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PROJECT H.I.R.E. IN REDDING

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Project H.I.R.E. is an acronymous derivation of "Hastening Success by Identifying Needs, Researching Referrals and Employing Wards." Employed in the Redding parole sub-office, here is how the program works.

Employment is a top priority need if a Youth Authority ward is to make a success of his parole. This project was developed because the parole workers in the Redding subparole office were convinced that by doing a more effective job in the employment counseling of Youth Authority wards, their chances of success on parole would be enhanced. We felt that due to the high unemployment rate in Shasta County, our employment counseling sessions had begun to show a somewhat negative attitude toward the availability of jobs. We felt a need to stimulate our own awareness concerning employment, so that in turn we could be more enthusiastic in our approach when counseling our wards.

The transition between institutional living and reentering the community is crucial to a ward's parole adjustment. We felt that if a newly released ward could find employment within the first 30 days of his release, the reintegration process would be much easier. (We needed information that would assist in developing a program that would focus on services relevant to this transition.)

This project was developed with our specific needs in mind but would be adaptable to various situations.

The procedure we developed was to:

1. Identify the goals of the project.
 - a. To record the employment history of each ward on our case-load, to identify employment resources in the community for future job referrals and to identify areas of need that are hampering the securing and maintaining of adequate jobs or job training.
 - b. To gather information from wards who have been successful in the job market, to identify special techniques and problem solving ideas. This information was evaluated and passed on

- to wards in employment counseling sessions, (see appendix, Helpful Hints, etc.)
- c. To develop a systematic procedure for intensive employment counseling to be initiated as part of the reentry phase of parole.
 2. Develop a survey form to be used when interviewing wards, to be filed in the ward's field file for future reference and to be used when evaluating the results of the project.
 3. Draft a form letter to be sent to wards, explaining the project and requesting an appointment to talk with them concerning their employment history. (See attached appendix).
 4. As each ward responds to the letter, set an interview date and time. Allow approximately one hour for each interview. No more than five interviews per day should be scheduled.
 5. Interview the wards who respond to the letter. All interviews are to be done in the ward's home or place of residency.
 6. Contact wards who fail to respond to the letter, either by telephone or home visit and make an appointment for the interview.
 7. Contact all wards incarcerated in local jails or juvenile halls and do the interview.
 8. Make ongoing contact with community agencies that provide employment services. Ask questions regarding their services and programs. Make them aware of the specific needs of the Youth Authority wards. Request their assistance in providing jobs and services to our agencies. Examples of agencies contacted are Manpower Program, (individual program directors such as CETA, Pilot Youth Project, and Title VI Coordinator), Youth Conservation Corps representative, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Welfare Department Opportunity Center, Employment Development Department, College Placement Office, Vocational Rehabilitation Office, Department of Industrial Relations. These contacts were made for information gathering and as a public relations technique.
 9. Record and evaluate the information obtained from the project. Develop procedures and techniques to be implemented when counseling with wards.

Evaluation of Project

Statistical information was not a primary goal of this project. Attitude changes and problem solving techniques were our main focal points. We interviewed 38 wards during a one month period. Concurrently, we were contacting agencies and making referrals. Even though we had not organized the information we received from the interviews, we found ourselves passing along information that we learned. There seemed to be a definite change in our attitude toward job hunting.

Obstacles did not seem so large. We were able to offer more alternative suggestions. We were aware of what was happening in the community and became more enthusiastic about individual ward problems. Problem solving became a challenge to us. The wards seemed to view us in a less authoritative role. Some employed parolees even contacted us when they

knew of a potential job, so that we could refer another parolee to the job.

The questions on the questionnaire started the wards thinking about themselves. The questionnaire was used as a tool to begin the interview. The form could have been completed in ten minutes but we allowed the discussion to branch off into other areas of concern. We did not allow ourselves to accept problems as excuses. We began speaking of them as hurdles to jump over, go around or under. We tried to convey this attitude to the ward. Through the use of the survey form we were able to identify problem areas that needed more emphasis during our counseling sessions. For instance, we learned that 80 per cent of the wards who were out of work were spending less than five hours a week job hunting.

Almost all of the wards interviewed indicated that friends and relatives were the best resources they had. They were unaware of other community resources that might be available to them. They were discouraged with public agencies and did not understand how these agencies operated or why it was important for them to be more assertive about their job needs when these agencies were contacted.

Fifteen of the 38 wards interviewed had high school diplomas. All of the wards who were working at the time of the interview had their diplomas.

Fifty per cent or 19 of the interviewees had not previous job experience. Only six wards reported that they had been able to maintain a job for longer than three months at a time. The others worked for short intervals and then either quit or were fired. This indicated to us the need for educating our wards in handling job frustrations and keeping a job.

Most of the wards reported that they earned a minimum wage when they worked. The ones that earned more were either experienced in their field or had started at the minimum wage and worked long enough to earn raises. Construction work was an exception, and jobs in construction usually started at \$4 per hour for nonunion workers. Income expectations seems to be an important subject to cover during employment counseling sessions.

Transportation did not seem to be as great a problem as we had originally anticipated. Most of the wards stated that they had adequate transportation. The transportation problems that were reported were usually focused around a suspended driver's license and were a temporary difficulty.

An interesting fact we discovered was that although 18 of the wards interviewed had forestry certificates from a Youth Authority institution, none of them was working for the forest service or as a firefighter. Some community contacts led to three wards securing summer employment with the forest service.

Of the 38 interviewed, only nine were employed. One month after the project was completed, 23 of the same 38 wards reported that they were working. While we cannot empirically prove that this was the result of the project, we know that our employment counseling reflected our newly acquired knowledge and our more enthusiastic and positive attitude.

The list of suggestions obtained from the wards during the interviews was compiled into a handout sheet. We plan to use these sheets during our initial contact with wards when they are released to parole. We also plan to have three one-hour counseling sessions with each new ward. They will

be scheduled a week apart, and the information to be covered has been outlined. The employment interview survey form will be used at these employment counseling sessions to focus on specific needs.

The project proved to be a very effective method of breaking in a new worker. It precipitated many discussions for our staff meetings. It also gave him insight into the emotional, environmental and financial difficulties so many of our wards were experiencing. Since problem solving is a big part of a parole worker's job, it was a constructive way of giving him an overview of what his job would entail. It provided an opportunity for him to begin developing relationships with wards on our caseload, learning the location of their residences and becoming acquainted with their families and environment. It also provided the parole agent with information he needed concerning the workers strengths and weaknesses, and what his further graining needs would be. It offered the opportunity to evaluate his job potential.

The project was time consuming and involved a lot of hard work. We feel that we now have gained information and developed tools and techniques to help motivate our wards toward becoming self-supporting members of the community. The enthusiasm the project facilitated among the wards was exciting to us as workers and we felt good about what we were doing.

The concept of identifying needs of our parolees, taking a good look at ourselves as workers, and developing a program to facilitate change in our casework have proved to be effective. The fact that many of our wards are now gainfully employed has encouraged us to continue using this concept instituted in Project HIRE in other areas of parole service. We believe the project needs to be evaluated on a larger scale and follow-up information obtained. Hopefully, we will be able to continue developing it and incorporating its use in other areas of parole casework.

HELPFUL HINTS FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH!

(Suggestions from Y.A. Parolees on job hunting)

- 1) Make sure all your friends and relatives know you need a job.
- 2) Put in applications and then go back every other day. Be friendly, and act interested in the business.
- 3) Always talk with the Manager or person in charge of hiring. Don't just leave the application form.
- 4) Ask friends and former employers for personal letters of recommendation. Even if it was only a lawn mowing job, they can say you are a good worker and reliable.
- 5) When you submit an application at Manpower, keep checking back with them. That lets them know you are serious about wanting a job.
- 6) If your attitude isn't right, it will show in an interview. Make sure you really want to work or don't bother applying.
- 7) Take any job offered, work hard and when you've proven your abilities, ask for a raise.
- 8) If you are looking for construction work, go to the construction site early every morning. Ask for work. Many foremen don't go through the union.
- 9) If you can afford union dues join the labor union. Talk with the guys at the union hall. Many of them don't want one or two day jobs and will give you leads on them.
- 10) Don't quit a job until you have another one.
- 11) Go to the Employment Development Department and check with them every day. Try to talk with the same person each time, and soon he will recognize you. It helps to know someone there.
- 12) The best way to get a job is through family, friends and relatives. Ask them directly for help and suggestions.
- 13) Look in the telephone book for businesses you may not know about and then contact them.
- 14) Ask your parole agent for leads.
- 15) Ask at the employment office if there are any special jobs or job training programs available.
- 16) Buy a newspaper as soon as it comes out each day. Check jobs right away. If you wait until evening, it may be too late.
- 17) Interview for jobs as often as possible and if they are not interested in you, ask them if they know any other places you could try.
- 18) If you hear about a job through a friend and he is a good reference, be sure and let the employer know who sent you.

- 19) Check the county personnel office bulletin board every three or four days.
- 20) Job hunt early in the morning. This indicates that you can get up and get to work on time.
- 21) Set aside a definite number of hours each day for job hunting. Work at getting a job.
- 22) Make a list of your abilities and then sell yourself. Say something like "I can do this and that", "I am reliable", "I am a friendly person", or "I learn very fast". List your good qualities and not just your work experience.
- 23) Think about turning your hobbies into a job. Then you will really enjoy your work.
- 24) Be willing to go to another area for employment. Write to friends and relatives out of town asking for job leads.
- 25) Take brush-up classes at the college to better prepare yourself.
- 26) If you hear of someone quitting or getting fired, go and apply for the job right away.
- 27) The more people you talk to about needing a job, the better chance you have of picking up a lead. Keep your need for a job in your mind and talk about it often, even to strangers.

EMPLOYMENT COUNSELING

1ST INTERVIEW

- I *Complete job history form*
 - a) Discuss ward's employment plans
 - b) Identify special problems and discuss ways of solving them
 - c) Provide services appropriate to the situation
- II *Give ward helpful hints handout*
 - a) Explain how it was developed
 - b) Ask ward to read hand-out and try some of the suggestions
- III *Set appointment time and date for next interview*

2ND INTERVIEW

- I *Review ward's progress*
 - a) Have special problems been worked out?
 - b) Evaluate techniques ward has been trying
 - c) Discuss any new problems
- II *Discuss application forms*
 - a) Neatness and clearness
 - b) Have information available
 - c) Forms indicate ability to think and follow instructions
- III *Make appropriate community referrals*
 - a) Manpower, EDD
 - b) Special problems referrals (welfare, school placement, B.I.A. or other)
- IV *Set date and time for next appointment*

3RD INTERVIEW

- I *Review Progress*
 - a) Ask names of places contacted
 - b) Discuss responses
 - c) Schedule check-backs
- II *Income Expectations*
 - a) Past experience
 - b) How much does ward need to live on?
 - c) What is realistic (individualized for each ward)?
- III *Discuss Interviews*
 - a) Appearance (dress, neatness, etc.)
 - b) Techniques (how to sell yourself)
 - c) What is interviewer looking for?
 1. Background information
 2. Reasoning ability
 3. Speaking ability
 4. A "feeling" about you as an employee.
 - d) Politeness
 1. Language
 2. Thanking interviewers.
- IV *Set time and date for next appointment*

4TH INTERVIEW**I Review ward's progress**

1. Ask ward to evaluate himself (what is working and what changes should he make)
2. How is ward feeling about job hunting? (depression, handling rejection, etc.)
3. Discuss any special problems
4. Make follow-up referrals

II Discuss future training needs

- a) GED, special classes
- b) Job-training programs available
- c) Discuss job survival (relationships with employers and co-workers).

III Evaluate Counseling Sessions

- a) Have they been helpful?
- b) Ward's needs not discussed
- c) Does ward want follow-up sessions?

The outline should be used with flexibility and changed when needed. Feedback from the wards should be incorporated into the outline whenever possible.

FORM LETTER FOR WARDS

Dear _____:

We are in the process of doing an employment history survey of all wards on our parole caseload. This is being done so that we can assess the work histories and identify special problems parolees are encountering regarding job hunting.

When the survey is completed we will be consulting with the community agencies that are receiving county, state and federal funds, to discuss our results. We are hoping to obtain a number of training slots for Youth Authority wards.

Please contact the parole office at 246-6501 to make an appointment for a home visit to discuss your employment record. If you are working at the present time we can arrange an evening appointment.

Sincerely,



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