LONG TERM UNEMPLOYED SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT

WEBINAR SERIES

Strategies for Retaining LTU Participants in the Program

Webinar: July 31, 2017
Roundtable Discussion: August 1, 2017

Topic: Proven free and low-cost retention strategies that H-1B Ready to Work (RTW) grantees can implement to engage and re-engage training participants to boost program retention.

WEBINAR LINK: https://www.workforcegps.org/events/2017/07/11/09/35/H-1B-Ready-to-Work-Strategies-for-Retaining-Participants

ROUNDTABLE LINK: https://hipimpact.webex.com/hipimpact/onstage/playback.php?RCID=89afa77352e8a8419a4a962f74f71ddf

Presented by: Dan Salemson, Workforce Development Consultant, Salemson Consulting Group

Participant Retention Requires the Right Tools

Information: Determine why participants leave your program and the major points in the program cycle at which they leave. Learn the most successful methods for keeping in touch with your participants. Ask participants what challenges they foresee as they complete the training. Request feedback. Use all this information to make small changes that can have a big impact. For example, bump up field trips from later in the training to immediately after orientation to increase interest in the training or send text messages instead of emails.

A Retention Culture: Make successful completion and the benefits from obtaining new skills THE central focus of your materials and presentations. Make success visible by hanging posters with positive messages. Create engaging classrooms with bright spaces, natural lighting, plants, and room for movement and interaction. Focus on participants’ sense of worthiness, competence, and structure to help them overcome the stress of unemployment, which affects retention.

Motivation to Stay: People tend to commit to actions that they verbalize. When
participants put in writing that they will complete the program, it’s a promise to you and to themselves. Another retention strategy is to ask participants to write letters to themselves listing their reasons for joining the program, what they hope to accomplish, and why it’s important. The letter can be used to motivate participants to stay in the program or to show them how far they have come once they have finished the program.

**Positive Influencers:** Competition and peer pressure are powerful influencers of behavior. If used correctly, they can increase program retention. Use constructive competition, peer pressure, and team-based learning to create and sustain excitement, increase connection, and motivate participants to continue the program.

**Recognition:** Frequent recognition builds program attachment. The strongest motivator is individualized recognition from a mentor or authority figure. It is cherished and has emotional value. Peer recognition creates a sense of pride. Money quickly changes from an incentive to an expectation. To make rewards impactful, follow Bob Nelson’s ASAP<sup>3</sup> (“ASAP cubed”) Model of Recognition: make them as soon, as sincere, as specific, as personal, as positive, and as proactive as possible.

**RTW Grantee Promising Practices**

**Grantee: City and County of Denver**

- Coaching, supportive services, and career pathways engagement motivate participants to complete training
- Program completers remain connected to the program through social media updates, industry news and event links, regional hiring events, and volunteer opportunities during local industry events
- Bi-weekly meet-ups after training completion provide participants with the opportunity to meet with employers, learn about topics related to job hunting, and stay engaged in the job search process
- Tools to reconnect with participants include LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, a newsletter, and employment status updates through the state system

**Grantee: San Jacinto Community College District**

- Compare post training wages of various trainings offered to motivate participants to complete training
- Visit classrooms frequently
- Bring registration forms near the end of class to register for the next class
- Keep in constant contact with the instructors because they know what is going on with participants
- Have knowledge of all available resources in the area for any circumstance