

# EMPLOYMENT IN RURAL AREAS

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“Employment” in your community may look different than it does in a college town.

# Typical Barriers in Rural Areas

- Lack of obvious jobs
- Declining industries
- No public transportation
- Minimal places for students to perform work experiences
- Few employment vendors to develop and support jobs

# Community membership looks different in a small town

- Many people commute to work or school,
- Or are self employed,
- Everyone knows everyone else,
- People with and without disabilities need to be creative to live in rural areas and earn a living,
- A great place to network & use social capital!

# Business might look different in a small town



# What do people do for work and income in your town?

- Ranching
- Agriculture
- Tourism
- Hunting
- Home-based business



# How do youth in your community gain work experience and learn a work ethic?

- 4-H
- Participating in the family business
- Raising livestock
- Moving irrigation pipe
- Mucking stalls
- Stacking hay
- School-based service learning



www.alamy.com - D3Y96A

# Plants grown from native seeds; Terlingua TX



Self-Serve Honor System







Self-Employment: varmint control, raising birds for sale...

# In Small Towns it is Easier to Network



- What is your school's network? Teachers?
- Do you hire people who are connected?
- Do you research connections as part of Discovery?
- How are your student and their family connected to the community?

# Economic Capital & Social Capital

- Where do you spend money?
- Where does your agency spend money?
- Where does the job seeker and their family spend money?
- Where do you spend time and who do you know?
- Leverage your connections.

# Social Capital

- Who does your family sell your beef to?
- Who works on your ranch?
- Where do you buy your feed?
- Where do you shop in town?
- Who does your school do business with?
- What about members of your school board?
  
- Mine the supply chain and use your connections

# Where Everyone Knows Your Name...





# Customized Employment

*According to US/DOL:*

Customized employment means individualizing the employment relationship between employees and employers in ways that meet the needs of both.

It is based on an individualized determination of the strengths, needs, and interests of the person with a disability, and is also designed to meet the specific needs of the employer.

# Customized Job Development

## Job Seeker Initiates

- Job seeker's skills, tasks & contributions are emphasized
- Employers are contacted because their needs might match what the job seeker brings
- Job seeker or representative presents a proposal
- A position is negotiated

## Employer Reacts

- *Considers proposal*
- *Reviews their unmet needs or allows developer to I.D. unmet needs*
- *If a match is identified, a new job description is created*



# Job Development

- „ Myth of the Labor Market
- „ Are we Developing or Finding?
- „ Jobs really Are Not Hidden: Social Capital
- „ Employers are Almost Always Hiring
- „ Discovery Drives Employment Development
- „ Artisanal non-Retail Business

# Big Sign Syndrome

- Large businesses have:
  - a Human Resources department
  - More structured hiring processes
  - More commitment to job descriptions
  - More applicants for each job



# Strategies to Tap into The Hidden Job Market:

- Get to Know our Communities
- Recognize that there's a Lot of Commerce even in the Smallest Communities
- Create Opportunities thru Economic Development
- Quit going where Every Other Job Developer Goes!

# Employer Needs/Benefits Analysis

## ***Unmet Workplace Needs:***

This area focuses on tasks that need to get done but are not getting done in the way the employer would like. It also can include tasks that have not been performed but need to be.

## ***Tasks Better Performed by Others:***

This area focuses on aspects of jobs that might better be performed by others at a lower pay grade. This option can directly save money for employers.

## ***Specific Benefit/Productivity:***

This area focuses on workplace needs for additional productivity in specific tasks. It must be matched with the job seeker's specific competencies.

# A Small Town Restaurant and Bakery

‘A Place to Ponder’

Small popular restaurant gets so busy at lunch potential customers are leaving.

- Material supply: Stocking beverage supplies, condiments, and silverware.
- A delivery business within a business.

# Christian Cat Fish Hole

Lithia Springs, GA



When developing a job for Pete the main factor was his list of conditions to be successful. It included preparation, environment, support on the job, and types of tasks.

## Conditions

- Sturdy environment
- Clear start and end to all tasks
- Physically demanding tasks
- Water and outside a plus
- Few people, familiar people
- Tasks to be completed didn't have a terminal deadline

## Support

- Staff with the best relationship
- Social story about the unfamiliar work place
- Teach the meaning of money and then paychecks.

Matching the worker's ideal conditions for success and tasks that could be offered to employers' needs resulted in the creation of 2 paid positions.

## Employer Unmet needs:

- Horses got fed and turned out but stalls and sheds frequently didn't get sawdust
- Electric waterers were constantly in need of cleaning
- Rocks need to be picked every spring



## **Mike's work experiences and self-employment were jointly supported by the school, family, VR and WIA.**

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- Wanted his own business,
- Mobile business so he could change locations,
- Didn't want too much pressure,
- Family supported marketing and transit to town.

# Small Business is frequently under capitalized

- Is there a service that would increase the businesses revenue, sales, profit?
- Is there a tool or piece of equipment that the owner would like but can't afford?
- Weaving resource ownership into job development;
- Computer tutoring at the day care center, embroidery machine, horse.

# Exploring Community Need

- Tourism
- Lots of retail
- Shop owners didn't offer shipping



# Transportation in Rural Areas

- Isn't just an issue for people with disabilities;
- Several states are creating partnerships across transit systems to increase service and reach to rural areas more cost effectively;
- SAIL Taxi Voucher Program- Southeast AK IL Program partnered with a local taxi/tour company and was awarded grant \$ to expand transportation for PWD and seniors; \$3 vouchers available for \$1.20;
- Bozeman MT- Para transit joined forces with MSU Bozeman transit, added some grant money which resulted in increased routes, more accessible transit for everyone, classier and free fare transportation for all citizens and tourists;
- Look at community need, resources, and solutions.

Lilly Shoup & Becca Homa, (2010) "Principles for Improving Transportation Options in Rural and Small Town Communities"

# Expanding Job Supports to Rural Areas

- Rethink who can provide training and on the job support;
- More flexible funding options- SSA work incentives, ABLE accounts, VR flexibility in contractor requirements;
- Can an established Employment Vendor have satellite offices;
- Long distance supports in addition to onsite supports.



.. maybe we should try to think out of the box?

Innovation Department