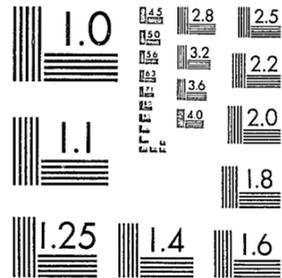


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National Institute on Drug Abuse

**SERVICES  
RESEARCH  
REPORT**



76008

**Techniques in  
Job Development  
and Placement for  
Ex-Addicts:  
*A Success Story***

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
Public Health Service  
Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration

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ACQUISITIONS

## Foreword

This report shows what can be accomplished through the enthusiastic, realistic, and well-organized work of a single job developer on behalf of ex-addict, ex-offender, and female welfare clients. It describes the job development and placement strategies of the Oakland, California, supported work program, Peralta Services Corporation. The report provides very straightforward examples of how potential employers can be identified and approached, how contact should be maintained, how and when to be persistent and when to abandon efforts to secure job commitments from an employer, and how to prepare clients for job interviews. It is an account of how one individual can make a difference. Though the activities described occurred in the context of a supported work project, the strategies and techniques are clearly applicable to treatment program staff responsible for helping ex-addict clients secure employment.

The National Supported Work Study, of which this is a part, was initiated in 1975 to test whether and to what extent 12 to 18 months of employment in a supportive but performance-oriented environment would equip the hard-to-employ to get and hold normal unsubsidized jobs. The target groups included ex-addicts, ex-offenders, women who had been long term recipients of welfare benefits, and young school dropouts at 15 sites across the country. To be eligible for the program, ex-addicts were required to be currently in treatment or to have been in treatment within the last 6 months. For research purposes, at 10 of the 15 sites clients were randomly assigned either to the experimental group (offered a supported work job) or to a control group (not offered a job) and were subsequently interviewed at 9-month intervals for up to 36 months.

The supported work provided graduated stress and close supervision; peer support; salaries at, or slightly above, the minimum wage; and a disciplined work environment. Workers were promoted, suspended, or terminated on the basis of their performance. At or before the 12 to 18 months of maximum employment in the program, they were assisted by the program to secure regular employment. Of the 87 clients who graduated during the period studied in Oakland, 82 secured regular employment with an average starting wage of \$5.12 an hour.

The national study found that welfare women and ex-addicts benefited the most from the program through increased employment and earnings, and reduced welfare dependency. The benefits considerably outweighed the costs.

Deborah Hastings-Black  
Services Research Branch  
Division of Resource Development  
National Institute on Drug Abuse

## Techniques in Job Development and Placement for Ex-Addicts

### A Success Story

Eric Lax

#### Supported Work

A study was initiated in 1975 to test whether and to what extent 12 to 18 months of employment in a supportive but performance-oriented environment would equip the hard-to-employ to get and hold regular unsubsidized jobs. The target groups included ex-addicts, ex-offenders, women who had been long-term recipients of welfare benefits, and young school dropouts at 15 sites across the country. The site discussed in this report is in Oakland, California. The private nonprofit agency providing the supported work employment is Peralta Services Corporation.

The supported work experience provided graduated stress and close supervision; peer support; salaries at, or slightly above, the minimum wage; and a disciplined work environment. Workers were promoted, suspended, or terminated on the basis of their performance. At or before the 12 to 18 months of maximum employment in the program, the clients were assisted by the program to secure regular employment.

Ex-addicts were most often referred to Peralta Services from drug treatment programs.

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The names of the program clients and some of the company employees have been changed.

Jim Carter, the job developer for the Peralta Services Corporation, carries a note in his wallet written to him in July 1976 by Peralta Director Sandy Warren. Warren was concerned over the scarcity of jobs Carter had turned up for graduates of the program. An increasing number of supported workers were due to leave in the months ahead, yet the chance of their finding work appeared slim. Warren's job development plan was for Carter to hit the streets in search of likely-looking companies, then walk in and make a pitch to their personnel managers about supported work. Carter had dutifully done this, but only about 1 contact in 30 turned up even a possible employer. Warren, however, was not discouraged. He reasoned that if the ratio was 30 to 1 and 4 jobs were needed, then Carter should contact 120 companies, and he wrote him to that effect: "Jim, according to your monthly business contact report, you're contacting 10 businesses per week. In your best week you contacted 17. I think we should be contacting 50 businesses per week!"

Carter was sure Warren was wrong, and he had what he knew was a better idea for developing jobs. But he figured Warren was the boss and that he'd try his method for another month. He put the note in his wallet so that "some day I could pull it out and remind Sandy how wrong he was," went out and contacted 113 companies, and got 2 favorable responses.

Carter could pull out the note anytime he wants now. Of 87 Peralta graduates through February 1978, only 5 did not have jobs when they left the program (4 did not want to work; the other simply disappeared). Those supported workers who have gone on to regular employment are statistically no different from others in the same target group who have not in regard to age, schooling, race, and prior employment, as the chart in the appendix shows. (For example, about two-thirds are between 21 and 31, about half have a high school diploma, about two-thirds are black. Approximately half of the ex-offenders and Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) mothers have worked before, while nearly 80 percent of the ex-addicts have held jobs.) In virtually every instance their first jobs after supported work were entry level, which means assembly line work in most cases. The average starting wage for the 82 who went to work was \$5.12 an hour; all but 7 started at over \$4 an hour. More than 70 percent of the 82 Peralta graduates who left the program for regular employment between January 1976 and February 1978 were still working in March 1978.

These figures may appear magical compared with other supported work site figures, but they were accomplished by two very unmagical means: hard work and good preparation. The hard work goes into selling Peralta to companies with high entry-level wages, the good preparation is what the Peralta workers get in their job development classes, and Jim Carter is responsible for both.

Carter's better way of lining up employers includes carefully going through 2 books: the Oakland Chamber of Commerce Directory, which lists about 2,500 businesses in Alameda County that employ 25 or more people, tells where the company is located, what it

makes, as well as whom to contact, and the Wholesalers' and Manufacturers' Directory, which offers the same sort of information. He looks for companies that employ at least 100 people, are manufacturers rather than wholesalers, tend to have large yearly employment needs, and offer high salaries and job security.

Then he calls the appropriate person. Instead of eliciting interest from 1 in 30, he now gets it from about 1 in 4. Carter makes out a 5- by 8-inch card for every company he calls, notes the date and the reaction, and tries to set up an appointment within a few days to go in and talk some more about Peralta. He also rates each company a 1 (wants to hire graduates), a 2 (definite possibilities), or a 3 (forget it). And he takes the personnel managers at their word. If one says to call back in 2 weeks, Carter calls back in 2 weeks. He is persistent without being obnoxious and will spend months lining up an employer he thinks might take several graduates over time. The following account is from Carter's card for Container Corporation of America, a cardboard box manufacturer in Oakland. I have included all of it because it is typical of the problems he encounters and the effort he makes.

"July 28, 1976--Called Personnel Manager Bob Smith. Just laid off workers, more to be laid off in September. No hiring until next April. Call him then. Laborers start at \$5.60/hr." Carter rated the company a 2 and sent Smith some material on Peralta.

"May 27, 1977--Smith replaced by Joe Black [who had never heard of Peralta, so Carter gave him the story]. Asked for material on PSC. Sounds very receptive. Says no openings now, but to keep checking. Call in June.

"6/14--Still nothing. 6/20--Will return call. 6/21--In on 6/22. 6/27--Will return call on 6/28 regarding attending employer's conference at Peralta. 7/18--Journeyman-level electrical and mechanical experience opening \$8.25/hr." ["A good sign, even though we couldn't send someone," Carter said as we went over the card.] "8/30--Appointment made for 9/8 at 2:00 with Joe Black (Bro.) [meaning he was a brother--black]. Very receptive, strong possibility. Entry level \$5.93. 3 shifts. Call 9/26 when he returns from reserve duty. Appointment on 9/22 at 2:00 to tour plant. 10/4--Black will attend employer's conference on 10/11. 10/11--Black won't be able to make it to employer's conference but will come on 10/18. 10/18--Black called to cancel appointment. 10/25--Black will no longer be with the company. 10/30--Will send PSC material to his replacement; still slow to new hires. 2/6/78--Appointment with Jenny Jones on 2/8 at 10:00. 2/8--Her baby sick. Rescheduled for 2/14."

I went with Carter to his appointment on the 14th, and so did Cathy Homan, a supported worker who is his very able assistant. "I was persistent because they pay well, and someone making that money is likely not to quit or get fired," Carter explained as we drove to the plant. He is a 41-year-old black with a close-trimmed salt-and-pepper beard; he looks maybe 35. Around the office he

wears jeans and a polo shirt, but for visits to corporations he puts on conventional business attire--on this day a gray chalk-striped suit, a white shirt, and a blue tie.

In the meeting with Ms. Jones he explained the concept of supported work and what PSC had done in the last 2 years. He stressed that Peralta tries to instill good work habits: attendance, punctuality, productivity, and an absentee rate of 5.5 percent or less. Then he put a loose-leaf photo album on her desk, flipped it open, and showed her before and after pictures of Peralta projects. He showed her paint jobs on Victorian houses that turned them from eyesores to beautiful homes, landscape work Peralta crews had done, how they refurbished and opened their own gas station, and wrecked stoves they had made as good as new. "This is very impressive," Ms. Jones marveled halfway through, and Carter told her, "I'm showing you these because I want you to be impressed."

By the time he was done, Carter clearly had her enthused about Peralta. Her only concern was that entry-level workers have to keep up with a machine and bundle the large sheets of cardboard it spits out. She called it unpleasant work that offers drudgery and little pride, but good pay plus a medical and dental plan and other good bennies. Half the people we hired last year did not make it through the 90-day probation period. If the person simply couldn't do the job I'd feel bad. We'd want the work to be successful if they're from Peralta." Carter told her not to worry, he had a couple of people in mind who would fit in fine.

She wondered, too, what the program's placement rate is and if there is any followup of graduates. She was amazed that it is about 99 percent for those who complete the program and was pleased when Carter said, "It's Cathy's job to keep in touch with graduates as much as possible. I'd be doing a disservice if I lost contact with you or with the graduate. We give whatever support we can to keep the employee going with you."

Ms. Jones said she would like to interview some Peralta graduates when she started to hire in March. Carter, after a year and a half of trying to get a commitment from the company, did not want to leave anything to chance. "When can I call you? Will you let me know when you have an opening?" She smiled as he added candidly, "I'm trying hard to get a commitment from you before you get away from me like the others." She told him not to worry, "I plan to stick around."

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Carter's salesmanship is manifestly important to Peralta's success, but his followup with companies that take on graduates is just as crucial, and he does that with equal zeal. He calls twice a month or as often as needed for as long as necessary to help the workers make the transition to a regular job. And he makes lots of little public relations gestures that keep Peralta in an employer's mind--a sensible thing to do, especially when Peralta is in competition with

at least 23 other programs trying to place people. So Carter sends employers copies of the monthly newsletter, and he presents a framed Certificate of Appreciation to a company and its personnel director after they hire their fourth graduate, and every 3 months or so he holds an employer's conference at Peralta so company representatives can see the program.

"Jim is the most professional of the people I deal with," says Anne Littleworth, who handles affirmative action and minority hiring for Caterpillar Tractor. Her feelings are shared by executives I talked with at nearly a dozen companies, who hire Peralta people because of "the guarantee that they've worked for a year," as Sandra Walton, the assistant personnel director of Well Made Metal Products, says. "I know they don't stay with Peralta if they don't work."

Even those people who have hired several employees from Peralta who have not worked out remain willing to hire others because of Carter. Anne Littleworth of Caterpillar is one. "Peralta people start off well but within 6 months they're gone," she told me. "Three of the four we hired we had to fire. The fourth has been with us a year but he started off by not showing up his first day of work. He came in at about noon, very embarrassed, and said he turned off the alarm thinking it was Sunday. I called Jim and we all talked and we gave him a chance. It was clear that he had been so happy about landing a job 5 days earlier that he hadn't drawn a sober breath since. But he is the only success story." The other three were fired for poor attendance, yet all three had absentee rates of only about 6 percent at Peralta. The incentive to work is certainly at Caterpillar--entry-level unskilled laborers gross \$15,500 a year. Amos Tingle, who is head of personnel, thinks it is because people have to show up every day at Peralta just to make enough money to get by. When they get to Caterpillar and make three times as much, "they start to think they can work only 4 days and still do all right." One of the three who were fired caused a commotion several months ago when it appeared that he had a knife in his back pocket. Carter was called and came to the plant; the man was brought into the office--and it turned out he was carrying an Afro comb. When I visited Anne Littleworth, she remembered only about the suspected knife. Even with that in her mind, however, she told me, "We'll try Peralta again, but not two or three at a time, at least until someone proves himself. And we certainly have attendance problems with people from other programs as well as our regular hires." Carter, who winced when I told him her version of the "knife" incident, was quick to freshen her memory.

Happily, the great majority of employers I spoke with have had better luck with Peralta graduates. Sandra Walton, for instance, says "the persistence of Jim Carter is what sold us--his calling, checking, and believing in his people. Our policy here is if you're on time every day and do your work, you'll have no problems, and that's been the case with people from Peralta. The foremen like their work. One has been here for 2 years and is doing very well. In fact, he really promoted the program. As soon as there is an opening here he calls Jim, who knows about it almost as fast

as we do." And Jan Noriega, the personnel officer for Gerber Foods, told me, "We hired an ex-offender from Peralta, but we never would have if he hadn't come from the program. It's common for community agencies to ask employers to come by, but they usually want us to speak about what we're looking for. Peralta is more thorough. They want to know what kind of worker they can send us." Ms. Noriega learned about Peralta from someone at Educacion Para Adelantar (EPA), which is sponsored, as is Peralta, by the Spanish Speaking Unity Council. "EPA's candidates were very good so I looked at Peralta," she told me. EPA, though, has not been a useful resource for Carter. Most of their placements are clerical and for little more than the minimum wage. Carter doesn't want to look at a job unless it's \$5 an hour or more. He admits that not all Peralta graduates are good enough to merit that wage, but he has proved that almost all are.

Which brings us to why they're worth that. The greatest reason is Carter's job development classes, but job development is too simple a title for what they are. They are a combination of group therapy and self-improvement exercises that also teach such basics as how to fill out an application, how to behave on an interview, and how to make good use of a rocky personal history.

Supported workers become eligible for Carter's class after they have been on the job for 6 months and have an absentee rate of 5.5 percent or less. People with a higher rate can get into a class if their supervisor recommends them and if they convince Carter that they want to join. Despite the program's success in placing people after they have completed a minimum of 6 months, there is a high dropout rate during the first 100 days of supported work, something that concerns Warren a good deal. "Our highest dropout rate is in the first 3 months," he told me. (The average length of stay in Peralta is just under 6 months.) "While many of those who leave have found jobs on their own, they are often on the downswing when they go--they're chipping or perpetuating bad habits or not maintaining a high attendance percentage. Even if they left to take a job they are not listed as graduates and are not included in our graduate employment statistics. Overall, the ratio of resignations to firings is two to one.<sup>1</sup> But once we get people in job development classes we almost never lose them. So maybe we should start the classes a little earlier. There would still be enough of a hurdle to get into them and enough time for us to get everyone out and into a job."

The job development classes, which begin every 2 months, are held every Thursday from 8 a.m. until noon. As you will see, they cover a very broad range. "I give them the Jim Carter philosophy of life," he told me. "I give them things to read that

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<sup>1</sup>As of March 1978, 600 people had enrolled in Peralta, 120 of whom were currently in the program. Of the 480 remaining, 59 self-placed before 6 months, and 82 were placed by Peralta after 6 months or more.

have helped me, and I show them what I've learned. I want to get them to think."

Carter really starts his employee development classes the day a supported worker enters the program. At an orientation meeting during my visit he asked a group of seven new workers what they had done that made them eligible for supported work. "Maybe you'd like to get away from that kind of activity," he said to the ex-offenders and ex-addicts. "Maybe you'd like to get off welfare," he told the AFDC mothers. "True?" They nodded. "That's what we're here for. This program is an opportunity for you to develop good work habits, to become a good employee. We don't teach skills here; you're not here long enough for that. This is an opportunity to work. We stress attendance and punctuality. That's all we've got going for us. It's important that you understand that. Everyone in this program has a goal of an absentee rate of 5.5 percent or lower. That equals approximately the number of days in a year you could be absent if you worked for a major corporation. If you can maintain that here, it is an incentive for someone to hire you from Peralta."

That attendance goal is held up to each supported worker for as long as he or she is in the program. Absentee percentages are printed on weekly paychecks. Those above 5.5 percent are printed in red; those below, in black. People consistently above 5 percent are given special attention and informed exactly of what they must do on a daily basis to correct or control the problem. At the end of 4 months all employees whose rates are still above 5.5 percent meet with their supervisor and Carter to talk about their progress and to get a lecture on the importance of near-perfect attendance and punctuality. And every month the crew with the lowest percentage of absenteeism gets a free lunch. All this may sound like so much hokum, but it works. Competition is fierce for the free lunch, and every supported worker I talked with knew his or her absentee rate to two-hundredths of a point. As an added incentive, there is a "Wall of Fame" just inside the entrance to the large Peralta office where all the staff sit in open view of each other, much like people in the city room of a newspaper. On the wall is a color picture of everyone who has been placed and a caption telling what company they have gone to. They do not go unnoticed. Supported workers waiting to conduct business with the staff always seem to stop and look at the pictures.

By the end of a Peralta employee's sixth month, then, the importance of attendance and punctuality have been driven in almost remorselessly and, having learned what one has to do to keep a job, he or she is ready to learn how best to get one. In 4 hours a week for as many as 20 weeks, Carter gives a course that, as he describes it, "is designed to enable graduates of Peralta to proceed with some sense of direction in identifying and obtaining a job before leaving the program," as well as to develop "an analytical thought process and ability to communicate verbally and in writing that will enable them to make good judgments in decisions that affect their lives."

Carter's premise is that most supported workers know very little about themselves and have trouble articulating what they do know in anything other than colloquial terms; even properly filling out an application for employment is beyond most of them. Carter's approach is elementary and thorough. Every week the class is given an application form from a different company to fill out. "Nobody ever told them how important an application is," he said to me before a class. "They don't know who they are, the jobs they've had, what they made, who their supervisors were, or where they went to school. I try to build an awareness of who they are and what's outside their world. Some feel at first that they don't need to learn how to fill out an application, that they can do it already. But almost everyone takes half an hour or longer to fill out the first one. Then I correct them by circling every error they make in punctuation or spelling, in clarity, or in order. There are usually enough circles on everyone's sheets so they will pay attention." Carter makes everyone write out every word in full (for example, February instead of Feb.), omit all generalizations (such as etc.). He tells them, "I'm 20 years older than most of you and I can put my history down without a mistake on any job application in 15 minutes. If I can do it, so can you." By the end of the classes, they can. Says Sandra Walton, who has hired several program graduates, "Peralta people are well-prepared when they come to apply. They turn in a beautiful application." Carter explains the importance of completing an application with speed and without error this way: "Say there are two of you who arrive at the same time to apply for one job. The first one done is going to get interviewed first. An application that is neat and full of information is going to make a good impression before you even open your mouth."

But learning how to fill in a job application is the simplest part of Carter's program. Finding a job, he teaches, is based on three things: locating the appropriate employer, getting an interview, and selling yourself. To do that you have to know who you are and be able to tell the interviewer about yourself with confidence. Over the course of the classes participants are pushed to take a close look at themselves--at their employment history; their education achievements; their strengths, interests, and skills. Moreover, "I want them to be able to discuss their negative past without feeling ashamed or having to hide it," he says. "My position is, whatever happened is okay because a good experience can come of it." To help do this he has members of the class introduce themselves to each other the first day. "I want you to know who's sitting next to you," he tells them. "I want you to get into each other's business and give each other constructive criticism, because you can accept something from your friends more readily."

I sat in on a class that met for the first time. Carter introduced himself by saying he was born in Chicago, grew up in a housing project, and had no direction other than knowing he didn't want to work in a steel mill like his father, who came home filthy and exhausted. "A lot of folks go to school and don't learn nothing," he told them, slipping into the street argot. "When I got out of high school I had a choice of the Army, which I had no eyes for,

or getting a job, and I didn't want to do that, or going to college. So I went to Eastern Kentucky and got a degree in business administration, but I didn't learn anything. Then I was drafted for 3 years. After that I was a caseworker, did some on-the-job training for the Urban League, then got into data processing. Any questions?" No one asked any. Carter went on. "I was arrested once, a long time ago, and decided I'd never get arrested again. I did do some stuff that was no good; I just didn't get caught. Now I'm square. That's me. Any questions?" Still none. He finished up. "I can make suggestions for things you can do, but I can't make you do them. I'll try to decide if you're serious about being here. It's not a service to you or to me to come to these classes if you don't want to."

Then the others introduced themselves, although much more briefly, almost all omitting what had brought them to Peralta. "Were you in jail?" Carter asked one. "Yeah," he mumbled. "What for?" "Strong-armed robbery and attempted murder," he said, looking at the floor. "How much time did you do?" Carter asked. "Five years, 6 months, and 28 days," he answered, still looking down.

"Now look," Carter told the class, "I'm not asking about your criminal pasts to make you feel bad or embarrass you but to see how you deal with it and to show you something. When you go in and talk to an employer and he says, 'I see a gap of three and a half years in your employment record, what were you doing?' you can either stare at the floor and mumble that you were doing time, or you can look him in the eye and say, 'I was in prison for strong-armed robbery and attempted murder. I'll be glad to tell you all about it if you want, but I served my time and now I'm ready to work.' I want you to have a positive self-image. I want you to feel good about who you are, otherwise you won't convince an employer that you should have a job." It is an approach no one in the class had ever considered, and it is one that employers I talked with said they admired.

Carter spends the second week's class explaining the importance of budgeting, of setting priorities for how money is spent: "Consider yourself as a bill to be paid, like the phone or electric bill, even if you put only \$5 a week into a savings account." The rest of the classes are centered on exercises designed to help the participants decide what kind of work they want to do (sometimes by making up lists of things they don't want to do and working from there) and how to get it.

To the 26-year-old who says, "I just want a good paying job, it doesn't matter what I do," Carter says, "I want to reverse your thinking." "My philosophy is to look for the worst and hope for the best," the man says. "Have you had a positive life to date?" Carter asks. "Not really." "I suggest it's because you're not looking for the positive," Carter says, managing not to sound like Norman Vincent Peale. "You can get what you want. You can make it happen." The young man is not persuaded. "To me, that's building yourself up for a letdown." Carter nods his head. "Maybe I can give you some insight that will make the next 26

years better than the last." The worker shrugs his shoulders. "We'll let it rest for now, but maybe that's what you can teach me in this class."

Carter has developed his program over the last year and a half by looking through appropriate books in the library, consulting his commonsense, and asking for information from the California Employment Development Department. He gives his classes homework to do, such as to list their most enjoyable achievements in 5-year increments (6 to 10 years old, 11 to 15, and so on). They go through a list of questions often asked by interviewers ("Why do you want to work for our company?" "How long do you expect to work?") and through another list that requires an awareness of one's interests and past ("How do you spend your vacations?" "Can you take instructions without becoming upset?" "What types of people 'rub you the wrong way?"). They discuss still a third paper, entitled "Negative Factors Which Lead to Rejection of an Applicant" (e.g., "poor personal appearance," "inability to express himself clearly," "fails to look the interviewer in the eye," "asks no questions about the job"). They are taught to call a company to inquire whether they are hiring, what the jobs are, and what the pay is rather than to just show up at the plant. "Otherwise you may spend a morning getting an interview and at the end of it find the job isn't what you want or that the pay is minimum wage. Find out what you're going after before you go after it."

As the classes advance Carter spends more and more time on interviewing. He takes them through various interviews one by one while the others critique their responses. During the last few weeks they do this on videotape so everyone can see how they come across. Carter implores the men to get a haircut and remove any earrings and other excessive jewelry they may favor, and to wear sensible, unflashy clothes. "Once you get hired, wear anything you want," he tells them.

One of the most enthusiastic employers of Peralta graduates is Donald Salady, the personnel manager for Crown Zellerbach. "I've hired five, and three are still on the payroll. We don't normally bat that well with walk-ins, let alone referrals from community agencies. We would have had four out of five if the fellow hadn't failed to show up or even call in for 3 consecutive days. Just doing that once during the 90-day probation period is an automatic fire. He was in his 88th. I was just heartsick about it. There must have been something more we and Peralta could have done to get him through.

"The program really has its finger on the pulse of industry and what it needs. They stress attendance and punctuality, and I don't see the other community programs I deal with doing that. The applications Peralta people turn in are excellent. They even come with a cover letter and a resume, which is unheard of from people looking for hourly employment. A problem is, I can spot a Peralta application right away because they are using a standard resume. I'd be willing to go there one night a week and help people personalize theirs a little more and volunteer a little more

information. Jim made a great start by having them do it; now I'd like to see it modified. There are other personnel people like me who would go, too. There aren't many agencies I'd volunteer to help. I'm very satisfied with Peralta."

Carter's goal is to have people out of the program by the end of the 11th month. Those who aren't spend their last month exclusively on job hunting. So far, those who have wanted jobs have found them. Carter's first priority is to find jobs for people who are near the end of their supported work eligibility, but he does not indiscriminately send people out to interviews. Because he doesn't want someone to take a job he or she is not suited for and because he wants to keep his credibility with employers, he tries to match jobs and applicants as closely as he can. He also does not send a worker without a car to interview for a job more than 45 minutes away by public transportation.

Of course the classes don't work for everyone. There is, as I said, nothing magical going on at Peralta. But hard work and good preparation are certainly paying off for supported workers in Oakland, where job development is an integral part of the program, not a hasty tack-on. There is pride in the program and a sense of unity among its staff and employees. They even have a Corporation Day twice a year that gives a chance for everyone in the program to see who else is in it and to pat each other on the back for good work done.

One was held my last day there. It started at 9 a.m. at the Oakland Auditorium. Various crews had arranged for and prepared free food; others had borrowed stereos and records. Crew chiefs and supervisors were introduced personally, then the whole crew stood up. There was a lot of applause. Certificates of Achievement were given to employees who had absentee rates of 5.5 percent or below. There were a couple of speeches followed by a slide show of work done by Peralta crews that gave new workers a chance to see what the other crews had been up to. One of the newest Peralta employees was there. I had seen him fidgeting and looking mainly at the floor in the orientation meeting a few days earlier. He watched the slide show in something close to slack-jawed wonder. Sandy Warren sometimes has the aura of a camp counselor and cheerleader, and he puts it to good use. He conveys an enthusiasm for the program that is infectious. Peralta workers take a good deal of pride in their work, and with cause.

It would be foolish to think this aura of bonhomie made everyone in the program turn their lives around. "We don't kid ourselves by saying this is just a program for ex-addicts or ex-offenders," Carter told me. "There are a lot of people in the program who are still addicts of one sort or another, and there are people who are working days and taking nights." Yet Carter and Warren and the rest of the staff have created an atmosphere in which there is a chance for change and solid lessons on how to do it.

Fred Cooper, a Peralta graduate who has been working at Crown Zellerbach for over a year (with a couple of months' layoff) dropped

by the Peralta Corporation Day festivities and I spent a while talking with him. He began work at \$4.90 an hour, has been promoted and given raises because of good work, and is now making \$8 an hour. I asked him about the job development classes. "I dug every minute," he said. "It's a good program if you take advantage of it. I got on the train and didn't get off."

## Appendix

Demographic comparison of Oakland's population  
and successful placements (through 1/31/78)

|                   |              | Male | 21-30 | Black | High school diploma | Trade/vocational training | Previously employed | Total |
|-------------------|--------------|------|-------|-------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|-------|
| Ex-offenders      | Placed       | 78   | 50    | 49    | 40                  | 18                        | 47                  | 83    |
|                   | All in group | 326  | 234   | 230   | 187                 | 80                        | 222                 | 356   |
| Ex-addicts        | Placed       | 18   | 16    | 14    | 9                   | 2                         | 18                  | 20    |
|                   | All in group | 84   | 62    | 59    | 47                  | 26                        | 75                  | 96    |
| AFDC <sup>1</sup> | Placed       | 0    | 8     | 12    | 8                   | 2                         | 9                   | 18    |
|                   | All in group | 0    | 41    | 76    | 43                  | 11                        | 56                  | 94    |
| All groups        | Placed       | 96   | 74    | 75    | 57                  | 22                        | 74                  | 125   |
|                   | All in group | 410  | 338   | 365   | 277                 | 117                       | 353                 | 547   |

<sup>1</sup>Aid to Families with Dependent Children.

**END**