

a joint resource journal for professionals in workforce,  
economic development, and education

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# Solutions

VOLUME 6 ISSUE 3 MAY/JUNE 2010



RX for an Economy  
in Recovery: Moving  
Good Practice to  
Scale

One Package, Many  
Solutions

E-Hub Means  
Business  
Opportunities for  
Local Entrepreneurs

Growing Renewable  
Energy Jobs in  
Minnesota

Communities In  
Schools of Georgia  
Partners with The  
Quality Group  
to Support Job  
Shadowing and  
Career Development  
Programs

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# From the Editors

Summer is almost here, school is almost out, and still, as of this writing, funding for 2010 Summer Youth Programs is not certain. And, if it does come, it will be too late for many regions to utilize it to its greatest potential. But lack of funding isn't stopping regions across the country from being innovative and creative. Programs and partnerships are happening in the most creative of environments, and we are including articles about several in this issue.



Learn about fresh ideas to educate and reward frontline healthcare workers and to advance and build the health care workforce in *RX for an Economy in Recovery: Moving Good Practice to Scale*.

Find out about a streamlined, fully integrated, scaleable solution to share information throughout your system in *One Package, Many Solutions*.

Learn about a new ticket to a successful business venture for entrepreneurs in *E-Hub Means Business Opportunities for Local Entrepreneurs*.

Read about the winning approach one state is using to strengthen and grow its renewable energy sector in *Growing Renewable Energy Jobs in Minnesota*.

And, discover how one partnership is addressing the drop-out problem in *Communities In Schools of Georgia Partners with The Quality Group to Support Job Shadowing and Career Development Programs*.

We are always looking to share new and innovative programs and practices with our readers. If you are interested in including an article about the creative things you are doing in your community or region, contact us at [kerry@workforcemarketing.com](mailto:kerry@workforcemarketing.com) to be included in a future issue.

Stay Safe this Summer!

Kerry Brooks and Kim Luedke, Editors  
Workforce Marketing Associates, LLC

# SOLUTIONS

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## About Workforce Marketing Associates

Workforce Marketing Associates is a full service marketing firm, providing all the support you need from a fully designed and implemented strategic marketing plan to simple project-by-project support.

We specialize in providing these services to national, state, and local organizations; associations; non-profit, and community-based organizations; and others involved in workforce investment, education, and economic development.

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# RX for an Economy in Recovery: Moving Good Practice to Scale

*By Marlene B. Seltzer, President and CEO of Jobs for the Future*

As our country works its way out of the deepest economic downturn since the Great Depression, one sector of the economy is a source of the good jobs we desperately need: health care.

The nation has created over 500,000 new health care jobs since December 2007. The Bureau of Labor Statistics now foresees a need for 50 percent more home health aides by 2018, 46 percent more personal and home care aides, at least 20 percent more nurses, and the list goes on.

Without strong action hospitals, health centers, and other care providers are unlikely to find enough qualified workers. The lack of qualified workers in this sector threatens the quality and availability of care, and it limits the economic potential of local communities throughout the country.

America can, of course, recruit young people and retrain those laid off from other industries to fill some of these health care jobs. But the cure for health care's workforce woes will come only when we also look to the millions of women and men now performing critical jobs on the frontlines of health care.



Representing about half of the 12 million Americans employed in health care, the frontline workforce is responsible for a wide variety of patient care, administrative, and support tasks, from scheduling your appointment to taking your blood. Yet these essential workers rarely receive the training that would enable them to advance in their careers. The result is high turnover, high recruiting and replacement costs, and missed opportunities to move frontline workers into middle-class jobs.

Reversing this trend requires fresh ideas about how we educate and reward frontline workers. We can begin by looking at three innovative strategies that have helped advance workers, supported the bottom line of the businesses that employ them, and improved the quality of care.

First, many communities are creating educational settings that support workers. Community colleges are exploring changes in their curricula, instructional methods, and academic and other supports to not only attract more working adults but also help them to succeed.

Second, innovative employers are creating work environments that support learning. Health care providers are making it easier for their frontline workers to earn credentials while on the job by embracing “learner friendly” policies and practices.

And third, communities are embracing “workforce partnerships” that reach across traditional lines, bringing together labor and employers, philanthropy and government, high schools and colleges to provide better opportunities for frontline workers and a more highly skilled workforce for health care employers.

How do these principles play themselves out on the ground?

In Kentucky, for example, when Owensboro Medical Health System had an urgent need for 500 registered nurses, it teamed up with Owensboro Community & Technical College to craft an accelerated nursing degree program for its frontline workforce. Paid release time and employer-paid tuition, along with online and classroom instruction at the hospital enabled workers to continue to earn a living even as they earn credentials. As a result, and despite demanding learning and work schedules, three-quarters of the frontline workers participating in this program are expected to earn an RN credential by the end of 2010, almost doubling their earnings.

In Maryland, a partnership of Good Samaritan Hospital, Community College of Baltimore County, and community-based and philanthropic organizations recently helped address a shortage of “nurse extenders.” The Baltimore Alliance for Careers in Healthcare trained nonclinical hospital staff—from dietary, transportation, and environmental services—first as nurse assistants and then, through additional training and internships, to become nurse extenders. Mentors and career coaches helped trainees develop clinical skills and manage work and family issues. All program graduates passed the certification exam on the first attempt. Their hourly wages increased by nearly 25 percent and they are on the path to further education and career advancement.

A third example comes from one of the nation’s most comprehensive joint labor-management programs, the District 1199C Training & Upgrading Fund. To develop the skills and careers of frontline behavioral health technicians, the Training Fund has partnered with Temple University Health Systems, Philadelphia University, and the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey-Department of Psychiatric Rehabilitation. As a result of the collaboration, frontline workers perform better, they are more confident in their own abilities, and they are more likely to be accepted by colleagues in health care occupations that might have been closed to them before. The hospitals in the project feel that they can better fulfill their mission to provide quality care.

Innovative programs like these, initiated by entrepreneurial employers, labor and community organizations, and foundations, suggest how federal investments and policy reforms could spur similar action across the nation and take success to a much larger scale. State and federal investments and policy reforms can help by:

- Providing federal matching funds to employers and to state and local governments for investments in the recruitment, retention, and training of frontline and mid-level health workers;
- Making grants to colleges for tuition support and programmatic innovations that advance frontline workers into high-demand health professions; and
- Expanding the federal student loan forgiveness program for health care graduates to include frontline workers as well as doctors and nurses.

A diagnosis for an economy in recovery has been made. Now let’s write the prescription and propel millions of health care workers into the skilled, middle-class jobs that represent America’s future.

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Jobs for the Future identifies, develops, and promotes new education and workforce strategies that help communities, states, and the nation compete in a global economy. In over 200 communities in 41 states, JFF improves the pathways leading from high school to college to family-sustaining careers. For more information, visit [www.jff.org](http://www.jff.org) or call 617.728.4446.

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# One Package, Many Solutions



The demands on your workforce board are greater than ever. Your team of executive, program, and financial professionals are being pushed to achieve more and more each year. Are you prepared for the challenges you face today as well as those that lie ahead?

Ask yourself these questions:

How easily can you scale up? Can your current systems scale to handle twice the number of cases than you currently serve? Could you scale up without adding staff?

- Is information synchronized across your departments and organizations?
- Do your program and fiscal teams have access to the real-time reports they need to work efficiently?
- Do your reports talk to each other? A culture of sound decision making can only exist if the information is timely, accurate, and ever-present across departments and reports.

Meet Brenda. Brenda is Executive Director in a large metropolitan region that includes 4

different counties, with differing needs and different service providers. Brenda's board expects to know how many customers are being served, how many unique and repeat visitors there are to each career center, total of all grants and programs, which services are being accessed in each county, and what the outcomes are of all of the programs offered. Most importantly, Brenda needs to show that the organization is fiscally healthy and that customers are satisfied with the services provided – that funds are being spent in the best way to maximize services and get the highest return for the funds being invested.

Then there is Jose. Jose is the Program Manager who oversees all of the career centers and six different service providers in the four-county area. Brenda looks to Jose to determine if One-Stop resources are being fully utilized, which services are being used by program, what are the program outcomes for each funding source and how well each service provider is meeting their contractual obligations, whether they are over/under spending or obligating per program, and other things like the number of visitors and what is the average reception room wait time in each center.

And Mattie, the CFO at the board must coordinate all of the information for the four-county area to provide internal reports to Brenda and the board, GAAP financial statements for external auditors and monitors, reports to funders/grantors, and federal tax reports.

Logistically this is a nightmare. Jose spends most of his time traveling between centers and meeting with the center managers. Does each center manager and each service provider use the same system to track all of this information? Does information make it back to Mattie in a timely manner so that her reports are accurate and up to date at all times?



What if all of their system-wide functions were running in a streamlined, fully integrated, scalable environment as opposed to a patchwork of functions?

NonProfit Technologies' Workforce Productivity Suite offers all the tools you need to execute and share information system wide. It is the only complete, integrated solution for your workforce Executive, Program, and Fiscal Managers.

But does it really work?

Let's check back in with Brenda, Jose, and Mattie.

Jose - "The Workforce Productivity Suite allows each of our career centers and service providers to track customers through a swipe card system. We know when customers come and go, what services they access, and how long they have to wait in each center. Our case managers can easily enter their case information into the case management system to track which services were used. Now all centers and service providers are using the same system and we don't have to waste precious staff time compiling individual reports and combining them into the reports needed for the board."

Mattie - "Information automatically comes into my accounting system from the whole system in real time, allowing me to pull the reports I need today for any purpose. We know at any given moment where we stand financially, where money is obligated, and how much money we are using per funding source."

Brenda - "The Workforce Productivity Suite has integrated all of our processes into one, streamlined system. It is allowing our fiscal and program teams to be more productive and our case managers to manage their cases more efficiently, providing better services to our community. No matter what the challenges are each day, my team can pull the financial and program information we need to be responsive to the changing needs in our community and the changing funding climate. The Workforce Productivity Suite truly offers many solutions in one package."

**To learn more about how the Workforce Productivity Suite can benefit your region, sign up for a free webinar at [www.cpaz.com](http://www.cpaz.com).**

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NonProfit Technologies, Inc. (NPT) is proud to be the software provider of the Workforce Productivity Suite, designed exclusively for Workforce Boards. We are a premier business and integration partner for Sage/MIP and our products are Microsoft certified. NPT services over 600 non-profit customers nationwide, with an emphasis on workforce. Contact us today at 800-404-9758, [workforce@cpaz.com](mailto:workforce@cpaz.com), or visit us on the we





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# E-Hub Means Business Opportunities for Local Entrepreneurs

David Arndt wasn't exactly sure what business venture he wanted to get into after working for General Motors for 23 years. For Michael Bachaus, automotive repair has been his longtime interest, but to start his own business following GM's shutdown was quite intimidating. For both, the newly-offered E-Hub program has been the answer.

"They've covered things you never would have thought about," said Bachaus, who plans on starting his business with partner, Kristy Homan. "They provide you with everything you need to develop your business plan" Bachaus said, "things you probably would never think about." He cited as an example a recent class where Milton, WI City Manager Todd Schmidt spoke. "I would've never considered my business signs, but you need to clear regulations to ensure they meet ordinances," he said. "That's just one small item—there are literally dozens of those types of things you need to know when considering starting a business."

In fact, prior to the E-Hub classes when Michael went to a bank to try to secure a loan, they asked about his business plan and of course, he didn't have one. But he will after he completes the E-Hub program. Based out of Green Bay, WI, E-Hub is a unique entrepreneur program where staff members work one-on-one with participants to explore individuals' business ideas and market feasibility. It is a non-profit community initiative with participants from a diverse group of socio-economic backgrounds, race, and income status. Over 60% of participants are women and over

30% are minority.

David isn't exactly sure yet what he will do when he completes the E-Hub classes, but he wants to use his electric skills. He worked at GM for 23 years, starting on the line, but then earning his electrical apprenticeship and working in that field at GM for 18 years. He also has his degrees in both electronics and aviation electronics (avionics), both two-year programs, from Blackhawk Technical College. He finds the networking contacts to be one of the biggest advantages to the E-Hub program. He said the excitement of being in a program started by Packer star Reggie White initially peaked his interest.



"This is different from regular classes," Arndt said. "Even though it is short-term, you put together enterprise teams and do your own work. The speakers come from real-world experience, which really helps us," he added. He said the speakers and resources will help him in areas like maximizing the use of computers, utilizing web sites, advertising, insurance, avoiding lawsuits, protecting employees, and similar subjects.

He is also impressed with the fact that you can call the speakers or even the national head of the E-Hub program, Mark Burwell, and they'll take the time to help you. "It's a very personal program," he said.

Michael's Case Manager, Ed Martinez, said Michael liked the idea that after completing E-Hub he will have more control over his future. "He mentioned to me that if he worked for an employer, his future would always be in their hands," Martinez said. "E-Hub will give him more control over setting up his own future," he added.



Michael didn't have much time to consider whether he wanted to get involved in E-Hub. When his business partner Kristy contacted Forward Janesville regarding assistance with developing a business plan and structure, they were put in touch with Kaia Fowler of the UW-Whitewater Small Business Development Center, one of the co-sponsors of E-Hub, along with the Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board (SWWDB). It just so happened the E-Hub classes were starting the next day.

"To say we were on the 'fast track' is an understatement," Kristy said. With Kristy's prior experience as a Warranty Administrator for Fagan's Automotive, Janesville and Michael's degree in Diesel Technology from Blackhawk Technical College and prior experience as an auto technician, their future plan was fairly well laid out for them. In fact, Michael has been repairing cars on his own, but is looking to expand into either a leased or perhaps his own facility. "I'd eventually even like to have two or three employees," Michael explained.

All three see E-Hub (short for Entrepreneurship Hub) as their ticket to a successful business venture. The six-week program offers three and-a-half-hour classes once a week, with additional time set aside for one-on-one counseling and coaching of participants. For qualified dislocated workers, the Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board pays for the program. One group meets in Beloit, the other in Janesville, with each providing the flexibility of attending the other one if there happens to be a personal schedule conflict. The second set of E-Hub classes started April 9 in Janesville and April 15 in Beloit.

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Those interested in E-Hub information can contact SWWDB Business and Employment Services Manager Eric Kuznacic at (608) 741-3502 or [e.kuznacic@swwdb.org](mailto:e.kuznacic@swwdb.org) or Kaia Fowler at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater at (262) 472-3217 or [fowlerk@uww.edu](mailto:fowlerk@uww.edu).

## UPCOMING CONFERENCES & EVENTS

### **August 14 - 17, 2010**

Southern Economic Development Council (SEDC)  
2010 Annual Conference  
New Orleans, LA  
<http://www.sedc.org>

### **August, 28 - 31, 2010**

Northeastern Economic Developers Association 2010  
Annual  
Conference  
San Diego, CA  
<http://www.nedaonline.org>

### **September 26 - 29, 2010**

International Economic Development Council  
2010 Annual Conference  
Columbus, OH  
<http://www.iedconline.org>

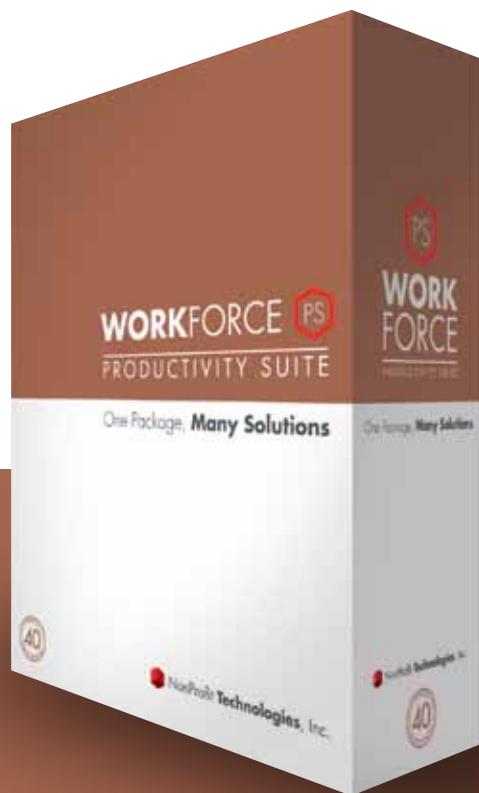
### **November 8 - 10, 2010**

Youth Development Symposium  
Chicago, IL  
<http://www.nawdp.org>

### **February 5 - 8, 2011**

National Association of Workforce Boards  
2011 Forum - A Dialogue for Workforce Excellence  
Washington, DC  
<http://www.nawb.org/forum>

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# Growing Renewable Energy Jobs in Minnesota

*By Teresa Kittridge, Executive Director, MN Renewable Energy Marketplace*

Start with private sector energy leaders. Add educators, labor, and foundations. Partner with workforce development. And, fertilize with \$5 million in seed money from a WIRED grant. This is the winning approach that the Minnesota Renewable Energy Marketplace (MNREM) is using to strengthen and grow the state's renewable energy sector.

"For business owners to create Green Jobs, we need workers to have practical training and up-to-date technical knowledge that fits our needs," says Mark Willers, chair of the 27-person MNREM board and CEO of Minwind Energy. "In Minnesota, we're going to have opportunities to compete in wind, solar, biofuels, biomass, and related industries, but if we don't have the local talent we're going to lose out to other states and other countries."



MNREM's first initiative to help meet that need was to fund 28 renewable energy projects, ranging from skills development to entrepreneurship to teacher development, through a Department of Labor WIRED grant. MNREM's private-sector led board reviewed hundreds of proposal submissions and chose projects that met industry needs most closely.

In one project example, five local businesses at risk of laying off people were able to send workers to a local community college for upgraded skill training. Through the project, a modification was made to the state's Shared Work Program so that the business could reduce payroll, the workers received unemployment benefits to replace the pay, and employees learned valuable new skills. The training, called Mechatronics, covers the five core knowledge areas needed to run today's highly technical and automated energy production and manufacturing plants. Core areas include mechanics, electronics, hydraulics, pneumatics and computerized controls.

"Our maintenance technicians that attended the Mechatronics course tell me that they are now able to solve problems faster, that they have a better understanding of some things that were a bit cloudy before, and that they are working more efficiently," said Harley Goff from Dotson Iron Castings in Mankato, MN. "Many of them are proficient in mechanical systems, but they lacked experience in electricity and electronics and how they interact with hydraulics, pneumatics, and mechanical systems."

A project at the other end of the talent development continuum was a high school renewable energy class in rural west-central Minnesota that partnered with the local ethanol plant to give students hands-on experience with an ethanol simulator.

"The lab manager from Chippewa Valley Ethanol Company worked with our class for a whole week and assisted us in running the gas fermenters and with the gas chromatography," said Ruth Ahrndt, Benson High School science teacher. "By the end of that time, students were having a competition to see which team could produce the most ethanol from their simulator."

"Also, two young men that completed internships at the ethanol plant as part of the MNREM project were hired on at the plant for the summer and may have regular employment there," she said. "They wanted to stay in the area to be involved in their family farms, but realized that they wouldn't be able to live on that income. Our program helped them find future job possibilities right in our community."



In total, the MNREM project served more than 8,100 participants and involved more than 100 businesses. Each project was required to have a private sector lead as well as a community partner. Business leaders in 36 Minnesota counties worked with their local workforce development agencies, educational institutions, and each other to explore creative new ways to build talent for the renewable energy sector.

There were a few bumps along the way. As the director of the the Mechatronics project attested, “Industry moves at a different speed than education,” says Doug Laven. “We targeted to have the course start a couple of months after receiving the grant. Industry came back and said you’re going to start next week,” says Doug Laven from South Central College. “We were ready to roll by the next week.”

Sharing of resources is not always a common practice. Yet, a local wind energy company, Outland Renewable Energy, worked with five local communities and the area’s technical colleges to support a Wind Energy Development Coordinator for everyone’s benefit. She is recruiting students for the Wind Energy program, promoting online wind energy courses, and creating a jobs database for employee recruiting.

“Having expertise in small communities is one of the biggest issues for future growth,” said MNREM Board Chair Willers. “I see brain-drain as one of our challenges in rural Minnesota. The young people leaving our high schools are moving to other cities, and as a business owner, I don’t want to have to look to New York City, Zurich, or China for our talent.

“MNREM has shown that we can identify private sector needs, work together to craft skills training, and try creative new ways to build a career pipeline. It’s this kind of practical leadership that will keep Minnesota in the forefront of this growing sector.”

Connie Ireland, regional administrator at the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), was there at the beginning of MNREM and authored the WIRED grant proposal. “With its success with the WIRED grant, MNREM is now going statewide with its efforts,” she says. “At DEED, we see this private-public cooperation as a model that can be used with other industries as well. It takes a willingness to hear all 27 different perspectives of the MNREM board members and then move ahead with one well-informed voice.”

Videos featuring each of the MNREM funded projects will be available on the MNREM website in June ([www.mnrem.org](http://www.mnrem.org)). A capstone event is being held this summer to celebrate the 28 projects and to begin the next chapter in MNREM’s work.



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# Communities In Schools of Georgia Partners with The Quality Group to Support Job Shadowing and Career Development Programs

For far too many students graduating from high school is an enormous undertaking, and attending college is an unrealizable dream. When a young person is unable to visualize a brighter future, lacks positive role models, and faces seemingly insurmountable barriers in the quest for a quality education, dropping out may seem like the only viable option.



Communities In Schools of Georgia (CISGA) is piloting an innovative e-Learning approach to address the drop-out problem by using WinAt-Work® from The Quality Group in eight CISGA Performance Learning Centers (PLCs). WinAt-Work features 6 to 8 hours of interactive video vignettes with a variety of actors who face challenges that are real and relevant to at-risk students. In addition to developing essential work readiness skills through online modules in Interviewing, Good Work Habits, Getting Along, and Getting Ahead, students come to realize that mastering employability skills is an essential key to a promising future. Inspired by this insight, students become more motivated to earn a diploma and more confident that they can indeed develop the skills necessary to thrive in our 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace.

Tom Roman, Training and Strategies Manager, Communities In Schools of Georgia, comments, "Communities In Schools of Georgia is delighted to offer the WinAt-Work training to students at our Performance Learning Centers around the state. PLCs are non-traditional settings for high school students who were struggling in the typical high school setting. In addition to earning their diplomas, these students are also striving to prepare for careers, college and life. We are incorporating WinAt-Work as part of our job shadowing and internship component to help all of our students get ahead! We are really excited about the program and can't wait to see the results!"

Communities In Schools is the nation's largest dropout prevention organization. The mission of Communities In Schools is to champion the connection of needed community resources with schools to help young people successfully learn, stay in school and prepare for life.

Since 1992, The Quality Group (TQG) has been producing innovative e-Learning solutions that improve lives, organizations, and communities. Today, TQG offers unrivaled e-Learning content in Lean Six Sigma, Project Management, Logistics, ISO-9000, Workforce Development and numerous other topics, all on OpusWorks®. TQG's purpose is to enable elegant, technology-powered learning experiences, on a global scale, with an ever present focus on process improvement.

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For more information about WinAt-Work Online, visit [www.winatworkonline.com](http://www.winatworkonline.com) or call Carol Dierdorff at 678-244-5393. For more information about CISGA, visit [www.cisga.org](http://www.cisga.org).



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