

SEPTEMBER 2000 WOMEN'S BUREAU CONFERENCE CALL

EMPLOYER TO EMPLOYER WORK AND FAMILY COALITIONS

Host: Nancy Chen, Women's Bureau Regional Director, Region 5

Speaker: Angie Laycock, Coordinator, Washentaw Work/Life Consortium

SUMMARY OF TOPIC

This call focuses on the promoting work and family programs employer to employer through a work/life consortium. The overall effort is to improve recruitment and retention capabilities of area employees by helping them integrate Work/Life options in their companies. The strategy used was determining what the current practices are in the business community. Differentiating the connection between availability of Work/Life options, Work/Life benefits and workforce development, making the case that there are benefits for both employer and employees. Identifying available resources for employers that will offer these services in a cost-effective way. The primary focus is on small and medium sized employers that don't have a lot of resources available. Timing was critical and partners with the same goals were identified and approached to work together on this project. The coalition started with a focus group that was a business forum made up of decision-makers from the community. This group helped to formulate plans for future events. The group also identified some of the reasons smaller organizations were not involved in Work/Life programs. First, they thought that all programs were cost prohibitive. Second, there was a very traditional view as their role as an employer that viewed work and family concerns as separate issues. Finally they simply lacked the infrastructure to support these types of programs. The following events came out of this initial planning process. The **first** event was a panel of employers giving an overview of Work/Life options and programs within their companies. The **second** event focused on child care solutions and options. The **third** event focused on flexible work arrangements. The **fourth** event focused on manager training on the benefits of work/life programs. The consortium is currently planning it's next round of employer events and currently maintains 40-50 employer participants at each event.

KEY POINTS

- Evaluate current trends and issues in the business community.
- Use current businesses to set the focus.
- Focus on the small to medium size businesses and how to remove barriers.

ADVANTAGES/SUCSESSES

- Raises visibility on the need for work family balance.
- Provides a vehicle for employer to employer mentoring.

- Employers are taking action and implementing new work/life programs.

DISADVANTAGES/ROAD BLOCKS

- Small to medium size businesses view their role as providing employment and do not see a connection to work/life balance.
- Getting employers to the events can be a challenge.
- Convincing employers that these benefits are cost effective and can help increase the bottom line.

SPEAKER CONTACT INFORMATION

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RESOURCES

- Karen Furia, Women's Bureau Regional Director, Region 10 furia-karen@dol.gov
- The Women's Bureau <http://www.dol.gov/wb/welcome.html>
- Kelly Tyler, Child Care Resources, Business Liaison tyler@childcare.org
- Child Care Resources, King County, Washington www.childcare.org
- Washington State Child Care Resource and Referral www.childcarenet.org
- Child Care in Health Care <http://www.childcareinhealthcare.org/>
- The Child Care Bureau <http://nccic.org>
- Alliance of Work Life Professionals <http://www.awlp.org>
- The Fatherhood Project <http://www.fatherhoodproject.org>
- Life Work Strategies <http://www.nationalpartnership.org>
- National Partnership for Women & Families <http://www.nationalpartnership.org>
- Boston College Center for Work & Family <http://www.bc.edu/cwf>
- Labor Project for Working Families <http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~iir/workfam/home.html>
- Blue Suit Mom <http://www.bluesuitmom.com/>
- National Network for Child Care <http://www.nncc.org/>
- Child Care Partnership Project <http://www.nccic.org/ccpartnerships>
- Woman's-Work <http://www.womans-work.com>
- Human Resources Executive/Cornell <http://www.workindex.com>
- Families and Work Institute <http://www.familiesandwork.org>
- The Life Station <http://www.thelifestation.com>
- Work Life Benefits <http://www.wlb.com>

The Women's Bureau Region X office and Child Care Resources of King County has compiled this "Work and Family Virtual Conference Call Summary Sheets" for information sharing and does not endorse any programs or organizations included in it. These summaries include information on programs and policies that employers have tried or ideas and thoughts that work and work/life professionals have shared.