



**WIAB 08-00**

**DATE:** December 8, 2000  
**TO:** All Local Workforce Investment Areas  
**FROM:** Cheryl A. Brush, Chief, Workforce Systems Bureau  
**SUBJECT:** Equity Activities in One Stops

Attached is a paper on Equity Activities in One Stop Career Centers, developed by the Gender Equity Advisory Committee and Statewide Nontraditional Leadership Team in the State of Illinois. This may be useful to you as you think through strategies for assisting females, particularly single heads of households, in achieving economic self-sufficiency.

Attachment

# **ONE-STOP CAREER SYSTEM**

## **EQUITY ACTIVITIES**

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Developed by:

Gender Equity Advisory Committee (GEAC) of the Illinois State Board of Education and  
Statewide Nontraditional Leadership Team (SNLT) of the Illinois Workforce Investment Board

## **Ensuring Individual Economic Self-Sufficiency through Rising Real Incomes for ALL Illinois Residents**

*Illinois' productivity and competitiveness demands that we fully utilize all potential workers.* The ability of the education and workforce preparation system to meet the training and education needs of all future workers will have substantial impact on the economy of Illinois. Full access to education and training must be available to all. An education and workforce preparation system that strives to be inclusive cannot merely open its doors and expect equity to happen. Deliberate action from everyone involved in the education and workforce preparation system must be taken to insure that barriers that limit opportunities are identified and corrected. While barriers to full participation have impacted both men and women, the economic inequities have had a greater impact on women which is evident in the persistent 30% wage gap between men's and women's wages. In 1999, male and female graduating high school seniors in Illinois will experience a lifetime difference in earnings of \$1.59 million if the current wage gap persists.

*Efforts to improve access and opportunities are important because of the increasing reliance on women's wages for the well being of families.* Approximately 46% of Illinois single mothers have incomes which are at or below the poverty level and another 12% are near the poverty level. Women's low earnings have a direct impact on the number of children living in poverty in Illinois, currently one in five. Women continue to be over-represented in the lowest paid, lowest opportunity jobs in the economy. They comprise 79% of administrative support workers and only 2% of workers in construction trades. In 1998, the six leading occupations for women were still secretaries, nurses, beauticians, waitresses, teachers and cashiers. These segregated occupational patterns contribute significantly to women's generally low wages and to the wage disparity between males and females. Seventy percent of women still earn \$25,000 or less in a year. Women and men with specialized technical training can expect to earn half a million dollars more in their lifetime than someone who is working at a low-skill, minimum-wage job.

*To ensure all Illinois residents achieve economic self-sufficiency through rising real incomes,* the Gender Equity Advisory Committee and the Statewide Nontraditional Leadership Team recommend the following equity activities for the One-Stop Career System.

# ONE-STOP CAREER SYSTEM EQUITY ACTIVITIES

## CORE SERVICES

### ***Outreach***

- Provide information and services in multiple locations with easy access
- Reach out to individuals who need the services by including brochures in mailings and announcements to TANF and food stamp recipient or publicize services on community bulletins boards, and in laundromats, food markets, hospitals, houses of worship, food banks, drug stores, shelters, school, on buses
- Make mobile services available in rural, isolated areas
- Ensure materials and recruitment reflect multiple languages and diversity representation including gender, age, race, disabilities
- Display posters, brochures, flyers and other promotional materials that include nontraditional\* occupations which feature photos and testimonials of women working in these occupations and indicate the salary range for entry-level and experienced workers in these occupations.

### ***Intake and Orientation***

- Expose all individuals to the full range of careers including those nontraditional for their gender and assist them in determining skills and interests they have which are transferable to nontraditional occupations
- Provide orientation and career counseling that includes nontraditional options, high wage opportunities, self-employment and micro enterprise training and information on the self-sufficiency standard
- Review materials including computer software to determine if all materials are inclusive, represent diversity and are gender fair. (Can all individuals see themselves, is the language inclusive, are the graphics inclusive?)
- Provide staff development for intake staff and career counselors on equity issues including changing roles of women and men, life stages, labor market and workforce trends, impact of career choice on wages, nontraditional careers, and diversity training

### ***Initial Assessment***

- Provide assessment that includes literacy, English proficiency, computer skills and basic interest inventory
- Provide information about high wage, high skill and nontraditional occupations, prior to assessing career interests
- Include interviews that draw out skills and interests participants may have that are transferable to nontraditional employment when providing career assessment
- Conduct an initial assessment of supportive service needs including child care, transportation, health care and other support services

### ***Job Search and Placement***

- Provide placement staff with training on strategies for overcoming barriers to entry into nontraditional employment

- Provide information on general workplace skills that includes legal rights on the job and techniques to prevent and diffuse sexual and racial harassment
- Provide employment statistics and labor market information, including job vacancy listings, information on skills needed for listed jobs, information on local demand occupations, including skills needed and wages
- Provide employers with information on nontraditional employment including opportunities and strategies to overcome potential barriers

### ***Support Services***

- Determine availability of vital support services including child care (on or near site), transportation, housing, health care and other support services
- Make linkages with social services and community-based organizations to assist in meeting support service needs
- Provide information on the availability of support services in the local area and make referrals as appropriate
- Partner with clothing bank to provide appropriate workplace attire
- Make referrals for substance abuse and domestic violence services as needed
- Partner with existing single parent and displaced homemaker programs

## **INTENSIVE SERVICES**

### ***Comprehensive Assessments***

- Use multiple measures, i.e. tests, interviews, inventories, hands-on work samples, to provide a comprehensive assessment that includes basic skills, aptitudes, abilities, interests, support service needs
- Include interviews that draw out skills and interests participants may have that are transferable to nontraditional employment to assist them in understanding all of their options
- Provide in-depth interviewing to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals
- Assist the participant to develop an individual employment plan which identifies the employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives and appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve the employment goals

### ***Support Services***

- Continue strategies for Support Services listed under Core Services
- Provide opportunities for participants interested in nontraditional employment to strategize on how to succeed in an occupation dominated by the other gender
- Provide individual counseling when difficulties arise, and in groups to strengthen skill and confidence, particularly where culture or gender bias threatens to block success in training and employment
- Provide short-term pre-vocational services to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training, including development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, professional conduct, tool identification, hands-on experiences with tools and machines
- Offer holistic services at the center dealing with family, health, and life management issues

## TRAINING SERVICES

### **Training**

- Provide information about training available for nontraditional employment
- Make preapprenticeship programs available
- Make upgrade training referrals for incumbent workers available
- Provide evening programs for incumbent workers to assist with job upgrades
- Expand availability of on-the-job training in high wage, high skill occupations
- Provide pre-employment and job readiness skills training for nontraditional employment
- Provide assistance for participants in making appropriate training choices using Individual Training Accounts
- Provide staff development on nontraditional training and employment – advantages and challenges

### **Support Services**

- Continue strategies for Support Services listed under Core and Intensive Services
- Determine availability and make appropriate referrals for tutoring, preparatory training, mentoring, and support groups

## ACCOUNTABILITY

- Document nontraditional training referrals by gender/ethnicity
- Document high wage placement by gender/ethnicity
- Document training dollars allocation by gender/ethnicity
- Analyze on-the-job training placements versus classroom placements by gender/ethnicity

## RESOURCES

- “The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Illinois” to quantify self-sufficiency for Illinois families (For more information, contact Women Employed at 312/782-3902)
- Illinois Occupational Information Coordinating Committee for labor market information (<http://www.ioicc.state.il.us/>)
- Illinois State Curriculum Center, a research, referral and resource center (<http://www.oes.siu.edu/>)
- Women’s Bureau materials, publications and guides (<http://www.dol.gov/dol/wb/>)

\*Nontraditional refers to occupations or fields of work, including careers in computer science, technology, and other emerging high skill occupations, for which individuals from one gender comprise less than 25 percent of the individuals employed in each such occupation or field of work.