

6.B Confirmation of Workforce Readiness Skills Training (Confirmation of Action by Workforce Services Committee)

In October of 2005, the Workforce Services Committee heard from several local representatives on workforce readiness issues. A recurring theme in the presentations was that employers are finding it increasingly difficult to find workers who possess basic job and workforce readiness skills – i.e. good work ethic, reporting to work consistently and on time, good basic skills (communication, math and writing skills), the ability to interact positively with other employees and good judgment and initiative.

The Blackhawk Human Resources Association (BHRA), a group of human resources professionals representing employers in Rock County, has looked at ways to improve workforce readiness skills of job seekers. For several years, BHRA has been interested in a course that would provide basic workforce readiness skills to young workers and document skill development on a competency certificate. SWWDB has recently partnered with BHRA in the search for an appropriate curriculum and has agreed to provide workforce readiness training as part of the services available through the Rock County Job Center.

Ms. Lori Rhead, a representative of BHRA, told the WSC that BHRA was interested in training course entitled “Tackling the Tough Skills – a Curriculum Building Skills for Work and Life”, by the University of Missouri Outreach and Extension program. She said that the curriculum was developed with the adult worker in mind. The curriculum, which runs 54 hours, is designed to be adaptable and flexible so it can be delivered to meet employer needs with a possibility add focus training on areas such as customer service skills, math skills or other industry-specific needs. Both pre- and post-testing are available to document skill accomplishment and a certificate to show achievement at the end of the course.

The cost of the program is \$2,400 which includes a one time fee for the author to conduct a “train the trainer” session. SWWDB will pay for the “train the trainer” session and use the training as a required Job Center service component for job seekers. It is expected that the competency certificate will be a credential that will be recognized by employers, thereby improving the employability of Job Center participants. SWWDB will also offer the program to employers as a “fee for service” business activity.

The WSC endorsed the training and SWWDB has proceeded to acquire the program. The “train the trainer” session will be conducted July. SWWDB will then begin offering the program through the Job Centers and on a “fee for service” basis this fall.

The cost of the training did not require the approval of the Board. However, because implementation of the Workforce Readiness Skills Program was included in the SWWDB Local WIA Plan, confirmation of the training by the Board is requested.