

**New Rochelle Public Library**  
**Best Practices for Delivering Workforce Development Services**

**RESPOND TO COMMUNITY NEEDS**

- 1) To develop the program, first initiate a community needs assessment by conducting as many surveys, focus groups and other discussions as possible, to identify:
  - Services to be instituted
  - Areas of instruction
  - Best times/days to conduct services and instruction
  - Key ways to connect with target populations
- 2) Forge collaborations with existing partners and seek out additional organizations for partnerships and collaborations. If your community has an umbrella organization of social service agencies, institutions, businesses or another entity that has instant connections to a larger group, be sure to become an active, vocal member.
- 3) Continually evaluate to determine what needs to be added, deleted, modified or enhanced, and retool accordingly. On-going dialogue with community partners and all library staff members; patron evaluations and surveys; and thoughtful, proactive analysis/review of findings, leads to timely and appropriate modifications.

**DESIGN A SUSTAINABLE WORK FORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM THAT BLENDS DIGITAL LITERACY WITH PERSONAL SUPPORT**

- 4) Explore existing programs that can be replicated or expanded to provide employment assistance and social services to patrons overcoming multiple barriers.
- 5) In tailoring the digital literacy courses to the needs determined in assessments, consider all ages and backgrounds of your community. Most written materials should be created on a 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade level, and actual instruction may need to be geared for that level. Classes need to separate the digital divide – in an economic sense and a generational sense. Schedule the courses according to the best times for patrons, which may mean holding some courses on Saturdays or Sundays.
- 6) Select and train librarians and hire instructors who will not only be effective and compassionate teachers, but will also constantly work towards furthering the goals of the Work Force Development program. Hire/designate a full-time IT employee to oversee the purchase, installation and upkeep of all technology, and to handle scheduling of technology instruction. Schedule specific times for one-on-one assistance, as these critically important sessions help determine which courses a patron should take, and provide encouragement for those who learn best by an individualized, “human” approach.

## **ADAPT THE LIBRARY'S CULTURE TO INCORPORATE THE PROGRAM'S GOALS**

- 7) Train the entire library staff about the work force development program and its objectives. In most cases a patron's first encounter at the library is with library clerks or reference desk librarians, but all staff members need to promote the program and answer patron's questions about the training, services and support that is available.
- 8) Re-purpose existing space that is underutilized into space that responds to changing community needs.
- 9) Establish an in-house communications network to centralize information pertinent to the work force development program.
- 10) Celebrate your successes, and do so with all staff members and possible funders.

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