

Programs of Four Nonprofits That Made Presentations at “A Grassroots Look at Workforce Development” Forum

[Hispanic Family Center of Southern New Jersey](#), Camden

The Hispanic Family Center of Southern New Jersey, Inc. (HFC) began as a small advocacy organization in North Camden that was founded in 1976 as the Hispanic Health and Mental Health Association. Since that time, the HFC has grown into a large, comprehensive, bilingual, Hispanic human services organization that provides services to residents in southern New Jersey. The HFC provides social service and advocacy programs that promote empowerment and self-sufficiency. With locations in Camden and Gloucester counties, the HFC provides services to nearly 10,000 individuals annually through over 20 programs that include employment and training programs, health education and prevention services, domestic violence and mental health counseling, and substance use treatment, as well as youth, family, and senior programs.

The HFC has provided workforce development services for over 20 years through various programs.

WomenBuild Training Program

The HFC operates a WomenBuild construction training program. This initiative was designed to provide construction training to minority and female ex-offenders in an effort to create more job opportunities for women. Trainees are provided with classroom instruction, work readiness, literacy, safety training, and exposure to occupational work settings. During the initial training cycle, the HFC had 15 graduates. Currently, eight of the women have been placed in construction-related employment, and four others are working in nonconstruction employment.

Job Developer

The HFC also has an on-site job developer who assists individuals in preparing for, searching for, and obtaining employment. The organization has seen a tremendous need for this type of workforce development service in the current economy. During its last cycle, the HFC exceeded its goals, providing workforce development services to nearly 200 individuals. As a result of those efforts, over 100 individuals scheduled job interviews, including 25 who gained employment.

WorkFirst NJ

The HFC has also been engaged in the provision of employment-related services to residents who are receiving or have recently received Temporary Assistance to Needy Families and general assistance

for more than 12 years through contracts with the Camden County Workforce Investment Board. The HFC provides training through its Community Work Experience Program (CWEP). The job skills training component of the program targets at-risk welfare recipients in need of intensive workplace literacy, work values, and personal career portfolio development.

Consumers participate in 25 hours of CWEP activities each week and 10 hours a week of English as a second language (ESL) instruction or intensive workplace literacy skills. The HFC's WorkFirst experience assists consumers in obtaining placement in clerical, administrative, child care, senior care, hospitality, and housekeeping positions.

ESL and Civics

The HFC is part of the Camden County Consortium that provides ESL services with year-round classes. The HFC provides services to over 350 students annually. Classes are taught by bilingual/bicultural staff. Since a key to achieving economic self-sufficiency in the U.S. is the ability to speak English, the HFC's Family Resource Center has been providing ESL classes since 1989. Students receive an education plan that matches their skills to an appropriate level of ESL education. The HFC's ESL program includes civics instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, naturalization procedures, civic participation, and U.S. history and government.

Green Jobs Training Program

In 2009, the HFC created its own Green Jobs Training Program (GJTP). The GJTP was a comprehensive skills-based training initiative that prepared candidates for careers in the energy-efficiency industry. The HFC's program was based on a national model for green jobs training that demonstrated positive outcomes in workforce development. The model used multiple strategies for classroom instruction and on-the-job training that gave students exposure to hands-on vocational skills. Throughout the program, the HFC maintained strong collaboration with Isles, which provided skills training.

During initial cycles, the program focused on recruiting a diverse group of men and women from the Camden area who had experienced difficulties obtaining employment in the past. The GJTP offered jobs that pay a living wage and opportunities for growth. This type of employment offers individuals a "pathway out of poverty" and a "road to self-sufficiency." Training equipped workers with the skills necessary to obtain careers in occupations with career growth tracks. The organization experienced tremendous success under this program.

In the first two years, the HFC graduated a total of 63 trainees in four cycles; of the total, over 50 students were placed in full-time employment or internships. This program was discontinued due to lack of funding. However, the HFC has secured funding from New Jersey's Board of Public Utilities to construct its own Green Jobs Learning Lab. The project is expected to be completed in the fall of 2012. The HFC hopes to continue green jobs training with new funding.

Work Up

The HFC also operated the Work Up program, which served residents who are receiving or have recently received Temporary Assistance to Needy Families or who live in public housing in southern New Jersey. The program assisted thousands of Latinos to gain access to services necessary to become employed, improve employment, and/or increase self-sufficiency. During 2010-2011, 350 individuals were assisted and over 700 referrals for services were made.

Project Connect

In 2010 and 2011, the HFC provided workforce support services to One-Stop Career Centers in Gloucester and Camden counties. Through this program, the HFC served as a collaborative resource partner to One-Stop staff by assisting with client referrals and follow-up to appropriate workforce support services. In addition to client support, HFC staff established a One-Stop Work Support Directory. Under this program, resource specialists worked with One-Stop Career Centers to provide intake, referral, and outreach services to One-Stop Centers in southern New Jersey.

Hispanic Women Demonstration Resource Center

The HFC previously served as one of New Jersey's three Hispanic Women Demonstration Resource Centers (HWDRCs). Under this program, the HFC provided basic language skills, ESL, computer skills, computer literacy, educational evaluation services, job counseling services, self-help programs and mentoring projects, career information services, and information and referral services. The HWDRCs began in 1987 and continued for over 20 years until they lost funding because of state budgetary constraints. This initiative provided services in a bilingual and bicultural manner. As a HWDRC, the HFC assisted thousands of Hispanic women.

[Impact Services Corporation](#), Philadelphia

Impact Services Corporation's mission is "to empower people in need to attain the hope, motivation and skills necessary to reach their fullest human potential and highest level of personal and family self-sufficiency."

Jobs and employment have been the linchpin of Impact Services Corporation's work since it was founded in 1974 in Philadelphia's Kensington community.

A multi-service nonprofit that employs over 150 people in five locations, Impact has a significant history of revitalizing abandoned industrial sites, creating new enterprises and jobs, helping difficult-to-employ individuals to successfully enter the workforce, and improving the business environment by starting and running business associations and business improvement districts. Its comprehensive community and economic development planning efforts, which started in 1992, have shaped much of this activity and have received corporate, state, and foundation support.

Impact's workforce development programs have spanned the transitions from the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) to the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) and the Workforce Investment Act (WIA).

Unlike many workforce development programs that focus mainly on program participants, Impact has also targeted the business community by developing and managing business associations, assisting businesses to obtain funding assistance, helping to develop the Aramingo Crossings shopping center, and involving the corporate community as members on its board.

Employment and Training

Impact is one of Philadelphia's largest providers of employment and training services; its services are focused on people who are some of the most difficult to employ: Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) recipients, ex-offenders, and formerly homeless veterans. It also provides smaller programs to assist local residents who are seeking to improve their employment situations.

It currently runs one of the city's largest Employment Advancement Retention Network (EARN) Centers, which target services to parents receiving TANF. In 2011-12, it expects to serve over 1,500 welfare recipients and place at least 1,000 of the recipients in jobs. Over 97 percent of those served by Impact's TANF programs are young mothers of color, the vast majority of whom experience multiple barriers to employment, including a lack of reliable child care, limited transportation resources, domestic abuse, and

limited work experience. In addition to case management services that remove barriers to employment, Impact's programs provide the "soft skills" needed to succeed in the workplace, job search and placement services, and post-employment support.

In the course of its work over a period of nearly 40 years, Impact has formed significant relationships with employers who appreciate the training offered by Impact's programs and the post-employment support that helps new employees succeed. Impact has placed over 1,971 TANF recipients in jobs since 2005.

Impact's efforts to improve the life chances of ex-offenders acquired a sharpened focus in 2000 when its Fathers at Work initiative began as part of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation's national demonstration project to strengthen families by improving the employment level of young fathers. The program, which served over 350 nonviolent first-time offenders immediately after their release from prison, was distinguished for having the highest placement rate of all projects in the national demonstration. The impact on recidivism was remarkable, with a three-year recidivism rate of less than 10 percent compared with a more usual 70 percent for offenders in this age cohort.

Since that time, work with ex-offenders has been supported by the Pew Charitable Trusts, the City of Philadelphia's prison system, the Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual Disabilities, and the U.S. Department of Labor.

Impact was an active supporter of the City of Philadelphia's recent efforts to "ban the box," an ordinance that changed employment application practices in the city to allow ex-offenders to have a first interview without having to reveal their involvement with the corrections system. Since 2000, Impact has served 3,354 ex-offenders and placed 1,651 in full-time employment.

Work experience, both paid and unpaid, has been a significant element of Impact's TANF and ex-offender programs. For people who have never been in the workforce or who have not worked for lengthy periods of time, this program helps participants operate on a schedule, work in teams, communicate in appropriate ways, and acclimate themselves to the rigors of employment. For many individuals returning from prison, this is their only source of income until they find work.

Impact's work with formerly homeless veterans started in 1993; since that time, it has received U.S. Department of Labor support for its Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program. Qualified veterans receive job search and placement services, skills assessment, use of CareerLink resources, resume preparation, and interviewing skills in addition to medical, legal, financial, housing, and family

reunification assistance. Participants are drawn from Impact's transitional housing programs, agencies serving veterans, and people who walk in to Impact's site at 124 East Indiana Avenue.

In 2010-11, Impact Services provided some type of employment assistance to 4,432 people and assisted 919 to enter full- or part-time employment. These numbers are expected to increase significantly in 2011-12 with the addition of a third major TANF program, which is expected to serve over 600 additional women.

[Isles, Inc.](#), Trenton

Founded in 1981, Isles, Inc. is a self-help urban development organization in Trenton, NJ. With a mission to foster self-reliant families in healthy, sustainable communities, Isles develops cost-effective, powerful ways to strengthen people and places in challenging urban settings.

Isles:

- Revitalizes communities by developing green affordable homes, parks, and community agriculture.
- Trains and educates youth and adults through a vocational high school and green jobs training center.
- Builds wealth by supporting social enterprises, micro-businesses, and other financial and credit-building services.
- Promotes green, healthy living by cleaning up environmental hazards, fostering energy efficiency, and promoting healthy life styles.

In addition, Isles promotes public policies that support family self-reliance and community health.

Isles has several workforce development activities.

Isles's Center for Energy and Environmental Training (CEET)

In 2009, Isles developed the Center for Energy and Environmental Training (CEET), a model statewide green jobs training center. The center serves unemployed and underemployed individuals, workers seeking to upgrade their skills or change careers, and employers seeking to enhance their existing workforce. In addition to training, the CEET provides green job placement assistance for graduates seeking employment, ranging from entry-level to advanced positions.

As an affiliate of the Building Performance Institute, the CEET can provide examinations for those seeking national certifications in the energy-efficiency field. In its initial two years, the CEET gave hundreds of low-income, underserved residents the opportunity to participate in the benefits of the emerging green jobs economy. At the same time, the center's training has further enhanced the green jobs workforce by advancing the skills and certifications of hundreds of existing employees.

In 2011, the CEET focused primarily on the energy-efficiency (EE) and renewable energy (RE) fields. Since January 2009, the CEET provided EE or RE training to over 325 unemployed and underemployed residents from across the state, and 73 percent secured jobs, despite the recession. Over 200 incumbent employees were also trained and are now using their new skills to make homes healthier, safer, and more energy efficient. The CEET has assisted the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in training and certifying 600 contractors in lead-safe renovation, repair, and painting through nine-hour training sessions. In 2011, the CEET completed training for more than 75 unemployed and underemployed residents throughout New Jersey.

Isles's YouthBuild Institute

Isles's YouthBuild Institute (IYI) offers alternative high school education options for at-risk urban students seeking a high school diploma or GED, vocational skills training (construction, computer technology, and office management), and life skills training (leadership, financial, health education, and conflict management). Isles has developed an effective peer-based approach for students between the ages of 16 and 24 who have struggled in conventional school settings and/or have had encounters with the justice system.

All IYI daytime students are enrolled in vocational training in construction, where students follow the YouthBuild-approved pre-apprentice certificate training curriculum to earn certifications in various construction fields, including carpentry, masonry, and landscaping. IYI students gain knowledge in drywall installation and repair, sanding and preparation, painting (exterior and interior), estimating, basic linear measurement, window glazing, flooring, masonry, and Energy Star weatherization. Students also learn how to make construction practices "green," or more environmentally safe and energy efficient. The students gain experience by renovating low-income housing units in the community and working on smaller-scale construction and renovation projects at the IYI building, such as the school store and media center.

IYI's internship project places numerous students in positions throughout Isles and in companies in the Trenton area. At the end of 2010, 41 IYI students and alumni had received internships, 14 had

transitioned into external internships outside of Isles, and five obtained jobs with outside companies. As part of its internship and job placement program, IYI's job developer teaches students essential skills to obtain employment, including resume writing, dressing for success, and interview skills. Once students are placed, the job developer coaches students by maintaining a relationship with both the student and the employer. IYI's job developer also offers the same job placement services to alumni.

Isles's Financial Fitness Club (IFFC)

Employers of low-income workers often face the dilemma of how to help employees who are feeling stressed and distracted by financial pressures. A 2005 study documented that one in four workers experience financial stress, a number that has only increased in the wake of recent mortgage and credit turmoil. Of employees experiencing financial stress, 80 percent report that they are unable to carry out their normal responsibilities, have cut their workload, and/or are less productive. Employee financial distress deeply affects employers.

Isles's Financial Fitness Club is a money management and credit-building finance system designed to create long-term financial stability for low-income workers by fostering positive money management. By using a set of clear and consistent outcomes, IFFC can objectively measure the effect of each intervention on customers' income, savings, and credit scores on a short-, medium-, and long-term basis.

Isles works cooperatively with employers to apply experiential financial education, one-on-one coaching, online technologies, social networking, and low-cost loans to improve the financial life of low-income workers. IFFC assists its customers by having a positive impact on financial decision-making, helping them to significantly reduce overall spending, and substantially alleviating the debt burden. IFFC was developed by combining the latest research in financial education and behavioral science in order to promote fundamental changes in its customers' money management, savings, and spending behavior.

Low-income families who join IFFC experience substantial savings and improvements in their financial well-being. In just the first year of participation, members save on average approximately \$2,000 - \$3,000 because of reduced fees, lower interest rates, and improved money management skills.

Here are some typical examples of savings that IFFC members experience:

- Improved credit scores can save members about \$200, or 16 percent, on auto insurance premiums.

- Access to one \$500 interest-free emergency loan can save a family up to \$450, since the average payday loan from a payday/check cashing lender is “refinanced” three times.
- By reducing a credit card interest rate from 24 percent to 8 percent, an IFFC customer with a credit card balance of only \$3,000 can save more than \$900 a year in interest.
- IFFC’s low-cost tax preparation saves members \$200-\$900 that they would otherwise pay to for-profit tax preparation services.
- Helping families claim all of their federal earned income tax credits and state income credits results in an additional \$1,400-\$1,600 refund, with some refunds as high as \$4,800.

Isles’s E4 (Energy, Environment, Employment, and Equity)

Isles’s E4 is a nonprofit business that serves New Jersey’s emerging green energy and healthy homes retrofit markets while generating jobs for local residents. Bringing a “whole building” approach to low- and moderate-income households in the region, E4 offers a triple bottom line business model: social benefits that include employment for underserved people and renovations in communities that need more energy-efficient, healthy homes; environmental benefits that include reduced carbon and other emissions and healthier, energy-efficient communities; and financial benefits that include revenue streams and potential profit to support additional work in the residential and commercial sectors.

E4 completed over 375 home audits and retrofits in 2011, saving thousands in energy costs for families, reducing many tons of carbon emissions, and stimulating the local economy. Outcomes included:

- Saving \$437 on average in reduced first-year energy costs for low-income families.
- Reducing average energy consumption by 35 percent for the typical low-income home.
- Employing 10 weatherization technicians at a starting salary of \$17.40 an hour with medical, dental, vision, and 401(k) benefits.
- Reducing 2.65 metric tons of carbon dioxide per home per year and reducing emissions of methane and nitrous oxide.
- Improving health and safety conditions, providing increased comfort for occupants, reducing homelessness and mobility, and preserving affordable housing.
- Increasing property values, reducing the incidence of fire and utility arrearages and bad debts, and avoiding unemployment costs.

[New Community Corporation](#), Newark, NJ

New Community Corporation (NCC) is one of the largest and most comprehensive community development corporations in the United States. Founded in 1968 after the Newark riots by Monsignor William J. Linder, the corporation has grown from one full-time employee to close to 700 employees. The organization's success has been built on Monsignor Linder's vision to meet the needs of the most vulnerable and economically disadvantaged. Today, NCC's programs and services have a positive impact on the lives of over 50,000 people daily.

NCC provides education, affordable housing, transitional housing for the homeless, day care, banking services, job training and employment services, economic development, health care, mental health counseling, social services, community arts, and recreation.

NCC has been a major contributor to the revitalization of Newark by developing a skilled and job-ready workforce. Training is provided in the health sciences and nursing, culinary arts, and automotive technician fields. NCC has served as an international model for community development corporations and hosts visitors throughout the United States and the world.

The New Community Workforce Development Center

The New Community Workforce Development Center is a state-of-the-art educational and training facility based in Newark, NJ. The center was established to provide marketable skills training for high-demand fields leading to both personal development and economic self-sufficiency. It offers multi-faceted programs in areas such as the health sciences, automotive training, and the culinary arts. It also offers adult basic education classes that prepare participants to obtain a GED.

One of the major advantages of the center is its hands-on, practical work experience, much of which is provided through NCC's network of facilities and business operations. Opened in 1992 as New Jersey's first newly constructed One-Stop Career Center, the 24,500-square-foot building at 201 Bergen Street contains a computer resource lab, classrooms, and a clinical laboratory for nursing students that features the latest simulated models to prepare students for real-life patient encounters.

Designed to serve those most in need and to accommodate the nontraditional student, the center offers flexible admission requirements and a curriculum that integrates academic and life skills such as time management and communications. The center maintains a full-time career services department that focuses on job readiness and placement and assists students in such areas as resume writing, job interviewing skills, and Internet job search.

