



Profiles of One Stop Career Centers Serving Homeless People

Below is a brief look at some of the strategies used by One-Stop Career Centers and their partners to serve individuals and families who are homeless. This list is not exhaustive—it was initially developed in 2003 and updated by the Chronic Homelessness Employment Technical Assistance Center (CHETA) in 2005 using information gathered through e-mailed and telephone surveys or on-site visits.

Throughout the country, Local Workforce Investment Boards¹ (LWIBs), One Stop Career Centers and Continuums of Care² (CoCs) serving those experiencing homelessness are responding to the significant program and systems challenges to addressing the employment needs of people who are homeless. Since 2003, many of the promising programs summarized in these profiles made strides to improve access and use of mainstream employment services. Some programs originally described have not continued to operate under their original funding auspices, but their work has set the stage for initiatives that succeeded and built upon their successes.

Profiles in this review include one stop career centers located in the following cities:

Tucson, Arizona
Mountain Home, Arkansas
Glendale, California
Irvine, California
Bridgeport, Connecticut

Portland, Maine
Boston, Massachusetts
Chattanooga, Tennessee
Houston, Texas
Washington, D.C.

CHETA found that most programs began with a modest, targeted effort (i.e.: obtaining community voice mail boxes for homeless One Stop users without phone access) and built

¹ Created by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, Local Workforce Investment Boards are entities charged with meeting the needs of employers and job seekers in a jurisdiction and submitting plans to the state, which in turn submits a plan for approval to the US Department of Labor. Boards ensure that the workforce system is market-driven; is easily accessible to any individual who wants or needs a job, education, or training; supplies well-trained people for all employers; and delivers services through one stop career centers. There are 3,500 one stop career centers across the United States. Find a one stop career center at <http://www.servicelocator.org/>. Information about WIBs can be found at the National Association of Workforce Boards website, www.nawb.org.

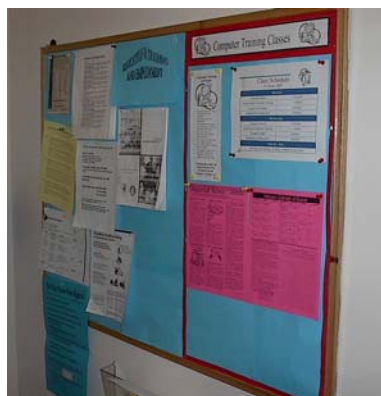
² Continuum of Care (CoC) commonly refers to the entity that develops and carries out the Continuum of Care plan. The Continuum of Care plan is a community plan to organize and deliver housing and services to meet the specific needs of people who are homeless as they move to stable housing and maximum self-sufficiency. It includes action steps to end homelessness and prevent a return to homelessness. There are nearly 500 CoCs across the United States. Find a Continuum of Care contact at <http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/homeless/programs/cont/coc/>.

stronger community connections and partnerships as a result. In effect, we found that original program innovation was a catalyst for increasing awareness of the employment needs of people with disabilities who are homeless, the platform for partnerships growth and a starting point for resource development. Each site has been challenged to achieve a common understanding, coordinate their efforts and undertake community systems integration to effectively deliver employment services for people who are homeless. It is important that these examples are seen not only for what they have accomplished to address homelessness through mainstream employment thus far, but also for their potential to accomplish even more in the future.³

Profiles

ARIZONA

The Pima County Jackson Employment Center (JEC) is one of three One-Stop Career Centers in the Pima County Community and Economic Development Department providing a full array of employment services to Pima County's homeless population seeking to enter the workforce. JEC enrolls work ready men, women, families, and youth in an intensive 2-week employability workshop, a highly structured, fulltime soft skills training that simulates workplace expectations. An integrated Individual Service Strategy (ISS) is a core activity that results in a case plan and an employability development plan for each client. The ISS approach involves identification of client goals and steps to be taken by both the participant and the Center to ensure goal attainment. Components of the ISS include intake assessment; self-directed job search; case management; vocational assessment and training; and job retention/aftercare strategies. While enrolled, participants and their families are provided needed services such as transportation, day care, referrals to transitional housing, laundry money and hygiene items, medical referrals, and work-related equipment and uniforms.



The Jackson Employment Center has a prominent role in the City of Tucson/Pima County's HUD-funded Continuum of Care planning process. As a result, JEC has both formal and informal collaborative relationships with the forty member agencies of the Tucson Planning Council for the Homeless. These groups have developed a process of shared planning and resources, allowing JEC to stay engaged with enrolled homeless participants over a longer period of time (up to 2 years). Last year, a total of 356 participants enrolled in the employment program at JEC and in the HUD Supportive Housing Program in a collaboration with faith-based and community-based organizations. A total of seventy-five (75) percent secured full-time employment at an average wage of \$8.38/hour at time of placement. A total of 74% had retained both employment and housing at the six-month follow-up period. The JEC services are supported by US HUD, US DOL (HVRP and WIA Youth), US HHS (SSBG), CDBG, United Way and Pima County general funds.

Contact:

³ For more information about US DOL initiatives on homelessness see <http://www.dol.gov/dol/audience/aud-homeless.htm>.

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ARKANSAS

One-stop staff from the Arkansas Workforce Center at Mountain Home conducts employment workshops at two homeless shelters in this rural community. Job-ready clients have access to business attire for job interviews and are provided with five outfits when a job is secured. The center also works with employers to provide on-the-job training. Through relationships with partners, the center is able to link customers with adult education and GED classes, medical and dental care, drug and alcohol treatment, housing assistance and transportation. Other partners, including Experience Works, Arkansas Rehabilitation Service, Areas Agency on Aging, Veterans Affairs, and Department of Human Services, provide case management, job placement assistance and other services.

Contacts:

Allyn M. Saathoff Arkansas Workforce Center at Mountain Home 759 Highway 62E, Suite 63 Mountain Home, AR 72653 870-425-4085 http://www.arworks.org/nw.html	Janie Wheeler Workforce Administrator NWAEDD 818 Highway 62-65-412 North Harrison, AR 72602-0190 870-741-6873
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CALIFORNIA

The Homeless Employment Project is a partnership between the Verdugo Workforce Investment Board and the City of Glendale. Through a sub-contract, the City of Glendale provides a Homeless Employment Specialist at Project ACHIEVE, a multi-service, multi-agency access center for the homeless. The Homeless Employment Specialist conducts an assessment of clients' job skills, develops case plans, and holds individual meetings with homeless program participants to help prepare them for responsibilities they will face in the workplace. During appointments, the Specialist assists clients with interview skills, resume writing, career goal setting, contacting potential employers, and filling out job applications. Clients are linked with services available at the Verdugo Jobs Center, a few blocks from Project ACHIEVE, including job listings via the Internet, a resource library, and job training programs. Funds from the Verdugo Workforce Investment Board have paid for a portion of the Employment Specialist's salary.

Contact:

Verdugo Jobs Center
1255 South Central Avenue
Glendale, CA 91204
(818) 241-7521

<http://www.verdugojobscenter.org>

CALIFORNIA

The Coastal Orange County One-Stop serves homeless customers through partnership with Families Forward, a nonprofit service provider that focuses on prevention and intervention. In addition to serving a limited number of families with transitional housing and housing support, Families Forward provides homeless and at-risk families with access to a wide range of services, including a food pantry, WIC, holiday program, case management, and a life skills education series. A career coaching program is also available for eligible clients who attend regularly to receive job search support and coaching throughout the search process. Clients who are not eligible or who need only computer access or short term assistance, such as with resume development, are referred to the One Stop Career Center.

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CONNECTICUT

CTWorks Southwest One Stop Career Center learned from their privately funded pilot project, Passports to Success, which through interagency partnerships offered case management, vocational training and employment support that formerly homeless tenants of supportive housing can participate in the workforce. Although the program ended, the partnerships that led to its development, the comprehensiveness and cohesion around a vision for ending chronic homelessness through employment and an impressive track record of leveraging community (public and private) resources is perhaps its most important legacy. Where other communities are struggling to bring together partners as diverse as the LWIB, Vocational Rehabilitation, shelters, housing providers, and faith and community based agencies to endorse and support a common vision around ending homelessness, Bridgeport is succeeding and demonstrating success.

CTWorks is located in the downtown Bridgeport area in proximity to homeless shelters and areas where people who are homeless frequently reside. The one stop is operated by Career Resources, Inc., a non-profit job development agency serving Fairfield County. It maintains partnerships with LWIB, Bridgeport Continuum of Care, the CT Division of Rehabilitation Services, the CT Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services and the Veterans Employment Service. The partners have a strong record of leveraging funding for jobs programs including almost 50 corporate donors, the United Way, a US Department of Education grant (Partners with Industry project), a DOL Work Incentive Grant and Disability Program Navigator funding and others. CTWorks and its partners augment WIA-funded ITAs with ITAs funded through community

giving. The WIB operates a “Career Coach” mobile One Stop with the technology on board to connect people who are homeless to core services.



The Bridgeport experience is one of putting homelessness and employment high on the priority list for the mainstream workforce system so job developers, employment specialists and other One Stop staff are able to serve and/or refer people who are homeless to the appropriate community treatment, housing and support services. It has resulted in a more flexible approach to employment services by VR, including an MH specialist

counselor on staff and funding for situational assessments (“working interviews”), early eligibility for VR services when people may not have months of being ‘clean and sober’ but are involved in treatment programs and want to get help with work. It also includes weaving a net of associated services like US DOL’s Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program⁴ (HVRP), benefits planning, specialized job fairs and access to employment counselors and One Stop services to ensure access to employment for these individuals.

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MAINE

The Portland Career Center works closely with other agencies in order to secure referrals and refer homeless clients to emergency services prior to receiving employment and training services. This is facilitated by the fact that the Career Center is located on the same street as the Oxford Street Shelter and other key agencies. A number of these key homeless-serving partners participate on several planning committees, including the Emergency Shelter Assessment Committee, the Continuum of Care, and the Homeless Veterans Workgroup.

Located in the Bayside Neighborhood of Portland, the Career Center provides services to homeless individuals through a local network of partners that include homeless shelters, City Welfare, Main Department of Health and Human Services, Catholic Charities, and others. It also refers job seekers to the local Public Housing Authority and one of it’s key partners, The Training Resource Center, will be opening a homeless shelter for Veterans.. The Center sees the people it serves as common customers from a variety of social service agencies, and they work collaboratively to provide a holistic approach to serving the public. All programs have their strengths and the Center uses it’s partnerships to offer them to the public in a “no wrong door” manner. In addition there is outreach to soup kitchens and the homeless shelters and assistance

⁴ For more information about HVPR see <http://www.dol.gov/vets/programs/hvrp/main.htm>.

with employment information and referrals, and workshops to assist homeless job seekers in obtaining employment.

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MASSACHUSETTS

There are three One Stop Career Centers chartered by The Boston Private Industry Council, Inc. (BPIC), Boston’s Workforce Investment Board – Boston Career Link, JobNet and The Work Place. Building on a history of strong partnerships including collaboration with the MA Department of Mental Health, the BPIC has developed three innovative programs to serve people who are homeless. These include:

- *Employment Connections:* A partnership between the Massachusetts Department of Career Services, the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health and JobNet Career Center – Serving persons w/ psychiatric disabilities who are homeless or recently housed.
- *Project TEAM:* A partnership between the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance, the Boston Mayor’s Office of Jobs and Community Services, Community Work Services, Project Impact and The Work Place Career Center serves homeless individuals who are receiving food stamps using Food Stamp Employment and Training funds.
- *HomeWork:* A demonstration project supported by the U.S. Departments of Labor and Housing and Urban Development. A partnership led by the Boston Private Industry Council with fifteen partners from state agencies, city departments and community based organizations to house and employ chronically homeless individuals with a disabling condition.

The JobNet One Stop Career Center hosts the HomeWork and Employment Connection projects where it developed a set of “enhanced services” such as one-on-one case management, benefits counseling, individualized job referrals, post placement support and navigator services for homeless individuals through its own WIA funding or other funds secured through grants. The HomeWork project went a step further to help end chronic homelessness by combing employment services with HUD’s Shelter Plus Care housing subsidies that seeks stable housing and jobs for participants. HomeWork enrolled 41 people, housed 20, placed 27 in employment, placed 9 in supported employment, and 18 in competitive jobs. All are enrolled in WIA. The average wage of for those employed is \$9.31 and the range is \$6.75/hour through \$20.00/hour.

Partnership services integration is a hallmark of the BPIC’s homeless projects and is the key to their success.

Contacts:

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TENNESSEE

At the Southeast Tennessee Career Center in Chattanooga, center staff regularly connects homeless customers with the Chattanooga Homeless Coalition's Community Voice Mail⁵ service. This service allows customers who have no phone to receive messages from potential employers. Once their community voice mail phone number is active, users can check messages from anywhere that works for them: pay phones, social service agencies, or the homes of friends and family. E-mail accounts are also made available at the center.

The Career Center taps other supportive services and housing through the Continuum of Care for homeless job seekers. The Center's Director and WIA Coordinator both bridge the relationship with homeless assistance agencies by being active board members of the CoC. A US DOL Work Incentive Grant operating in support of the Center with assistive technology and a field resource specialist enabled increased service to SSDI/SSI recipients.

The center and its partners has moved beyond a single, focused effort at providing additional support for people with disabilities, including those who are homeless and are now actively involved in the fabric of community efforts to address poverty and unemployment among people with complex needs. They cite partnerships as both their biggest success in breaking down silos that existed between providers and the mainstream workforce system and that dedicating time and resources to partnership building as the best advice they could give to other local areas trying to replicate their efforts. Another key ingredient in helping agencies who serve people who are homeless to understand and utilize the Career Center is the presence of a Disability Program Navigator (DPN) in the center. The DPN not only conducts training and orientation to providers' staff seeking to address their customers' employment needs, but can also receive, review and assist in referrals of individuals using center services.

Contact:

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⁵ Community Voice Mail (CVM), supported by grants and donations, makes telephone messaging available to those with demonstrated financial need, lack of reliable phone service, or pursuit of a goal for work, housing, healthcare, or safety from domestic violence. For more information go the website www.cvm.org.

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www.secareercenter.org

TEXAS

Since 1989, the Service of the Emergency Aid Resource Center for the Homeless, Inc. (SEARCH) has served homeless individuals and families. Founded by a coalition of ecumenical congregations representing diverse ethnic, social, and spiritual backgrounds, the nonprofit agency is an active member of the local Continuum of Care. Its' programs include permanent and transitional housing, daily lunch for 250, a food pantry, mobile outreach, day care, medical assistance and psychological evaluations, and a one-stop resource center for the homeless that offers a comprehensive set of programs to meet a variety of needs.



SEARCH's mid-town location is convenient to transportation and accessible services on the ground floor of it's main facility where employment services are adjacent to showers, laundry room, dining room, and a clothing room.

The agency developed collaborations with a variety of partners across the region without whom homeless people would not be effectively served.

The 13-county workforce system in Southeast Texas is overseen by The WorkSource - Gulf Coast Workforce Board, a 63-person board of directors with a majority of members from the private business sector. The Board's staff, housed at the Houston-Galveston Area Council (HGAC), manages contractors that provide a full range of job services through 36 regional career offices. This year SEARCH began building on their innovations and success in programs like the Job Bank, Literacy Program, GED Program, Culinary Training Program and WIA Workforce Re-entry Program by becoming a One Stop Career Center for the Gulf Coast Workforce Board. It offers a range of WIA core services are organized in a seamless, accessible service delivery setting. Through its partnerships, SEARCH can offer on-site food service skills training as well as link customers to a variety of training services through the HGAC's WorkSource system.

SEARCH received JTPA and now additional WIA funding to support it's commitment to providing employment assistance for the homeless (and other customers) by significantly expanding its employment services in 2005. To adhere to their mission of providing flexible and individualized services, the agency could not rely on one single source of funding to meet the needs of homeless people. By braiding together a variety of funding sources, the agency can effectively and comprehensively serve the employment needs of homeless job seekers through the provision of one stop career center services as well as outreach and wrap-around supportive services.

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Washington, D.C.

Located in the First Congregational United Church of Christ, the Downtown BID Satellite One-Stop Career Center is operated in partnership by the Department of Employment Services (DOES) and the Downtown Business Improvement District (DBID). The Center, co-located with a soup kitchen in a faith-based facility, focuses on training and employing the homeless and local residents of D.C.'s Chinatown neighborhood. Participants can get help with a resume, search for jobs online and connect with employment opportunities. Each morning a breakfast is served and participants are encouraged to get assistance with housing, food stamps, healthcare, and veterans benefits. In addition, a women's program addresses specific health and domestic issues. A full range of services is available in the building or by referral to other D.C. government agencies and non-profit service providers. Contrary to common perceptions, approximately 31% of homeless people in the District work at least part-time and may have received assistance from this Career Center.

The District's Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness incorporates an important role for the City's mainstream workforce system. The D.C. Workforce Investment Council's identifies "hard to serve" target populations within the District – including homeless individuals and recognizes that as homeless individuals take responsibility for changing their situation, the DC Networks One-Stop Career Centers can be helpful in delivery of numerous workforce education and training services to assist individuals in development of their basic and employability skills, obtain labor market information and other appropriate services and training to obtain employment.

The Veterans Affairs Satellite One-Stop Career Center makes special efforts to reach and assist veterans who are homeless or do not have permanent housing. They have established close working relationships with homeless shelter staffs throughout the City. One-Stop Center staff conducts onsite employment workshops at a local Veteran's Center twice a month. The DOES provides employment counselors to the New York Avenue Homeless Assistance Center (HAC) and will consider placing counselors at other HAC sites as appropriate to serve homeless individuals as well as local neighborhood residents seeking employment assistance.

Contacts:

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This document was funded by the Office of Disability Employment Policy, the Employment and Training Administration and the Veterans Employment and Training Service of the U.S. Department of Labor, under contract #E-9-4-4-0052. The opinions contained in this publication are those of the contractor and do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. Department of Labor. CHETA would like to thank the contacts listed for their time and effort to provide the information for these profiles.

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