

Area organization's job is to get people working

Written by Harry Colbert, Jr.
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With the economy still in flux, many individuals are finding themselves facing layoffs and the daunting task of seeking new employment.

For some of these displaced, or soon to be displaced workers, this may be the first time in 10, 15 or even 20 years that they have had to seek employment. Making the task even more daunting is with changing technology; some may no longer have the skills to compete in today's competitive job market.

This is where Resource comes in.

Resource is a nonprofit organization that provides services in employment and training, mental health and chemical health. Resource's four divisions include Employment Action Center, Minnesota Resource Center, Recovery Resource Center, and Spectrum Community Mental Health. The organization assists over 19,000 people a year and employs 300 people. Resource has facilities throughout the metro with offices in St. Louis Park, Minneapolis, St. Paul and Bloomington.

Through its Dislocated Worker Program, Resource helps transitioning workers throughout the state. This service has proven beneficial to countless workers facing the prospect of not having a regular paycheck for the first time in years.

"We had a woman who was 83-years-old and she was with her company for 45 years. She was laid off and she said, 'Do you think I'm too old(to find a new job?'" said Pam Kling, a director with the Resource Dislocated Worker Program. "I said my goodness no; you're never too old. She ended up with a wonderful part-time job and she was tickled pink with her new skills."

Through the Dislocated Worker Program, Resource provides free, individualized services to dislocated workers including job placement assistance, funded training, personal support funds, career counseling, workshops to assist with job search, resume writing, and interview and custom hiring events for businesses. Resource also offers other services including services for those in need of chemical or mental health assistance.

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“Over the past three years, we’ve placed over 2,200 workers,” said Nekeisia Booyer, a director with the Dislocated Worker Program. “If you know someone who has been laid off due to no fault of their own, you can say, ‘Hey, I know a program that can assist you.’”

Booyer said the typical worker assisted through the Dislocated Worker Program finds employment paying \$20.86 on average. She said once a person is a client of Resource, that person is a client for life and Resource continually offers follow-up services to these it has helped.

Of concern to those with Resource is a large disparity in hiring of African- and Native-Americans.

“Some of it is due to education and some of it’s due to very blatant racism,” said Booyer. “We’re looking to end this disparity.”

Booyer said the commitment to get people working is above and beyond what one might expect.

“We’re not talking an 8 (a.m) – 5 (p.m.),” said Booyer. “We’re working around the clock. We’re going to meet you where you are; that’s just the kind of dedication we have as a staff.”

For more information on the services offered through Resource, visit www.resource-mn.org or call. (612) 752-8000.