

## **NOVEMBER, 1999 WOMEN'S BUREAU CONFERENCE CALL**

### **CONSORTIUM BUILDING:**

#### **CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSFUL MODELS FOR WORK AND FAMILY**

**Host:** Frances Jefferson, Women's Bureau Regional Director, Region 8

**Speakers:** Cindy Carrillo, Work Options Group

Teri Floyd, Hunter Douglas

#### **SUMMARY OF TOPIC**

This call focuses on a very innovative, unique consortium model that is a very viable option for the small business. A consortium is a group that comes together to meet their common needs as a group. The employers are the consortium and the employees are the beneficiaries. This consortium model is one of a kind because it doesn't focus on bricks and mortar. It doesn't for example, build child care centers for groups of employers, it focuses on different kinds of services that help people balance their work and their family lives. The Work Options Group works with employers around the country, helping employers form different industries and sizes together to form a consortium. Work Options Group provides the formalized model, creating a corporation that is a free standing not for profit. Different employers become members of the association that provides bylaws, clearly stating rules and operating procedures. The corporate consortium is the entity that enters into contracts, not the individual employer providing a limited amount of liability to the employer. The decision-makers are representatives of the different participating companies and they sit on the board of directors. The next step is a uniform needs assessment that each employer distributes to determine as a group what benefits the consortium will focus on. It is extremely important to focus on the needs, the costs and the bottom line benefits so the consortium can make good business decisions.

#### **KEY POINTS**

- This model works for different industries and different size companies.
- Consortiums take 3-4 months once employers have been identified for participation in the consortium.
- The consortium is set up as a non-profit corporation with a board of directors that represent the participating employers.
- Conducting an employee needs assessment and focus groups will tell you what the critical issues are for employees.

## **ADVANTAGES/SUCSESSES**

- Liability is limited to the employers/consortium members.
- Purchasing benefits as a group gives the members buying power to get the best rate for their money.
- Allows for creativity when finding solutions for employee's common issues.

## **DISADVANTAGES/ROAD BLOCKS**

- The model is extremely innovative and new and can take some time to get employers at the table.
- Turnover of members can be disruptive to the consortium.
- Fees can be a roadblock for employers who don't understand the benefits of the consortium.

## **SPEAKER CONTACT INFORMATION**

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## **RESOURCES**

- Karen Furia, Women's Bureau Regional Director, Region 10 [furia-karen@dol.gov](mailto: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](mailto:tyler@childcare.org)
- Child Care Resources, King County, Washington [www.childcare.org](http://www.childcare.org)
- Washington State Child Care Resource and Referral [www.childcarenet.org](http://www.childcarenet.org)
- The Child Care Bureau <http://nccic.org>
- Alliance of Work Life Professionals <http://www.awlp.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>

- Child Care in Health Care <http://www.childcareinhealthcare.org/>

*The Women's Bureau Region X office and Child Care Resource and Referral 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.*