

MANAGEMENT'S ROLE

The success of OEC depends on the commitment of the employer community, along with management and staff of a local WorkSource Employment Department office, to develop and maintain a solid working relationship. This implies that both parties are clear about their role and their expectations of one another. The manager, in most cases, is the logical party to initiate the implementation of an employer council, particularly since the field office has much to gain from the input and work emanating from an active council. There are, however, concurrent responsibilities and activities during the organizing phase as well as throughout the life of the partnership.

To begin, the field office manager seeks participants from a cross-section of the employer community representing various and targeted firms and industries. Care should be taken to include private sector businesses representing both users and non-users of the Employment Department. Particular attention to potential customers is important, but established customers initially will be easier to recruit and will derive the most immediate benefits for both the Department and the business members.

Managers should give some thought to the type of leadership characteristics needed to motivate the employer community to engage in developing and maintaining an OEC in their area. Some characteristics to consider when looking for leadership from within the employer community are:

- **HIGH VISIBILITY:** It is of tremendous value to have employers who are well known in the business community.
- **RESPECTED MEMBERS:** Employers who are seen as interested in, and working to improve the quality of life in their communities make effective representatives for community projects.
- **ENTHUSIASM:** A dynamic personality will generate and sustain the interest of other committee members and can be a key ingredient to success.

Once participants are identified, it is the manager's responsibility to contact them in writing, by phone or in person. E-mail contact should be reserved for maintenance and announcements, not recruitment or first contact.

STATEMENT OF OEC OBJECTIVES

- Participation will support a planned effort to improve services to employers.
- Involvement is potentially beneficial to the entire community, and of great value to the Employment Department.
- Encourages questions and sharing of ideas for improving services of the Department.
- Sets a time and place for an orientation meeting
- Provides a timed agenda for the meeting.

The first meeting is the responsibility of the Employment Department field office manager who will check that:

- The meeting room is conveniently located and of adequate size and environment to accommodate the group.
- The agenda is timed so that consideration is given to accomplishing business within the constraints of attendees' schedules.
- Proper equipment for conducting presentations is set up and in working order.
- Appropriate staff is in attendance and prepared to participate; and
- By the end of the meeting, employers will have sufficient information and motivation to implement an OEC to serve their area.

The Employment Department field office manager has an important resource available during this critical development period. The **OEC Coordinator** will provide technical and support assistance to the council and the field office throughout the implementation period and beyond. Great care should be taken when selecting the OEC coordinator. Organization skills are essential. The OEC Coordinator has assigned responsibilities and required knowledge that can be covered generally by the following descriptions:

- Represents the Employment Department in matters concerning the operations of OEC within the community.
- Serves as staff support role for local OEC.
- Assists local employers and management in developing and maintaining productive partnerships.
- Distributes up-to-date program and legislative information that impacts public/private employers at the local, state and national level. This is provided by state OEC.
- Supports the goals and mission of OEC and observes guidelines as prescribed by the OEC board.