

CMJTS OJT Program Shines during PY09

Overview describing the innovative best practice

Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services (CMJTS) has a long history of writing on-the-job training (OJT) contracts in Central Minnesota. From the early days of the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) to the present, CMJTS has been known for its strong OJT program. In PY 09, CMJTS wrote the most OJTs of any region in the state!

This achievement was due to the innovative OJT enhancements CMJTS implemented in PY09 that enabled CMJTS to use this training tool to put many job seekers to work and help many businesses create jobs during this current recession.

Early in PY09, CMJTS workforce development advisors (WDAs) recognized the need to update the OJT policies, procedures, and contract forms. No substantial revisions had been done since 2005. The WDAs, who had the most experience with OJTs, were well aware of what was working and what was not in our OJT program. Confusing language was causing some misunderstandings about the program for our central Minnesota businesses at a time when the value of OJTs to businesses as a hiring tool was rising.

The WDAs drafted changes that clarified policies, streamlined internal procedures, and simplified contract forms. The CMJTS corporate attorney reviewed all new paperwork. As an added bonus, OJT contract forms were converted into a “fill-able pdf” form, allowing staff to e-mail forms to businesses for preliminary review and completion. This innovation decreased the response time, enhanced customer service, reduced internal printing expenses, and saved CMJTS staff time and travel expenses by reducing the number of on-site visits necessary to initiate and implement an OJT contract.

At the same time, CMJTS placement specialists, a pilot program that had been in effect for year, was deemed a regular program. The three placement specialists joined the three WDAs as experienced OJT employees. This synergy proved key to implementing the largest and most successful OJT program in the state during PY09.

Jobseeker impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for jobseekers)

- 133 central Minnesota job seekers were hired and trained for permanent jobs using the CMJTS OJT training program.
- 13 central Minnesota job seekers were referred to the TAA OJT program by CMJTS for an additional 13 TAA OJTs.
- Average wage at placement with CMJTS’ OJTs was \$16.51.
- Each CMJTS OJT employee earned a portable, national certification.

Community impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for non-jobseekers)

- 133 jobs were created with CMJTS OJTs.
- An additional 13 TAA OJT referrals enabled additional businesses to train to their skill requirements.
- More than \$540,000 in CMJTS training reimbursement benefited businesses and communities in central Minnesota. (This does not include the TAA OJT funds that businesses received)
- Central Minnesota businesses trained job seekers to their job skill requirements
- Each OJT employee earned a national certification.

Quotes from businesses:

“This is working out fantastic. Mary is doing so well and has been taking on more and more responsibilities. She is great! This has been a win-win experience.”

“The OJT program is wonderful for businesses. This program allowed us to enhance and lengthen Branden’s training.”

Identification of those involved, including collaborators

Collaborators included CMJTS staff, businesses in central Minnesota, and state and federal funding partners. Resource room staff helped identify potential candidates for OJTs and referred them to CMJTS. When identified as TAA eligible, CMJTS contacted state TAA staff who then proceeded with the OJT, as appropriate.

Leveraging/alignment of outside resources

CMJTS funding sources including ARRA OJT, WIA, Dislocated Worker, and MFIP. Each OJT employer was reimbursed 50% of the OJT employee’s wages for the length of the contract. \$540,000 was leveraged from employers.

Ideas for replication/lessons learned

Because of the additional ARRA OJT funds available during PY09, CMJTS OJT staff focused on increasing the marketing of the OJT program to businesses. Once businesses understood the program, they were very interested in participating. “I have worked for CMJTS and with OJTs for more than 15 years,” said Cathy Baumgartner, workforce development advisor at CMJTS. “I have never seen such interest in the program as businesses expressed this year. Because of this increased marketing effort, many businesses now call us before they hire to inquire about available OJT candidates.”

Barbara Chaffee, CEO, commented, “CMJTS is committed to continuing this successful program and will seek out OJT funds whenever possible. As the business quoted above said, ‘this is a win-win experience.’”