

TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT NOTICE	NO. 42-10
	DATE May 20, 2011

TO: STATE WORKFORCE AGENCIES
STATE WORKFORCE ADMINISTRATORS
STATE WORKFORCE LIAISONS
STATE AND LOCAL WORKFORCE BOARD CHAIRS AND DIRECTORS
STATE LABOR COMMISSIONERS
COMPREHENSIVE AND AFFILIATE ONE-STOP CAREER CENTER
DIRECTORS
EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION GRANTEEES
NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS

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Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships

SUBJECT: Encouraging Partnerships between the Workforce Investment System and Job Clubs to meet Career and Employment Needs

- 1. Purpose.** To announce a project spearheaded by the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships (CFBNP) supporting the efforts of community-based and faith-based Job Clubs, and to encourage workforce leaders to develop collaborations between the workforce investment system and community-based and faith-based job clubs aimed at improving the quality and quantity of employment and training services to job seekers and unemployed individuals.
- 2. Background.** The CFBNP was launched in April 2010, following President Barack Obama's amending of Executive Order 13199 on February 5, 2009. The purpose of the CFBNP, in coordination with the President's broader White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships, is to form collaborations among all levels of government and nonprofit organizations—faith-based and secular—and community leaders to more effectively serve Americans in need. The Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) and CFBNP have been working together to expand the reach of the workforce investment system, including One-Stop Career Centers and ETA grantees, to organizations and individuals that have not previously connected with these programs. One of the recent primary focuses of CFBNP has been to support Job Clubs.

Job Club programs based at churches, other religious institutions, community organizations, and more recently online through Facebook and social media offer an opportunity for unemployed individuals to come together and share job search techniques and professional networks, learn about careers and programs, and provide peer support. Other terms for Job Clubs include: Unemployment Ministries; Job Groups; Work Search Roundtables; and Career Transitioners. The literature on Job Clubs is limited. Job Clubs are not generally supported by national or state membership groups, funder networks, national religious bodies, or other organizing entities, which makes it difficult to define and classify them.

In 2006, Public Private Ventures (PPV) released a study and a guide on the use of employment networks (including Job Club models) as a strategy for employing low-income people. PPV found that both employers and workers rely on personal, social, and professional networks for jobs. In one survey, 88 percent of employers expressed a preference for hiring lower-skilled positions through informal referrals. At the same time, the report revealed that low-income job seekers have small employment networks. Surveys of more than 1,100 low-income job seekers revealed that 75 percent had fewer than five people who could offer help with finding a job.

Job Clubs grow in number during economic downturns. Through its own research, CFBNP estimates that there are at least as many Job Clubs in operation across the country as there are One-Stop Career Centers (approximately 3,000).

While Job Clubs vary from one organization to the next, they share several general characteristics:

- **Facilitated meeting-based approach:** Job Clubs are typically organized around regular meetings, which take place on a weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly basis, in most cases. Meetings often occur in the evenings or weekends and generally seem to provide coffee/tea and refreshments. Job Club meetings are led and organized by a facilitator, often a volunteer or member of the church or community organization.
- **Small group and inclusive setting:** Most Job Clubs work in small group settings, with meetings of 5 to 30 participants for at least a three-month period. While Job Clubs often advertise to their congregation or community members, they tend to be open to the broad public.
- **Peer support:** A central tenet of most Job Clubs is to act as a support group for unemployed people. In many (though not all) cases, Job Clubs view their work as more closely aligned with a grieving process model or 12-step treatment model rather than a workforce development model, where there are various stages of unemployment (grief, anger, denial, acceptance, etc.). The facilitator's role is to help participants work through these various stages.
- **Network and education models:** In addition to peer support, Job Clubs also offer assistance in the areas of job search and career development. Often times, they take a networking approach where participants share their various networks to help each other identify job opportunities. Job Clubs will also use an education model where they provide participants with information and skills in areas such as job search techniques, résumé building, and interview preparation.

- **Guest speakers:** A hallmark of Job Clubs is to invite outside guests and experts to speak to participants. Guest speakers could be human resources experts, small business owners, employer representatives, and former, employed Job Club participants.
 - **Volunteer-based and limited budgets:** A commonality across Job Clubs is that they operate on shoe-string budgets and often are driven by and dependent on volunteers who serve as the coordinators and meeting facilitators. In most cases, Job Clubs rely on donations and in-kind services for meeting space and food.
3. **Connecting with Job Clubs.** CFBNP has spearheaded several activities, underway and planned, for strengthening the capacity of Job Clubs and linking them with the workforce investment system. Activities include:
- **Community of Practice:** CFBNP has developed and is managing a Community of Practice (CoP) on the Workforce3one.org Web site called the Partnerships CoP (<https://partnerships.workforce3one.org>). The Partnerships CoP is designed for Job Club coordinators, volunteers, organizers, and others to share toolkits and resources, connect with other Job Clubs locally and across the country, share contact information for One-Stop Career Centers with active Job Clubs, and access Webinars, discussion threads, and other resources.
 - **Electronic Tools and Training:** CFBNP will connect Job Club coordinators with ETA's electronic tools, including the Worker ReEmployment portal (<http://www.careeronestop.org/reemployment/>) found on the workforce information Web site - CareerOneStop (www.careeronestop.org) and new career tools, including My Next Move (www.mynextmove.org) and myskills myfuture (www.myskillsmyfuture.org) and provide basic training on using these tools and incorporating them into the Job Club curriculum.
 - **Referrals:** CFBNP will help to facilitate relationships between Job Clubs and One-Stop Career Centers and ETA grantees by identifying potential collaboration opportunities, and contacting local organizations to share potential partnerships.
 - **Volunteer Exchange:** CFBNP will facilitate a volunteer exchange whereby One-Stop Career Center staff will have an opportunity to volunteer as a guest speaker at a local Job Club meeting to share insights about local employment trends and labor market information, tips and strategies for job search, training programs, and other useful information.
 - **Webcast:** On May 24, 2011, CFBNP will host a webcast (that will also be archived) for Job Clubs and the workforce system announcing the launch of the project, the role Job Clubs play, and collaborations between Job Clubs and One-Stop Career Centers.
4. **Action Requested.** DOL encourages state and local workforce investment boards, state workforce agencies, One-Stop Career Centers, and ETA grantees to establish partnerships with Job Clubs and to work with the CFBNP to identify local Job Clubs.

Additionally, the public workforce system is encouraged to visit and join the Partnerships Community of Practice (CoP) (<https://partnerships.workforce3one.org>) to outreach to Job Clubs and to share information on partnerships; and to participate in the May 24, 2011 Webcast. Information for the Webcast will be available on CFBNP's Web site at <http://www.dol.gov/cfbnp>.

5. Inquiries. Questions regarding Job Clubs and partnerships or any other information included in this Training and Employment Notice should be directed to Ashley Gerwitz, in CFNBP, at 202-693-6031 or Gerwitz.Ashley@dol.gov.