

**ODOT Region I Alliance
Screening and Assessment Workgroup – Summary and Recommendations
December 21, 2005**

Charge to the Workgroup

Review "Standards for Determining a Qualified Highway Trades Worker" document. Review and discuss screening and assessment processes of individual agencies, programs. Determine if one screening or assessment tool can be utilized collectively. Review distinct placement and follow up processes of workforce-related programs/ agencies. Develop recommendations that utilize standard and consistent candidate screening and assessment.

Members:

Charles "Chick" Rose	WorkSource Oregon
Cynthia Mullen	Oregon Employment Department
Mark Dostal	Office of Civil Rights
Doug Barrett	Oregon Employment Department
Jerry Auvil	Willamette Carpenters
Jess McKinley	Oregon Bridge Delivery Partners
Jim Pauley	Ironworkers Local 29
Judy Betts	Hamilton Construction
Laurie Cunningham	Mowat Construction
Lori Bean	worksystems, inc.
Michael Burch	Portland YouthBuilders
Rachel MacClarence	Better People
Randy Blakely	Portland Community College
Rey Espana	NAYA Family Center
Pete Petersen	Bureau of Labor & Industries
Janiece Thoresen	Mowat Construction

Background and Summary

The Workgroup organized its efforts and inquiry upon an inductive model. A profile of the successful construction worker, as viewed by the JATC, contractor or project owner, was the goal against which screening and assessment recommendations developed.

Workgroup members with expertise in meeting the needs of persons most subject to employment barriers helped identify where candidates might be lost and articulate strategies to enhance a Candidate's skill, knowledge, training, and education portfolio.

The group demands that the process yield continuing opportunities for participants. Qualified Candidates will be encouraged to continue to enhance skills once in the Alliance Workforce Pool. Each Workforce Partner, JATC, and contractor must track training and enhance the bases upon which the Qualified Candidates will be able to find future training and employment. No Qualified Candidate will be mere fodder for the maw of so-called "group set-asides" and left to dry in the breeze at a project's end.

There is consensus on this report; there is no dissent.

I. Workgroup Recommendations

A. Establish an Alliance Workforce Pool. Its members, Qualified Candidates, will represent diverse racial, cultural and gender populations. Contractors and project owners may draw apprentice-qualified employees for the construction trades from the Pool.

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- B. Recruitment and Referral Entities will be Partners in the development of the Alliance Workforce Pool and will offer assistance to persons demonstrating interest and commitment toward the construction trades industry.
- C. Candidates for the Pool and Qualified Candidates in the Pool will be tracked continuously through steps in the screening, assessment, referral and hiring processes by the Oregon Employment Department and by any Project Owner. To the extent possible and/or practical, any Partner which provides recruitment, referral or job training will track Candidates through the referral, screening, assessment and hiring processes as well. This recommendation should be among those developed further by the proposed Alliance management mechanism. Standards will be consistent for all screening and tracking processes.
- D. Existing community resources including public agencies, non-profit service providers, private employers, and Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committees will be relied upon to establish and maintain the Alliance Workforce Pool.
- E. Each Qualified Candidate will have experienced consistent Orientation, Screening, Assessment and Referral processes to determine and enhance employment-related skills and attributes. The intent of the process shall be to screen *into* the Alliance Workforce Pool reliable, safety conscious and motivated workers. Standards will be consistent for all screening and tracking processes.
- F. Assessment tools and employment processes used, can and will be derived from existing programs and models with a record of successful use in the construction trades.
- G. Alliance Workforce Pool Qualified Candidates, referred to a JATC or a contractor, shall be monitored for completion of OJT and Related Instruction hours, to the extent possible, by the Entity responsible for referral of the Candidate to the Pool. The project owner, contractor or JATC to which an employment referral is made will also continuously monitor OJT and Related Instruction hours.
- H. Alliance Workforce Pool Qualified Candidates are eligible for referral to any job assignment. A Qualified Candidate may accept employment offered by a public project contractor or by a JATC. A Qualified Candidate Pool member shall not be restricted to assignments to a single contractor or those made by a single JATC.
- I. Contractors, project owners, and JATCs will ensure that all employment opportunities offered Alliance Workforce Pool Qualified Candidates will maximize work stability and successive skill development.
- J. The Alliance Workforce must develop and provide a system capable of expansion to serve all public works projects and the Registered Apprenticeship community at local and regional levels.
- K. The Alliance Workforce system will develop means that help ensure Qualified Candidates continue employment and/or transition to formal apprenticeship programs. System

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Partners and other participants must investigate and adopt grant and/or loan programs available to assist Qualified Candidates, who have demonstrable need, with initial basic tool, transportation, and clothing expenses.

- L. The Alliance Workforce system will give participants realistic expectations.
- M. As the Qualified Pool grows and additional Candidates enter the process, substantive areas may require significant management oversight including overall management of interlinked systems. The need and special skills, if required, for a central manager should be reviewed at least every six months.
- N. Government agencies, charged with compliance oversight, must assess and monitor the capacity of contractors and project owners to adapt training practices to conform to the responsibilities placed upon them by this program. Assessment and enforcement must occur from the inception of all contracts.

II. Spatial Representation of the Process Management

Flow charts developed to assist the understanding of the Screening and Assessment processes will be made a part of the Final Report.

III. Transition of Candidates to the Alliance Workforce Pool

A. Summary of the process and order in which it happens:

- 1. Candidate inquires or responds to invitation
- 2. Orientation
- 3. Education level established and documented; referrals for academic testing
- 4. Drug Screening
- 5. Interview (Soft Skill Analysis)
- 6. Physical Testing
- 7. Referral to Alliance Workforce Pool
- 8. Referral to peripheral service provider or counseling out of the program.
- 9. Data Management

B. Detailed Description of the Process

(1) Source of candidates; Candidate inquires or responds to invitation

(a) Candidate participation and referrals are particularly encouraged from groups directly involved with client communities who may be under-represented in the current

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construction industry workforce. In addition, persons registered in iMatchSkills who have indicated a nominal interest in apprenticeship and identify themselves as belonging to an ethnic minority or female status may be invited to attend orientation sessions.

- (b) Each Candidate's attributes will be entered, as facts are available, into iMatchSkills by any WorkSource Partner with direct access to ensure uniform data entry for each person as to Skill, Knowledge, Education, Experience, and Training. Standards for information entered will be consistent and followed by each WorkSource Partner.
 - (c) OED, in concert with WorkSource Partners, contractors and the Registered Apprenticeship community, will identify current and additional data fields to enhance the iMatchSkills system relative to the Alliance Workforce Pool. One-Stop offices and Partners will cooperate with each other to enter into the iMatchSkills system data for each Candidate.
- (2) Orientation concepts; emphasize in visual and textual materials, from recruitment through job placement, an understanding of the nature of construction work. This means that Outreach and Marketing should include these concepts in the materials developed. All written materials and scripts must ensure uniformity and broad understanding as well as addressing language and literacy barriers.
- (a) Work Conditions
 - Physical Demands are rigorous
 - Natural Environment affects the job and jobsite every day
 - Occupation tools and clothing are job specific
 - (b) Present the Alliance program as an opportunity
 - Make clear that there are no guarantees
 - Establish reasonable expectations
 - Inform that some industries require occupational appropriate attire and, in some cases, tools.
 - (c) Instruction on life skills important to success in the industry
 - Physical fitness
 - Good nutrition
 - Literacy and math skills
 - Ready to work
 - Transportation
 - (d) Emphasize the need for the applicant to be candid and honest
 - Disclosure of convictions is not required. Convictions will not exclude Candidates from the Alliance Workforce Pool. Some employers hiring from the Alliance Workforce Pool may perform criminal background checks, but this might not disqualify Qualified Candidates from employment. When responding to an employer request for background information honesty is advised.
 - The Candidate will be informed that sincere and energetic participation will be expected of all Candidates in the Screening and Assessment phase as well as in the industry once gainfully employed.
 - (e) Emphasize the overriding Industry requirements of safety and productivity

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- (f) Instill within each Candidate, from the outset, the construction industry pride and spirit
 - We build structures at once beautiful and utilitarian
 - Our workmanship is based upon attention to detail
 - We have high quality standards and work with fine tolerances
 - Construction is a team event
 - Wages and benefits are serious and substantial
- (3) Age, Legal Worker Status & Education - Candidate statements must be documented not later than the Interview step (Step #5). Partner agencies and one-stops will provide information to Candidates on resources, means and methods to meet documentation requirements.

Education level established and documented: referrals for academic testing through WorkSource Oregon partners or area community colleges (College Placement Testing). Academic testing * will occur before Step #5.

* Information below is representative of resource material that must be developed and provided to Partner agencies.

- Clackamas Community College – uses Compass, a computer based placement test. Will assess reading, writing and math – structured to increase in grade level with each passing score. The test is free and offered on a walk-in basis. No college application or admissions requirement.
- Mt. Hood Community College uses the computer based Accuplacer™ as its placement test. The test measures reading comprehension, English grammar and math. If English is not the applicant's first language, the computer will administer the Levels Of English Proficiency tests (LOEP). This test is also free and administered on a walk-in basis. Valid photo ID required.
- Portland Community College administers the Asset test (paper and pencil) and Compass. The Asset test is \$10 for non-PCC students. The Compass test is \$15 for non-PCC students. Testing is offered based upon a schedule. Valid photo ID required.

(a) Candidates must be at least 17 years of age with high school diploma, GED, or established equivalency, or 18 and over at the time of entry into the Alliance Workforce Pool.

(b) Candidates at steps of recruitment, orientation, and interview will be informed that the lack of high school diploma or equivalent may reduce, but will not deny, employment opportunities in this program. They will be offered referral to services that may assist them with diploma or GED completion.

(c) Candidates must have sufficient documentation to complete the I-9 form.

- (4) Drug Screening - The drug-screen product, Oralscreen-4™, is an apt exemplar of a test the Workgroup recommends. The per-test cost is between \$15 and \$20 and is offered by the manufacturer, Avitar, as suited for Pre-employment, Reasonable-Suspicion, Post-Accident, or Return-to-Duty applications.

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- (a) Candidates at steps of recruitment, orientation, and interview will be informed that the construction industry requires all workers to be drug free every day without exception.
 - (b) They will be informed that failure to test “clean” for drugs will prevent entry into the Alliance Workforce Pool.
 - (c) A threshold drug screen will be conducted before the Interview (Step 5) process. If the Candidate passes the screen, a referral will be made to the Interview. If the screen is not passed, it will be recorded as inconclusive and the process stops. The Candidate, at his or her own expense, may challenge the Pool drug screen by another means arranged by and through the Partner agencies.
- (5) Interview - One-Stops or other Partner agencies will conduct interviews during which at least the following will occur:
- Recap, with the Candidate, the process for referral to the Qualified Pool.
 - Give information about community resources and the construction industry.
 - Inform Candidates that some employers may seek information regarding any record of criminal convictions.
 - Analyze “Soft Skills”, personal experience, and work related circumstances.
 - Transportation Issues - Driver's License (applicants need to know that an employer may require a valid license); Ability to get to and from work; Vehicle Insurance
 - Construction work involves frequent change in jobsite; geographic location, project and/or employer
 - Equipment – Tools (which tools has the Candidate used, when and under what circumstances); which tools does the Candidate possess
 - Experience – work, employment, hobbies and community involvement
 - Attitude toward work and the construction industry
 - Referral to Community Colleges for tests regarding reading comprehension, math ability, and trades English.
- (6) Physical Assessment → *there is some concern regarding the potential of the physical assessment to be viewed as beyond the essential functions of the job. A review of possible civil rights and ADA issues by an Alliance Management team will be important.*
- (a) The subcommittee suggests that assessment evaluations be held to assist in determining readiness of a Candidate for rigorous construction industry employment. It recommends that evaluation sessions be observed by teams made up of volunteer industry professionals. Subcommittee members from industry contractor and JATC groups believe this will be beneficial to the Candidate and to any potential employer. The subcommittee suggests that the sessions be held at pre-set quarterly intervals to avoid overburdening the volunteer pool.
 - (b) Each element of the Physical Assessment will be measured as a pass/fail. Capabilities evaluated will be based upon speed, safety and accuracy. Analysis of physical capabilities will be rational, progressive and simulate work conditions including, but not limited to,
 - Shoveling Sand

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- Moving with a loaded wheelbarrow
- Stacking Cement Blocks
- Ability to use a ladder
- Weather conditions

(7) Referral to Alliance Workforce Pool - Mandatory Qualified Requirements

- (a) Referral to the Pool will be automatic and tracked in the OED system.
- (b) Admission to the Pool will occur when the data is entered showing that steps 1 – 6, above, have been completed. The Referral Entity or One-Stop office will continue to work with the Qualified Candidate giving notice of and referral to, services that may aid the enhancement of a Qualified Candidate's portfolio. This will include tracking continuing employment, community activity, education pursuits, driver license, etc.
- (c) Candidates referred to the Pool may elect to share as much information about themselves as they wish consistent with the manner in which the iMatchSkills system currently operates.
- (d) The single status in the Pool is Qualified Candidate. Beyond minimum qualifications, levels of competency and accomplishment will vary with each Qualified Candidate. Employer and JATC groups may contact Qualified Candidates as permitted under their relationship with OED and the iMatchSkills system. Any JATC or contractor who retains a Qualified Candidate for employment will notify OED within 2 business days of that action as well as any subsequent change in the employment relationship. A change is defined as firing or lay-off, cancellation from apprentice status, failure to advance in training status, and transfer to any project other than the original employment.

(8) Referral to peripheral service provider or counseling out of the program.

- (a) The Candidate or Qualified Candidate, at any point in the process, may be referred for services to remedy deficiencies or enhance existing skills, knowledge, education and training.
 - (b) Entities involved in screening and assessment will share and combine lists of resources and referral procedures utilizing the list/matrix developed by the "Current and Needed Services" workgroup.
- (9) Data Management – OED will maintain a single system for tracking Candidate and Member progress through the Steps outlined above. A Recruiting or Referral Partner Entity should maintain a record of contacts and any information relevant to the Entity. Communication with OED will help to eliminate deficiencies and errors. Progress through job referral, instruction and work processes must be monitored for compliance.**