

August 24, 2006

Mr. Ben Esner  
Deputy Director  
Independence Community Foundation  
182 Atlantic Avenue  
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Dear Ben:

Thank you for your support of Williamsburg Works' Environmental Remediation Technician training program over the past year.

Independence's support was critical to our success. Not only were we able to run 4 successful cycles over the past year; we were able to improve the ERT program. We expanded our offerings, tailoring it both to the students' needs and our employers' demands. We attracted significant on-going funding from additional sources that allowed us to hire additional staff into our Skills Training division and will allow us to offer this quality program in future years. In addition, our continued experience with this model program is now informing the expansion of our Skills Training division to include Commercial Truck Driving and Food Services training, with plans for other skills as well.

Attached please find our final report for the 2005-06 program year which includes a financial report. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 718 302-2057 ext 210 if you have any questions about the program or this report.

Sincerely,

Ronald Lee  
Director  
Workforce Development Division

Attachments

# **ENVIRONMENTAL REMEDIATION TECHNICIAN TRAINING**

**A Program of Williamsburg Works/St Nicholas Neighborhood Preservation Corporation**

**Client Profiles  
2005-2006 Program Results  
Program Summary, Goals and Results  
ERT Program Plans/Next Steps  
ERT Curriculum  
Financial Report**

**August 24, 2006**

## CLIENT PROFILES

Here are client profiles for two of our recent ERT graduates:

JR, 35-year-old Latina mother of five, was tired of her life on public assistance and decided to make a change. JR came to St Nicholas/Williamsburg Works in March 2001 looking for employment. She participated in our overall Williamsburg Works orientation session where she heard about the Environmental Remediation Technician training.

JR enrolled in the ERT program, graduated, and began to work for Clean Harbor as a Field Technician. Her first assignment was at Ground Zero working 70-hour weeks (\$12 per hour for the first 40 and \$18 per hour for over time). JR stayed employed at Clean Harbor until June 2004 when she decided further skills were needed if she wanted upward mobility in the field.

She returned to St Nicholas which had enhanced the ERT course to include eleven certifications (as opposed to the one certification she received in one of the first ERT cycles). JR graduated and became employed by Environmental Staffing at \$14 per hour. Over the next two years JR worked for other environmental companies with contracts in New York and in the southern United States.

In June 2006, JR. was hired by Nalco Chemical Company as a Chemical Route Specialist at \$45,000 per year with full benefits.

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HL, was a 37-year-old Black male with two children living in a substance abuse halfway house; he had constantly been in trouble most of his adult life. In January 2006, HL came to St Nicholas/Williamsburg Works because he heard about the ERT training from a family member. He completed the program in June 2006.

HL desperately wanted to get out of the half way house but he needed a job and \$1,500 in the bank. In June 2006, HL was hired by Primary Resources as a Field Technician at \$18 per hour. HL has since been totally discharged from the halfway house.

## 2005-06 ERT Program Results

### *Cycle 1 (February – April 2005)*

Enrolled	Trained	Hired	Still Employed	Still Active	Inactive
31	24	23 * 96%	23 100%	0	1

*\* In addition, 3 enrollees who did not complete the full training are working in the field*

### *Cycle 2 (July – September 2005)*

Enrolled	Trained	Hired	Still Employed	Still Active	Inactive
32	24	22 92%	19 86%	3	2

### *Cycle 3 (November 2005 – January 2006)*

Enrolled	Trained	Hired	Still Employed	Still Active	Inactive
31	24	21 88%	21 100%	1	2

### *Cycle 4 (March – June 2006)*

Enrolled	Trained	Hired	Still Employed	Still Active	Inactive
26	23	19 83%	19 100%	1	3

### *Total Year to Date*

Enrolled	Trained	Hired	Still Employed	Still Active	Inactive
<b>120</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>85 *</b> <b>89%</b>	<b>82</b> <b>96%</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>

*\* This does not include the additional 3 participants who are working but did not complete training.  
Hired includes both job in and out of the environmental field.*

## **PROGRAM SUMMARY, GOALS AND RESULTS**

### **Summary**

The past year was extremely successful for the ERT program. We continued to offer a quality training program, expanding to 4 cycles serving 95 participants most of whom achieved high-wage entry-level jobs with a career path. Our placement rate is 89% and our retention rate is 96%. We became financial sustainable, securing a diverse foundation of core funding, generating income, and perfecting a financial model for the ERT program. And we continued to improve the program, responding to participant needs and requests and employer requirements and demands. We continue to learn from our experience and incorporate this knowledge into the program. This learning is also informing the expansion of the Skills Training division to include two new skills, with other skill trainings in the planning stages.

### **Goals and Results**

#### **Goal 1: Offer Quality Service**

- Operate at minimum 2 cycles of training with an 85% placement rate and a 90% retention rate. *Williamsburg Works offered 4 cycles of training during 2005-06. Our placement rate is 89% and our retention rate is 96% for the first 4 cycles, exceeding our goal. (The fourth was only recently graduated.) We continue to receive excellent feedback from employers, graduates and funders. An employer (Leighton Associated Environmental Services) interviewed one of our recent graduates and was so impressed with his credentials and knowledge about the industry they called to set up a meeting to speak about interviewing more candidates and being a guest speaker in future cycles. The graduate was hired.*

#### **Goal 2: Become Financially Sustainable**

- Meet program income averaging \$70,000 per cycle from ITAs and develop the expertise in securing and processing ITAs. *We continue to earn a significant portion of our program funds from ITA vouchers. (ITA vouchers fund low-income participants to take the ERT training and are performance-based, paid only on completion of training milestones.) We continue to struggle in the government-implemented ITA system which is untimely, bureaucratic, unclear and continually “changing the rules”. For instance, NYS DOL recently and with little notice changed the ITA milestone payment points from 75% of the \$2500 voucher payment at 2-week and 25% at training completion to 50% at 2 weeks and 50% at completion. Further, the ITA systems do not allow us to determine if participants are ITA-eligible on a timely basis, leaving us in the position of enrolling and starting a participant and finding later he is not ITA-eligible, or waiting until we can definitively determine eligibility risking loss of that participant or low enrollment figures. As a result, we have revised our income predictions to \$55,000 per day-time cycle and \$50,000 per evening cycle.*

*Despite these problems, we continue to manage within the ITA system. Many of our staff are well-trained and experienced in ITA processing and so we are still able to earn adequate ITA funds to support the ERT program. In 2005-06, we earned (or expect to earn) \$73,750; \$31,250; \$60,000 and \$61,250 in our four cycles, averaging \$56,500.*

- *Secure additional funding as necessary to continue to augment the ITA income and allow us to quickly respond to changing employer needs and to ensure that the program fully contributes to overall employment operational costs. In this area, we have been extremely successful and are now confident that we can continue to offer the ERT program for as long as participant and employer demand continues. In late 2005, Robin Hood made a significant grant to the ERT program which we expect to be renewed. This grant allows us to expand to 5 cycles annually and for the first time the ERT program funding is covering the full costs of the training, supporting organization-wide activities such as outreach, job development, and data reporting, as well as contributing to overhead. This grant is also supporting us to fully staff our Skills Training division and make needed improvements to our internal and external reporting. We were also refunded by the US EPA in early 2006 for an additional 2-year grant, which partially funds 4 cycles over the next 24 months. We are also retained by STRIVE as a subcontractor to two of their programs to operate 3 additional cycles through 2007.*
- *Develop a financial model that incorporates ITAs and other stable funding that allows us to operate the ERT program in 2006 and beyond and can be used to inform other skills trainings for WW. As noted above, we have achieved this goal. With the significant funding this successful program has attracted, we are now able to expand to 5 cycles; tailor it to meet funder requirements regarding clients demographics, employer demands and participant needs; fully support the direct program costs and adequately contribute to the overall employment operation at Williamsburg Works including overhead.*

*We are also able to further test our skills training model, developed and perfected in ERT, and are now applying it to two new skills – Commercial Truck Driving and Food Service. Early results look promising. As you may remember, our model requires that training be employer-linked; result in a credential; and have diverse funding and support including ITAs.*

### Goal 3: Continuous Improvement

- *Formalize and expand employer network. We have expanded our employer network. We now have 28 employers who have hired our graduates, virtually all of whom are still open to hiring our graduates. We have a few dozen others who we have reached out to and are knowledgeable of our program and are open to and/or have interviewed our graduates. Six employers regularly participate in*

*the training by providing guest speaker; mock interviewing and/or interviewing on site; and/or hosting field trips. These include Miller Environmental, Jabco Construction, Primary Resources, Resource Options and ATC.*

*We also work closely with three unions, Mason Tenders Local 78; Asbestos Local 12a and Hazardous Materials Workers Local 201. Due to the quality and depth of our training, two of these, 201 and 78, have approved us and hire our graduates into their apprenticeship track as 2<sup>nd</sup> year apprentices with stipends, training and entree to paid jobs. This ensures their access to union construction jobs and an apprenticeship wage of \$19.20.*

- *Expand partnerships and services to graduates including previous years' graduates. We have expanded both the number of organizations who work with Williamsburg Works and our ERT program as well as the breadth of services that we provide to ERT participants, recent and past graduates.*

*We work with the various government entities including the NYC Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination who hosts site visits for participants. EPA Region #2 Headquarters also has hosted site visits. Participants also meet with staff from NYC DEP, and the EPA Division of Enforcement and Compliance, the Brownfields Office and the Regional Administrator's Office to discuss their ambitions and budding careers. And of course, we continue to work closely with OSHA and the NYC Health Department who grants many of our ERT certifications.*

*We have just started working with the NYC Housing Authority who plans to work closely with us on recruiting and hiring and may also host a cycle of training. Currently, Williamsburg Works participates in their orientation sessions three times a month providing information about our Workforce Development Division, especially our three skills trainings. We expect to more closely partner with the NYC Housing Authority in the future to provide Environmental Training. NYCHA plans to directly screen and recruit potential candidates from their housing developments for our training. And NYCHA has also offered St Nicks the use of their community centers in all five boroughs for training purposes at no cost.*

*We also have expanded our partnership with STRIVE around environmental training. STRIVE has sub-contracted with Williamsburg Works to offer training for youth and adults over a 2 year period.*

*Through our EarnBenefits program, we provide significant post-placement services to ERT graduates. Of primary importance, our program staff has expanded from one dedicated person to 3 ERT staff and a Skills Training Manager. We continue to offer supportive case management services to newly working graduates as they make the transition to work and a new career. Staying in close contact with graduates and the two dozen companies who employ our*

*graduates, we continue to assist graduates as they string together independent contractor jobs and seek permanent positions, promotions and career growth.*

*Program graduates also access all the benefits of EarnBenefits including free income tax preparation; ensuring access of EITC, free interview and work clothes; food stamps and transitional benefits; and discounted utilities. One of the most important benefits has been the free Citibank checking accounts and direct deposit for paychecks. With many participants working out-of-state, a strong connection to a bank is crucial.*

*We have not had success with securing health insurance from Working Today for our participants; they have found it to be too expensive. But we do assist participants and graduates to access Child Health Plus and Family Health Plus for medical coverage.*

- *Revise curriculum and program. Over the past year, we have adapted the curriculum in response to changes in the industry and participant needs. Specifically, we added three new certifications. Two, the 16-hour OSHA Disaster Site Worker and the 24-hour Soil Vapor Intrusion, were added at the suggestion of the US EPA due to regulatory changes. We also added a third course, the 8-hour Blood Borne Pathogens at the suggestion of the hospital and medical waste industry. We now offer 11 certifications in our daytime ERT cycle.*

*We now plan to offer two evening cycles, which will be shorter in duration and cover less material and grant fewer (7) certifications. This was developed in response to working participants who are not able to afford to quit their job in order to participate. While abbreviated, we are still confident that we will retain our high placement and retention rates.*

*These curricula have been formally documented and are attached.*

### **Other Successes/Problems/Issues**

- We now have a core staff for ERT and Skills Training. As such, we have multiple staff trained in this unit and have build to a critical mass that is allowing us to expand this division.
- While data reporting continues to be challenging, we have switched our reporting to a much easier to operate Access-based system, used by the rest of our Williamsburg Works operation. Further, we are working closely with Robin Hood Foundation and Seedco to implement new internal and external reporting systems.
- Our success in ERT and our proven model, and increased staff has allowed us to pilot two new skills this summer – Commercial Truck Driving and Food Service. Both trainings have been successful and we are now focused on job placement.

- Our marketing materials and outreach efforts continue to need improvement and we have allocated budget to improving this aspect of our ERT program as well as for all Williamsburg Works programs.
- In summary, we have reached the “critical mass” and are poised for expansion.

### **Plans/Next Steps**

In the coming 12-18 months we expect to:

- Pilot an abbreviated evening cycle of ERT Training
- Incorporate suitable young adults from our Youth Division into our day and evening cycles and include more based as appropriate.
- Develop a formal report documenting our ERT program that describes our program, our results, successes, failures and lessons learned, for general distribution.
- Replace our Lead Abatement Handler certification with Lead Worker for Bridges which will not require our graduates to pay for a \$280 licensing fee but will still provide quality Lead training.
- Develop a program to help new graduates finance their upfront costs (licensing fees, steel toe boots, tools, etc.)
- Develop a working partnership with NYCHA, as a funder, employer, advisory committee member, recruitment partner and training site.
- Integrate our new fatherhood initiative for non-custodial parents into our ERT and other skills training programs.

**ST. NICHOLAS NPC/WILLIAMSBURG WORK  
 WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
 INDEPENDENCE GRANT  
 EXPENDITURE REPORT  
 7/1/2005 - 06/31/2006**

<b>COST CATEGORY</b>	<b>BUDGET</b>	<b>EXPENSES</b>	<b>VARIANCE</b>
<b>PERSONNEL:</b>			
Salaries	12,500.00	12,500.00	-
Fringes	2,500.00	2,500.00	-
<b>TOTAL PERSONNEL</b>	<b>15,000.00</b>	<b>15,000.00</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>TRAINING</b>	<b>25,000.00</b>	<b>25,000.00</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>OTPS:</b>			
Equipment	5,000.00	5,000.00	-
<b>TOTAL OTPS</b>	<b>5,000.00</b>	<b>5,000.00</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>ADMINISTRATIVE OVERHEAD</b>	<b>5,000.00</b>	<b>5,000.00</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 50,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 50,000.00</b>	<b>\$ -</b>