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STANDARDIZING THE TRAINING OF EMPLOYMENT SPECIALISTS

Abstract:

In the United States, displaced workers, the unemployed and those seeking to build additional work skills are provided employment training and job placement services through a system of One-Stop Career Centers. The quality of services provided at these centers rests upon professional Employment Specialists who work closely with clients to identify job interests, to connect them to appropriate training opportunities, to match them with needed supportive social services and to guide them to eventual employment. Despite the crucial role these Employment Specialists play, currently there are no broadly accepted standards that establish what these individuals are expected to do in the workplace, nor indicators to assess how well an individual performs these responsibilities

Education Development Center (EDC) and the United Labor Agency (ULA) have partnered to create a foundation upon which curriculum can be developed that addresses the skills, knowledge and behaviors that Employment Specialists must master in order to serve their clients successfully. EDC is a non-profit, education research and development organization that designs, implements, and evaluates programs to improve education, health and economic opportunity worldwide. ULA is the social action arm of organized labor in Greater Cleveland, Ohio. ULA currently operates One-Stop Career Centers in both Cleveland and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

This presentation will outline efforts taken to create standards that define the work of Employment Specialists and to establish indicators that guide assessment of workplace performance. We will describe our methodology and present:

- a profile of an Employment Specialist that provides a detailed description of what an individual needs to know and be able to do to be successful at this job;
- a collection of performance based indicators that are aligned to the work responsibilities identified in the profile;
- examples of how these materials can be used as resources for the creation of curriculum aimed at training Employment Specialists.

We will distribute copies of these materials and will explain how the methods used by EDC and ULA have applicability to other fields.

Keywords:

workforce development, training, skill standards