



Workforce Development Professionals are everywhere!



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How did you get started in workforce development?

Initially, when I began working for PathStone Corporation, I never dreamed that my career would become workforce development. I actually had been a stay at home Mom for several years and decided to take a peek at possible part-time employment in the local newspaper. What caught my eye was an Employment Specialist position. It sounded particularly interesting because of its connections to employers and working with limited English proficient participants. The minute I began my employment, I knew this was the job for me.

I firmly believe that often we can become successful in the things we choose to do because of a personal connection. I grew up in a monolingual Italian household where I primarily spoke Italian, and English secondarily. My parents were both monolingual and afraid to speak English for fear of making a mistake.

My father particularly was college educated in Italy. Yet, once he came to the United States his language barrier prohibited him from pursuing teaching at the college level. When I spoke to him and he responded, I continuously thought to myself how brilliant he was. At

times throughout my career, I have thought how much more he could have accomplished if he had had access to some of the programs we all operate today, and how his life could have been so different. Was he successful? -- he was, absolutely. But he never had the opportunity to work in the field he loved.

Now here I am with over 33 years of workforce development experience in developing programs for multi-barriered populations. I have personally experienced the transition from the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) to the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), to the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), and now to the new Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Today, PathStone's participants -- whether a migrant and seasonal farmworker, an ex-offender, a TANF recipient, a youth participant, or a participant of the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), just to name a few -- are assured that barriered populations have the necessary skills to keep up with a demanding and changing job market.

What is the most exciting thing about being a Workforce Development Professional?

The most exciting thing about being a workforce development professional is having the opportunity to improve employment opportunities for all workers. It is evident that having a workforce development professional involved in learning new trends assures that participants gain tangible skills and knowledge relevant to their up-ward mobility in the workforce. This

is an exciting time where workforce development has the opportunity to change the labor market prospects for disadvantaged workers by building a strategy to bring together job training, education, human services and economic development. While at the same time meeting the needs of current and future business and industry.

What do you value most about your NAWDP membership?

Since workforce development is critical to the success of all the programs we operate within the PathStone Corporation, NAWDP assures we continuously improve our services to job seekers. PathStone staff continuously strive to achieve credentials in case management, and job development and business

services. Furthermore, NAWDP identifies new funding sources that may connect to other programs PathStone may operate. More importantly, NAWDP provides us the opportunity to connect with other workforce development professionals from around the country to share our experiences and learn from one another.

Why did you apply for the CWDP?

Initially, I applied for my CWDP in 2001 to lend a professional capacity to what I do every day. But today, the profession has expanded rapidly and has developed competencies that assure that we keep up with new

trends. Today, I have ensured that not only my direct reports carry the credential but those they directly supervise are moving towards achieving