

Best Practices for Delivering Workforce Development Services

Clinton-Essex-Franklin Library System

Partnerships

We developed partnerships with Literacy Volunteers, Chambers of Commerce, BOCES, and a Volunteer Fire Department, and we had a built in partnership between the Clinton Essex Franklin Library System and One WorkSource of Essex County through our contract arrangement. The partnerships helped us address the challenge of a small population and low population density, bringing more people into our classes and help sessions.

One-on-one assistance

We found that people needing assistance to find jobs were reluctant to attend group class sessions. We had some success offering digital literacy classes (MS Office, Antivirus Protection, etc.) in groups, but even these were more popular when offered in a one on one format. Many people need assistance to use their own equipment, such as laptops, tablets or ereaders. After the one on one format, small groups were our next best format. Anywhere from 3 to 8 or so worked well in the small libraries we offered classes in.

A regular schedule

People are busy and distracted, and having a regular monthly schedule helped them plan to fit in the classes. Libraries also helped publicize the classes and help sessions, and the regular schedule avoided confusion.

Free publicity in newspapers and community calendars

We regularly submitted our classes to local papers and community calendars and also used a community email list in one of our small communities.

Flyers at local stores and public buildings

When we had time to place flyers in communities, it worked well. Unfortunately it was very time consuming.

Flexibility and willingness to react to local layoff events

When a Lowe's store in one of our communities closed, we were ready with a trainer and a laptop lab to help with the process of assisting the employees. We also had formed a partnership with the Chamber of Commerce in that community, and we let them take the lead along with One Worksource, but they were appreciative of the program's willingness to help, and it cemented the partnerships further.

Instructors that enjoy learning new things and can adjust their teaching levels

Because of the one on one sessions that we began concentrating on, a great variety of questions were asked. Our instructors were already very knowledgeable, but were willing to pick up new skills along the way. They were also very personable and avoided the pitfall of speaking in "tech speak."

Betsy Brooks, Automation Librarian, CEFLS, brooks@cefls.org