

CWI SPECIAL INNOVATION PROJECTS

First Quarter Report Summary

The CWI funded three CWI Special Innovation projects in 2006, each for \$100,000. The following provides a brief summary of project accomplishments from start up (July 1) to the end of the first quarter (September 30).

Advanced Manufacturing Efficiency and Productivity Improvement Project

(Racine Area Manufacturers and Commerce)

Project Overview

The purpose of the project is to increase efficiency and productivity of workers and workplaces in the Southeast region by aligning and integrating the education and training supply chain across workforce development, technical college, UW system and employers. Key goals are to (1) increase the number of CNC operators available to employers and share model information across workforce development areas; (2) launch an automated manufacturing resume posting and search service; (3) increase the skills of incumbent workers; and (4) increase number of professional/managers receiving training to improve manufacturing efficiencies.

Key First Quarter Accomplishments

- Meetings conducted with Racine County Workforce Development Center (RCWDC), Milwaukee PIC, HIRE Milwaukee Center, Gateway Technical College and General Automotive to share information on CNC Boot Camp model.
- Started CNC Boot Camp September 13 with 20 participants (16 Southeast, 4 Milwaukee), with RCWDC lead coordinator; another planned to start November 6, with HIRE Center lead coordinator. Gateway Technical College is providing instruction for both; one-stop centers are providing case management.
- Kenosha County Job Center leading review of web-based resume posting sites; committee formed to begin work in second quarter.
- Regional business services group from Job/Workforce Development Centers from Southeast GROW region taking lead in incumbent worker training portion of grant; draft application for manufacturing renewal grants has been developed.
- Members of workforce development system, UW Parkside and local Association of Operations Management developed training plan, secured facilities, created informational marketing materials and distributed materials through professional groups, job/workforce development centers and Chambers of Commerce in region. Training sessions for first of five modules comprising the certified Production and Inventory Manager training program started at UW Parkside, with 14 participants.

Issues/Potential Changes

- Increased use of primary CNC lab at Gateway Technical College required portions of new Boot Camp classes to be moved to another location outside of Racine, resulting in unforeseen transportation costs. Costs incurred will be taken from other grant line items. (12 of 14 Racine participants lack either valid driver's license or a car.)

Regional Distance Learning System

(Workforce Development Board of South Central Wisconsin)

Project Overview

The purpose of the project is to establish a distance learning platform within the South Central Wisconsin region that will broaden access to industry driven education and training for future and incumbent workers. Key goals are to (1) implement a new collaboration with the Wisconsin Educational Communication Board (WECB) and (2) to integrate all available distance learning technologies into one training system to support the needs of Job Center customers and Industry Partners.

Key First Quarter Accomplishments

- Held five planning sessions with WECB, WDB, Technical Colleges and Job Center partners.
- Completed initial stage contract with Wisconsin Broadcasting System
- Organized and have had ongoing meetings of three work teams -- two curriculum content teams (financial literacy and Foundations in Health Care) and engineering/equipment installation team. Teams are engaging staff from WECB, Wisconsin Public Television, six Job Centers, Madison Area and Moraine Park Technical Colleges, and WDB.
- Have made progress in developing content for first data casting projects and expect to launch Foundations in Health Care in December.
- Began work on site surveys and determination of equipment needs, with all but one survey completed; will have equipment positioned at three of seven locations in November.

Issues/Potential Changes

- Have encountered delays in installation of transmission antennae due to unexpected need to work through building landlords, which has been a challenge in Dane County. Issues are being resolved, but are expected to delay the project by about four weeks.

Technology-Based (Virtual, Internet-Based) Job Center

(Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board)

Project Overview

The purpose of the project is to develop a technology-based workforce delivery system that can be used as an alternative to the current facility-based Job Center. The "Virtual" Job Center (VJC) will be through an enhanced web site, accessible from anywhere there is internet access. Goals are to (1) improve the service delivery system to employers, workers and job seekers and (2) develop a system that allows access to real-time customer data for use in case management and administrative planning.

Key First Quarter Accomplishments

- Numerous planning and coordinating meetings and conversations with partner agencies from all three participating workforce development areas (Southwest, North Central, Northwest) to inform and gain support for the VJC concept. A survey of partner staff indicated a high support level (3.6 out of possible 4.0 scale).
- Partner discussions on web site resulted in final design and layout concepts and a graphic designer has been engaged to improve the look of the website.
- Developed/implemented an RFP process resulting in selection of an IT consultant to assist with development of the web site.
- Ongoing work with DWD, the IT consultant and SWWDB on the data tables/systems essential to the VJC to ensure compatibility of data entry with the WIA ASSET system.
- Marketing to employers and creating marketing materials in process, with partner meetings to discuss issues, purchase of mouse pads for marketing purposes, and first employer presentation planned for October.

Issues/Potential Changes

- DOL mandates on common measures are forcing ASSET system changes, which in turn are impacting the planned data entry process for the VJC. The system is being redesigned to use ASSET as the system for entry of client and case management, instead of the original plan for using the VJC as point of entry. DWD has agreed that it can "push" data back to the VJC and make data available more frequently so that WDBs can use the information for monitoring, planning and decision making. DWD and SW WDB continue to work cooperatively on this issue, but it is causing delays in getting the VJC up and moving forward on marketing and other related objectives.