describes this as how she got her current job as a teacher's assistant:

*. . . The way I got the job was, we were in the job training class. It was an assignment to go out and get an application. The school corporation was right down the street and I thought, 'Oh, that will be an easy assignment, just go get the application, fill it out and turn it in. . . .' That was the easiest assignment of all. And, so I did it. And then I came back and I called. My case worker said, 'Well, here I got a list of all the schools; you can call them, and see. . . where they have openings. . . And so I started calling, and like the fourth school. . . the principal asked me, 'Do you want to come in, and would you like to come in for an interview today?' And I was like, 'Sure.' And he said, 'Well, OK, I'll see you at one o'clock.' So I went in there at one o'clock, and he hired me. I wasn't even*

*through with my class yet. So I still had another week and a half. So he said. . .I could come in there and observe and see if that was something I'd like to do, and get a feel of it. And so by the time BRAVO! was over, I started my first day. . .I went to work. . . .*

Upon completing the BRAVO! Seminar, clients move on to the next step in the process. Judy Spigle, a BRAVO! facilitator, describes what happens:

*After BRAVO! they go. . .directly into job search with our employment specialist. And, with the employment specialist and their case manager at the Center for the Homeless, they collaboratively come up with an individual placement plan, an IPP. That includes how much time they'll be spending in job search, how much time they'll be spending in continuing to work maybe toward their GED, or working on adult basic education needs, counseling, 12-step meetings—whatever programming seems appropriate for that particular client..*

Part of this next phase includes looking into jobs developed through partnerships. With institutional, development, operations, and program partnerships with several organizations—including the University of Notre Dame, South Bend's largest employer—the Center already has an advantage in placing guests in open positions with organizations they know are committed to helping people. Father Edward Malloy, President of Notre Dame, explains:

*One of the things that we try to do is be a reliable and steady employer. So, if people start in a relatively rudimentary job, they can work their way up. One of the things that I think we can offer is a kind of environment which stresses community and a sense of mutual responsibility. And that's something that I think also reinforces what the Center for the Homeless is trying to achieve with its guests. . . .We don't hire people that can't do the job, but we have a wide range of jobs that are available, and there's always a turn over. And so, in a typical year, we would be able to hire some guests from the Center . . .We're very clear when we hire someone what our expectations are for performance—regularity, showing up, getting the job done, working well with one's fellow employees. And once a record has been established, it's golden. And we have found that, even when people come from somewhat problematic backgrounds, given the effort and given the right kind of support structures, a good percentage of people can make it here. And that's a lesson that we have to offer to other employers in the area. So, we've taken some risks; occasionally it doesn't work out. But we can say from our experience, that in the majority of, instances, it does work.*

Employment specialists who work at the Center and have their own contacts, seek to extend the number and kinds of potential employers for guests. Joan Evans, one such employment specialist describes her work:

*I . . . work with area employers in the community, going to them, stating that we have people that have come through maybe 10, maybe 12 or 15 weeks of programming, and we certainly want to put that client in a good job with an employer that will be understanding and have compassion. . . . So after. . . they've got their job, I do a job retention and follow along; 30 days I keep monitoring them, 60 days, 90 days, 120 days, 180 days, and even if they have left the Center for the Homeless, I can continue to reach them out in the community if they've gone into housing or their own apartment. Just so that they know that they're not out there alone, there is still a connectedness that if something should happen, and they were in the position of maybe losing a job, that. . . I could do some intervention for them and for the employers.*

One of the partners who employs guests from the Center is Corporate Staffing Resources (CSR), a staffing agency which places both temporary and permanent staff in positions at other companies. Sharon Keane, Vice President of CSR, explains their role at the Center, which includes working with the BRAVO! seminar:

*. . . We've come into the classroom and actually worked with the guests, instructing them on what employers are looking for in the area: on how to interview, how to prepare for work, the level of commitment that an individual needs to bring to a job. And. . . when they are job-ready, . . . having them go through an interview and evaluation process with us, and placing them in a position—typically in what we refer to as a temporary-to-direct hire—which would be a longer-term job opportunity for them.*

Ms. Keane elaborates on how this helps her business:

*. . . Individuals that are coming through the doors here at the Center are very similar to the individuals who are coming through our branch operations. So we work very closely with the Center, because it is the right thing to do. . . . Our clients are looking for individuals who are prepared to work, bottom line. Where those individuals come from, where they've been is not as relevant to our clients. They're looking for the individual who's going to show up for work every day, put their best foot forward, and earn their paycheck on a weekly basis. So, the Center for us has been a source of labor. People who are ready to go to work. And that's a real benefit to us, and to our clients. . . . It's worked very well.*

Ms. Keane further explains how organizations similar to hers can benefit agencies similar to the Center for the Homeless and their guests:

*A fairly common problem for . . .shelters occurs when individuals/organizations, on an informal basis, come by to the . . .shelter looking for labor. Spot jobs, they're often called. And individuals are taken advantage of in those situations, often unpaid or not paid as they were promised in terms of the amount or in the time frame. A staffing service such as CSR can be a buffer. . . .Just as we evaluate our candidates and our employees, we evaluate the clients. We want to make sure that the work environments are safe for our employees; we want to make sure that our clients can pay the invoice when it comes. So, that evaluation goes on before we send any one of our employees from a center or anywhere else to a client site. Obviously, the advantage to the guest at the Center is that they know that they're going to a real job opportunity and that they will be paid. The advantage to the client is that they know that our candidates, whether they're from the shelter or Center, have been thoroughly screened.*

Another partnership that has resulted in job opportunities for guests is the development of CFH Landscaping Services. This job training enterprise—started (in addition to providing job training and employment opportunities) to provide structure to contribute to homeless persons' own development and business development within the community, as well as to create revenue to support the Center's general operations—was developed in partnership with ServiceMaster, who has provided two managers (their services are currently paid for by funds from Memorial Hospital and the business run by the Center) for training the landscape crew. The crew team itself is made up of and led by both current and former guests of the Center. After beginning the job training enterprise, CFH Landscaping Services submitted a proposal to Memorial Hospital to provide commercial landscape maintenance on the hospital's campus. According to Phil Newbold, president and CEO of Memorial Health System (Memorial Hospital):

*When we began looking at the Center for the Homeless landscaping business as an opportunity for Memorial, we took a very hard look, just like we would any particular customer/supplier relationship. They performed in the bidding process in a very professional way. They talked about the outcomes. They talked about what they could do. They talked about the kinds of enthusiasm and excitement that the people would bring, and they sharpened their pencils and made sure that it was competitive as it possibly could be. So they won their contracts, this year, last year, and hopefully every year because they're good at what they do, they're committed to what they do, and they did it in a very business-like, very professional way. . . .*

Once this business relationship between the Center and Memorial was established, Memorial began to become more involved with the Center, as part of its own mission in providing primary health care to the community: they opened and staff a health clinic at the Center.

### **What is Success?**

At the Center for the Homeless, success is viewed in terms of what individual guests accomplish. Staff recognize that guests come from many different backgrounds with varying degrees of need. With this in mind, staff see that what may be a simple milestone for one guest may be a truly great accomplishment for another, giving the latter what Lou Nanni describes as “this little triumph of the spirit, that just re-instills this hope.” Even so, Mr. Nanni insists:

*. . . We continue to see at the Center for the Homeless, and let this be said very loudly. . . we continue to see a hell of a lot more failure down here everyday than we do success. The worst thing that we can let happen with our model is be portrayed as a panacea to this problem. It is important to say that time and time again, because we know. . . we need to be doubling and re-doubling our efforts on a regular basis, if we're going to make a dent in this problem.*

Key Contact: Drew Buscareno, Executive Director  
219-282-8700

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## **The Goodwill Options Program**

Goodwill of North Florida, Inc.  
4527 Lenox Avenue  
Jacksonville, Florida 32205

### **Program Overview**

In 1994, a coalition of some 30 local organizations, including Goodwill Industries, was formed to better address the problems of homeless persons in Jacksonville, Florida. Known as the Emergency Services and Homeless Coalition, its members represent a wide range of agencies and individuals—including homeless shelters, support service providers, temporary employment organizations, businesses, and formerly homeless people. Early on, coalition members agreed that a comprehensive employment program was a critical unmet need for homeless clients. As a long-time provider of employment services in North Florida, Goodwill Industries took up the challenge of developing a jobs program geared specifically to homeless persons.

The Options Program is now entering its third year of operation. For its first two years, the primary funding source was a Supportive Housing Program grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Options staff includes a full-time program manager (Valerie Baham) and nine full-time employment specialists. Program oversight is provided by Goodwill's Vice President for Job Training and Development (Jim Wadsworth) and a Coalition support services subcommittee. In 1998, more than 1,500 people were referred to the program, and 500 formerly homeless people were able to secure employment.

The goal of the Options Program is to “provide easily accessible, individualized employment services to homeless people in Jacksonville.” Thus, by definition, the program does not target a particular group of homeless individuals, but rather serves a broad range, including substance abusers, mentally ill persons, and single mothers with children.

The Options Program offers the following services:

- ! Individualized assessment and job search support provided *on-site* at homeless shelters and other residential and outreach facilities. Employment counselors, working at facilities around Jacksonville, provide assessment services, assist clients in developing individual employment plans, and then monitor their progress in achieving their employment goals. Employment counselors may refer clients for training or other services or, if they are job-ready, assist them directly with the job search.
- ! Intensive job coaching for individuals requiring such assistance, particularly those with psychiatric illnesses. These services are provided through a Goodwill partner, Renaissance Center Inc. (RCI).
- ! Training activities that orient newcomers, connect potential employees and businesses, and teach employment skills. On a quarterly basis, Goodwill also holds a non-traditional job fair geared for the homeless population. Employers offer testimonials of their career paths, including the bumps along the road.
- ! Assistance in overcoming barriers to employment, such as transportation tokens; suitable clothing, tools, or necessary equipment for work; or day care.

### **Mission and Philosophy**

Options is dedicated to the concept of “work first” or the “place and train model.” However, once that first job is obtained, the program is committed to ultimately helping client find jobs that pay better and fulfill career goals. In the words of Jim Wadsworth, Goodwill’s Vice-President for Job Training and Employment:

*For someone to be self-sufficient, their most important need is to have a job. Often they don’t have the luxury of waiting three, six, or nine months to secure employment. They need a job now, if they’re going to feed themselves and their family and provide shelter for themselves and their family. . . .So our effort is to work with them to help find a job that’s appropriate to their needs and is consistent with their skill sets.*

*Once they have that job, then we and other providers can work with them to find other employment that will allow them to advance in career and advance in earnings. . .our role is not only to help them secure employment now, which is their most pressing need, but also to be there along with them and be there later to help them find that next job. That’s the reason we developed these other programs, so that there are steps that are available to the person, depending upon their needs and desires.*

The Options Program is also built on the premise that employment services must be *easily accessible*. This is particularly important in a large city like Jacksonville that has a very limited public transportation system. By placing employment counselors at different residential sites, the counselors can readily interact with both clients and case managers. Clients also have the convenience of one-stop shopping. When they are ready to receive employment services, they simply have to go to another room and not another part of town.

### **Assessment and Counseling**

Because the Options program operates in a variety of residential settings, individual Options staff must comply with different rules and requirements. The rule at most sites is that an individual must be actively involved in case management at their residential site and working toward meeting other needs before they are referred to an employment specialist. Referrals typically come from the residential case managers.

The services offered to Options clients are tailored to the needs of the individual—based upon their skills and aptitudes, their needs, and also their work history. During an initial meeting, the client and the employment specialist determine work-related needs, job skills and readiness, and work preferences. In follow-up meetings, the counselor works with the client to prepare ***an individual employment plan***. The plan addresses both short-term and long-term training and employment goals. The specialist also identifies specific job-related needs that a client may have, such as lack of transportation, clothing, or day care. Goodwill can supply bus tokens to newly hired clients; Goodwill can also provide vouchers that allow clients to obtain clothing at Goodwill Thrift Stores.

Over the next few days or weeks, the employment specialist works with the client to identify job leads. The counselors do not go on job interviews with the clients, who are expected to conduct their own job search under most circumstances. However, once a job is obtained, the Options staff provides follow-up services. At most sites, counselors follow the progress of newly employed clients for one year to ensure that everything is going well. If a problem arises, they will work with the client and employer to arrange a solution.

Valerie Baham notes the importance of follow-up services:

*When an employment specialist starts working with an individual, it's really important to stick with that individual long-term. Along the way there are many rough times, not only for the participant, but for the employment specialist as well. . . .It's really important that we go the extra mile and stick with them until the end, whether they stick with themselves or not, because if we stick with them*

*and if they still fail, I think they still walk away with a sense of knowing that someone believed in them. . . .*

Some clients, particularly those with psychiatric disabilities, require more intensive assistance. For these Options clients, the Renaissance Center Inc. (RCI) offers specialized services including *job coaching*. Heidi Davis, an RCI counselor, describes how this works:

*The coaching process is really vital because getting the person that job, doing whatever's necessary to get them ready to go through the job interview, . . . is only the beginning. Helping that person to gain the confidence and the skills to stay on the job, this is our goal. We're looking at not a quick fix, but something that's going to be long-range and sustainable. . . .*

*That follow-up process is extremely important, and we will follow a client as long as they really need services. Some of our folks are ready to leave us after six months, and we have some clients that are still with us after two years, because they need that kind of support; but they stay on the job. They just need someone there that cares and that will listen and help them in the areas that they're deficient. I can't say enough for that part of it.*

The intensive nature of job coaching is revealed in Heidi Davis' description of her work with one client who had been living at the I.M. Sulzbacher Center for the Homeless:

*I guess one lady that comes to mind. . . we used to call her Mama because she was sort of everybody's mother. A lovely lady, but she is schizophrenic, and she left here and went to transitional housing, but was not able to cope with finding a job and going through all the processes that you have to go through to keep a job. So, what I did was help her to pick out a job that would be suitable for her. We found a job in a thrift store and I helped her to fill out the application, and went through the process of her turning in the application and going for the interview, and she was hired.*

*. . . She was very nervous about what she was supposed to do and how she was supposed to do it—so for a week I went with her to work every day, and we worked together until she felt secure about her job, and we also worked with her employer, so that they understood what her needs were. . . .*

*She's been employed now for seven months and is doing very well, has moved out to her own apartment, loves her job, and loves her boss.*

*It really takes a very personal relationship. When you're working with someone that has a mental barrier, you really have to build a trust relationship with that person and there has to be that level of security for them to know that you're not going to be halfway there; they need someone that's going to go the distance with them. So the kinds of things that we do are to be sure their needs are balanced; to be sure that the type of job that we are finding for them is going to be appropriate for them; that they can manage it; to be sure that the environment they work in is going to be worker-friendly; to help prepare their employers for their presence, and set up good communication lines.*

## **Program Management**

As previously described, Options partners with many different providers spread out over a large geographic area. (A list of residential sites serviced by Options is shown on the next page.) Managing such a dispersed program can have its special challenges. The program staff work hard to ensure that everyone's needs are met.

Because Options works with different organizations that serve different populations—mentally disabled persons, single mothers with children, etc.—Valerie Baham and her staff tailor their services to each particular facility and to the people who reside there. They do this in several ways. Most important, in hiring an employment specialist for a given site, Ms. Baham looks for someone who she thinks can work effectively with a particular population that is served by the partner organization. Options will also involve the partner organization in screening candidates and in the final interview for the staff person.

Once the employment specialist is established at a site, Ms. Baham works to ensure that her staff and the facility staff, especially the case managers, are communicating often. Ms. Baham visits each site on a regular basis, at least once a week. If there are any problems or concerns, they can be quickly identified and addressed. She notes, however, that problems inevitably arise:

*I think that sometimes it happens when you have the case manager for that site and an employment specialist, and you're both pulling and tugging on that client to go two different directions, and. . .that client is split down the middle and starts using one against the other. So, it's very important that we keep that open line of communication and make sure that we're offering—or at least saying—the same thing.*

The residential sites also work to ensure open communications and a team spirit between their staff and the Options employment specialists. Linda Lanier, the Executive Director of

Sulzbacher Center, which is served by Options, describes how her site has worked to integrate two Options employment specialists into their program:

*We have found that partnering with outside agencies, and in fact even having them under our roof, has for the most part been very successful. It's important to remember we're all human beings, and relationships don't always work out as perfectly as we would like them to. But one of the things we've done is, we have client-specific teams—in other words, we have a team for our women's dorm, our men's dorm, our family dorms, and our men's pavilion. So there's a cross-department professional team who works with [each group] of residents.*

*So, we invite our resource partners, like Goodwill, to participate in those teams. They carry every bit as much clout and responsibility as every member of the team who gets a paycheck from the shelter. So, we really make them partners in the care of our guests, and I think that has probably been the single-most thing that has contributed to the success, because they don't feel like they're just somebody who rents an office or stays in an office. They really feel part of the shelter, and that's been very important.*

### **Housing Provider Partners Working with the Options Program**

Options works with a wide range of homeless residential facilities that serve different homeless populations:

**The LM. Sulzbacher Center** is an emergency shelter. It is the largest facility in Jacksonville, serving several hundred people at a time. Two Options employment specialists work in concert with the case managers to assist people to become self-sufficient.

**Liberty Center** is a transitional housing facility for men and women. Options works with individuals at Liberty Center to either find employment or to advance in their career if they already have a job.

The **YWCA** also runs a transitional housing facility for women and children. Residents can stay there for up to two years. Because they pay rent, YMCA residents need to be employed. The Options employment specialist works with the clients to help them develop a long-term career plan and find employment that will meet their immediate needs.

**Hubbard House** is a residential facility for abused and battered women. Many of the women at Hubbard House have not worked outside the home for some time. They often need to work transitionally for a period before they are ready for full-time employment. The Options employment specialist works with these residents to help them find transitional employment. Having gained some work experience, Options works with them to find full-time permanent jobs.

**Clara White Mission** does not have a residential program. It is a walk-in, emergency assistance center. Meals are provided and some social services are available at this location. An Options employment specialist will make contact with people as they come off the street.

While building a team is important at each site, Valerie Baham also works to create a team spirit among her staff of employment specialists. She brings her staff together on a regular basis to discuss issues and share information.

### **Advantages of this Model**

For the City of Jacksonville, the Options model is a cost-effective means of delivering employment services to homeless people. Goodwill brings its long-standing expertise to

homeless individuals at residential sites. The sites themselves do not need to create or develop their own expertise in this area. Ms. Lanier explains:

*One of the reasons that we chose Goodwill is that they really are the experts in jobs and job training, and they've been doing this for years, so why not ask the people who really know how to do it, instead of trying to figure out how to do it ourselves?*

In addition to bringing their experience to the sites, Goodwill also operates other employment programs that may be of benefit to Options clients. (On average, Goodwill places about 2,200 individuals in jobs each year. Of this group, about 500 come through the Options program.) For example, the agency operates several *Job Junction* sites around Jacksonville. These employment service centers are a source of job announcements and have trained employment specialists to help clients with resume preparation and job leads. While the Job Junction sites are open to anyone in search of a job, they were designed with the homeless population in mind. The sites provide telephones so that clients can contact an employer and have an employer return their call without identifying a homeless center. Computers are also available for preparing letters and resumes.

Another project run by Goodwill is called *HR Options*. This program provides customized recruitment and screening for employers; most of the positions available to participants through this particular program are higher paying jobs, starting typically at \$ 9.50 per hour. Some who are served by the Options program can eventually be referred to HR Options for placement with one of these employers.

### **Partnerships with Employers**

Options staff work in a variety of ways to engage employers in the program. Some employment specialists spend a good part of each day on job development—making contact with employers to explain their services and the population they serve, and discussing how Options can work with the employer to meet their employment needs. Employers will also contact the program, having heard about it through another employer who had a good experience.

In all, staff maintain contact with more than 100 employers on a regular basis. At any point in time, there will be 800-plus job listings in a job bank that is available to employment specialists for placement opportunities.

Goodwill staff recognize that they must not only meet the needs of the prospective employee, but also the employer. Employers have to be satisfied. According to Jim Wadsworth, employers are usually satisfied because the Options staff does a lot of prescreening:

*I think one of the advantages that an employer has in working with a job program like this one is that they're getting people who are prescreened. Our employment specialists have time to work with a person, determine what their desires are, what their needs are, what their strengths are, what their weaknesses are, and can assess whether or not that person is appropriate for this job or that job, and, beyond that, for this employer or that employer. So, they can work to help provide a better match.*

### **Overcoming Barriers to Work**

Because the public transportation system in Jacksonville is limited, getting to and from work can present a major hurdle for a homeless person searching for employment. Options staff look to help clients find jobs on or near transportation routes. According to Jim Wadsworth, “. . .One of the goals we strive for is that 85-plus percent of the jobs that our job developers secure are on public transportation and are accessible to our participants.”

Options is also able to provide clients with discounted bus tokens so they can get to and from work. Working through the Jacksonville Transportation Authority, they purchased \$75,000 worth of tickets in 1999 at a 30 percent discount.

Some Options clients can also participate in the Good Wheels program, which assists individuals in getting a car. Clients must be employed at least 90 days, and must be living in a permanent dwelling. Goodwill offers up to \$2,000 toward the purchase of a car.

Options also helps clients overcome other employment hurdles. The program maintains a client assistance fund that can be used to purchase work-related items, such as carpenters' or chefs' tools. Upon receipt of these items, the client is typically asked to sign an agreement to stay on the job for 90 days. If successful, they are allowed to keep whatever tools and equipment were purchased through the program. All clients are eligible to receive clothing assistance. Participants are provided with clothing vouchers to be used at a Goodwill Thrift Store.

### **Fine-tuning the Program**

During the first two years of operations, Options staff learned a lot about the things that worked in their program and what they could do better.

Jim Wadsworth describes working with *labor pools*:

*One of the things we've found that really doesn't work successfully in helping people to move toward self-sufficiency is working with labor pools. We have*

*found that participants who use the labor pool and become co-dependent on labor pools, they will work for one or two days in the pool, take the cash that they're paid, and then lay off for two or three days until they need money and then they'll go back to the labor pool again. So, we have tried to not use labor pools as part of the employment process. We've also found that there are some that have taken advantage of people, and so we want to make sure that we avoid putting people in a position where they can be taken advantage of.*

*We will occasionally work with one or two selected labor pools to help someone to develop work experience. It'll be a transitional setting, where we will have them work typically with a labor pool that is working at one job site for a period of time. We want that person to work for two or three weeks to gain work experience, to work on their work aptitudes, work habits, and then move them into more permanent employment.*

Valerie Baham describes Options' desire to help harder-to-serve clients:

*In our last year's program, we encountered a high number of harder-to-serve individuals. What we did, we went back and looked at what areas we needed to strengthen within our program. So [in] the next program year we're looking at bringing on job coaches to have more hands-on [assistance to] increase retention rates. We're looking at other programs too. We have joined forces with the Learn to Read Network to get a person to the point of knowing how to read enough to put him in a classroom environment where he or she can pursue a GED or some type of vocational training. There are other areas that we're looking at. . .for the next program year, but as. . .we encounter new clients, we see a need to do different things that will assist a client and empower them to become self-sufficient. . . .*

Similarly, Heidi Davis describes the challenges of working with harder-to-serve clients, but a little more specifically:

*One of the gaps that I see is working with homeless people who have just come out of a prison setting. They have a double handicap; they've been out of the normal society setting and. . .they have the stigma of being a convict or having a prison record. They're also living in a setting that's not normal, and I think of one gentleman that I work with that had [spent] 27 years out of his 47 in prison, and we made a lot of progress, but in the end he went back to prison. It just broke my heart, but it was just really hard to find the places that would accept him, and the places that were really able to deal with where he was coming from. I don't think*

*he was a failure, I think we really failed him. So working with people who have prison records is one place I think there's a big gap.*

*Another place is working with people who have dual diagnoses, people that have mental illnesses, and drug or alcohol abuse problems. They have a very hard struggle, and it's hard to say which came first, the chicken or the egg, with their situation, but it really takes a courageous person and a person with a lot of inner strength to walk that path back to being part of community. . . . Trying to be their support person, not to become co-dependent with them, but to be an enabler for them is very, very difficult, and I'd say that's where we have probably our lowest rate of success. They get started, and then there's just not enough support . . . to see them through the process, and I see that as one of the places that we really are needing to do a lot more work in providing services.*

### **What Is Success?**

Jim Wadsworth defines success in terms of stages individual homeless persons reach in working towards self-sufficiency:

*In terms of success for the people we serve, I think the success varies from individual to individual. For some individuals, getting that first job and keeping it for 60 days might be a measure of success. We don't see that as ultimate success, but it is a success for that person, and we see it as a success for our program.*

*The next step would be for them to get a job and keep it for 90 days or longer. We have found through experience that if a person stays on a job for 90 days, then they're more than likely going to stay there a year or longer. If they don't make it the first 90 days, then they're going to be back in the job market. That 90-day point is a very critical one. The next critical one is six months. But 90 percent of the people who make it 90 days make it six months. So 90 days is a critical juncture and for us success is seeing someone get at least to that 90-day mark.*

Heidi Davis expresses a slightly different view of success:

*Success really comes in varying degrees, because sometimes success is just helping a person one step down the road. Maybe we don't get to the point of employment, but maybe we help them solve one problem that will some day lead them in that direction. . . .*

*Success, to me, is when you have helped someone to find their niche, you've helped them to find something that they're capable of doing. . .that they are able to take care of their own basic needs, and are able to move out of a shelter and into housing of their own. . . .*

Contacts: Valerie Baham, Program Manager  
James Wadsworth, Vice President for Job Training and Development  
904-384-1361