



## 2015 USO Talent Development Network Innovative Project Awards

### Innovative Project Award Winner Recipients

#### Tri-Rivers and Marion Technical College

**Challenge-** August 2014, ConAgra Foods Inc. announced it was closing one of its two Marion facilities in six weeks, effective October 10, 2014. The first facility to close employed 146 people. OhioMeansJobs - Marion County issued a Request for Quotations for Rapid Response Services in Marion County. Marion Technical College (MTC) - Center for Workforce Development (CWD) submitted a proposal to provide requested services. This proposal was a joint effort between Marion Technical College - CWD and Tri-Rivers Career Center Adult Education, (TRCC). This project was awarded funding with MTC as the fiscal agent.

**Solution-** CWD, TRCC and OMJ - Marion County met with ConAgra management to determine employee needs and to develop a calendar for the six week time period. Services identified as being needed were Rapid Response information sessions, resume writing, interviewing, and basic computer classes, a Financial Aid workshop, and a Transition Center. Computers would be needed at the ConAgra facility for the six week time period. OMJ - Marion County placed the calendar of scheduled events on their web page. 12 Rapid Response information sessions were held to cover employees on all three shifts. Ten resume classes were scheduled, four interviewing classes and four basic computer classes. One financial aid workshop was scheduled. All classes were delivered by CWD and/or TRCC employees. The Transition Center was staffed approximately 50 hours by employees of OMJ - Marion County, CWD and TRCC within the six week period. TRCC provided 11 computers and one printer at ConAgra in the Transition Center. OMJ - Marion County provided two Wi-Fi ports for connectivity. OMJ - Marion County, CWD and TRCC arranged a job fair to be held at ConAgra, exclusively for ConAgra employees. Companies invited were within a 60 mile radius and offered comparable wages. Employers were given a packet of information about the ConAgra employees and the numerous awards they had received, most recently the "FY 14 Plant of the Year" within the ConAgra organization. A county job fair had already been scheduled within this time period. Companies were given the list of ConAgra awards and ConAgra employees were identified. During the last two weeks of employment, employees were offered WorkKeys assessments at the ConAgra facility by the TRCC staff.

**Results-**36 employees were awarded National Career Readiness Certificates as a result of taking the WorkKeys assessments. 25 Silver, 4 Bronze and 7 Gold Certificates were awarded. 105 visits were made to the Transition Center in the six week period. 21 individuals participated in the Basic Computer classes, 14 attended Resume classes and 8 attended Interviewing classes.

As of mid-January 2015, approximately 74 individuals had reported employment or training to OMJ - Marion County. Seven individuals enrolled in Spring Semester courses at Marion Technical College for a total of 74 credit hours. Two individuals enrolled in TRCC's Industrial Maintenance Program, three enrolled in TRCC's Welding Program.

## **Rhodes State College – Utilizing Assessments to Create Customized Training Programs**

**Challenge-**A local manufacturing company was experiencing a high and unacceptable percentage of equipment downtime. It was affecting the company's ability to meet customer demand. The company had identified, as a potential root cause of the problem, a lack of formalized training for their maintenance associates. The maintenance group consisted of 23 employees with a broad spectrum of maintenance repair knowledge. There was a need to assess, with reliability, the current skill level of the employees.

**Solution-**The Workforce Development Training Coordinators researched potential assessments with the assistance of the USO TDN Resource Center at Lorain County Community College. We chose the Ramsay Maintest because it measures the practical mechanical and electrical job knowledge of maintenance employees and provides strengths and weaknesses in 21 areas. Historically, this test has been used with managers and hourly maintenance employees and is supported with criterion-related and content validation. The assessment also provides a comparison of local results to the national percentile. We proposed the use of the Ramsay Maintest along with the ACT Math Compass test to the employer to evaluate the skill level of each maintenance employee. We then compiled the results of the 22 groupings (including Math Compass score) for each employee. By establishing a threshold score value in each category, we were able to create an individualized and customized training plan for each employee to close their identified skill gaps.

**Results-**The Company was delighted with the concept of using the Ramsay Maintest to initially quantify the maintenance employees skill levels. 23 Maintenance employees were tested. The results validated that the Maintenance group had a wide variety of skill levels across the categories of the assessment. A customized training plan was created for each individual that addressed the skill gaps identified by the Ramsay Maintest. The proposal to deliver the required training was accepted by the Company. A combination of hybrid curriculum, hands-on labs and face-to-face delivery will provide the necessary instruction. The training is scheduled to begin February 1, 2015. We believe there is significant need in the marketplace for industrial maintenance training. This training framework that utilizes the Ramsay Maintest, provides a customized but cost effective solution to our industry partners. This process is easily replicable with other customers.

## **Columbus State- Training Program**

**Challenge-** The CSCC Center for Workforce Development Department was delivering the H1B Chemical Operator training program and needed the CSCC Community & Professional Testing Center to secure, administer and proctor a set of "Candidate Screening" assessments. The Ohio Board of Regents is the grant funder and originally placed this program with Washington County Career Center and now replicated this 12-week training program at CSCC.

**Solution-** The Community & Professional Testing Center (WD) partnered with this program in providing and administering a battery of technical assessments as part of the Chemical Operator program's admissions requirements. The Community & Professional Testing Center administered four SHL Verify Assessments as industry-recognized talent screening assessments on Reading Comprehension, Calculation, Checking and Mechanical Comprehension. The benefits of using these assessments helps determine strong candidate/program "Fit" thus improving student retention and completion of the program.

**Results-** The Training Program had 15 candidates assessed as part of the application/screening process; 12 of these screened candidates were accepted into the Program; 10 of this Class Group of 12 completed the Training Program; and 8 of these program completers found employment with chemical industry employers.

"The Ohio Board of Regents approached Columbus State Community College with the opportunity to meet a regional workforce need by partnering with a neighboring academic program. By leveraging the expertise and resources of CSCC Community & Professional Testing Center we were able to assess the skill set and knowledge level of incoming students and tailor the training program to their unique needs...win-win-win. Local industry gets great employees, the students get a great job, two schools are able to collaborate versus compete to offer the best educational product."

## **Honorable Mention Recipient**

### **Columbus State FastPath Program**

**Challenge-** The FastPath program is designed to assist underemployed, unemployed and transitional Columbus area residents gain the job skills for entry-level employment in fast growing fields such as Patient Care, Building Services/Floor Care, Food Services, and Logistics. The FastPath programs vary and are approximately 3-6 weeks long, 120 - 160 hr. training program funded by a grant from the City of Columbus and administered by Columbus State Community College. Determining program applicants fitted best to these specific 'pathways' is critical to applicant and program success.

**Solution** -The Community & Professional Testing Center partnered with the FastPath program in providing and administering a nationally recognized USO/TDN Career Assessment (CareerScope for Vocational Research Institute) to assist the FastPath program advisors in determining the applicants' interests and aptitudes to support placement into one of the various career training pathways. The benefit of this assessment is helping place the candidate in the career pathway that contributes to a strong applicant/career 'fit' and strengthens the student retention and completion of the training program.

**Results-**The first cohort training groups had 26 candidates enter the program; 20 students completed their training programs; and 10 had found employment upon graduating with their program certificate. "As a Career Facilitator for Grant Funding Programming, the CareerScope has been an amazing tool to utilize for those individuals, who are coming back to college to look at their career pathways. This assessment gives them a breakdown of their skills, interests and aptitudes and even utilizes O\*NET to show what careers or positions would be beneficial to them. For example, the individuals interested in our Patient Care Program all showed strong skills and interests in the Scientific, Humanitarian, and Accommodating arenas where they have the knowledge and passion for helping others. This tool really helps guide our students in the right tracks for this program".