

January 14, 2009

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**OFFERING EMPLOYERS FLEXIBILITY, TEMPORARY JOBS MAY BE FIRST
SECTOR TO REBOUND; NEW STUDY EXAMINES POTENTIAL OF
“ALTERNATIVE STAFFING ORGANIZATIONS”**

Study examines organizations that aim to help disadvantaged workers and fulfill business needs via temporary job placements and supportive services

New York, NY—A new study by Public/Private Ventures (P/PV), a national nonprofit focused on research and program development, highlights the work of four alternative staffing organizations (ASOs), which use an innovative approach to help disadvantaged workers gain access to jobs: They combine traditional temporary job placements with needed social support services.

“Despite difficult economic times, past economic downturns have taught us that the temp industry is the first to rebound and has done so robustly,” says Sheila Maguire, P/PV vice president for labor market initiatives. “Alternative staffing programs offer an important opportunity to capitalize on that trend and help low-income workers successfully connect with the labor market.”

ASOs are staffing agencies started by nonprofit organizations that aim to meet the needs of both disadvantaged job seekers and employers by coupling job brokering with supportive services. Unlike typical for-profit staffing firms, ASOs may offer—in addition to the temporary jobs they help participants secure—important supportive services and assistance finding stable long-term employment, often despite significant barriers, such as a criminal record, a history of homelessness or not having a high school diploma.

P/PV’s new report, *A Foot in the Door: Using Alternative Staffing Organizations to Open Up Opportunities for Disadvantaged Workers*, takes an in-depth look at four ASOs and their efforts to assist disadvantaged job seekers. The report reflects P/PV’s findings from the second phase of the national Alternative Staffing Demonstration (ASD), which was launched by the Flint, Michigan-based Charles Stewart Mott Foundation in 2003. Mott support for that most recent phase, which ran from 2005 to 2008, totaled nearly \$2.5 million. A second report on the ASD is being simultaneously released by the Center for Social Policy (CSP) at the University of Massachusetts at Boston’s John W. McCormack Graduate School of Policy Studies, focusing on the capacity of the four ASOs to generate job assignments and serve two sets of “customers”—job seekers and employers.

P/PV’s new research indicates that ASOs serve people with a range of barriers to employment, and, as seen in other employment programs, the more barriers that individuals face, the lower

their chances for a successful outcome. At the same time, the report suggests that ASOs—by combining job brokering with key supports, such as transportation to work, emergency cash assistance and referrals to supportive services—may help offset the negative effects that certain barriers (including multiple barriers) can have on job placement, retention and wages.

Neal Hegarty, program director of the Mott Foundation’s Flint area grantmaking, notes that such findings offer new insights into how innovative workforce development strategies can support the nation’s labor market. “The alternative staffing model, by combining temporary job opportunities with supportive services, seeks to meet the needs of people with barriers to work, as well as employers,” he said. “These findings offer an important first look at the meaningfulness and effectiveness of that approach.”

Maguire agrees, noting that while further research is needed to assess the impact of alternative staffing programs, this report represents an important step in understanding how ASOs serve disadvantaged individuals. “ASOs can provide important access to jobs, as well as some of the supports that these job seekers often need. When such services help someone stay on the job longer or work more efficiently, they are also a benefit to businesses, which depend on reliable employees to remain competitive.”

Organizations that participated in the study were First Source Staffing, started by the Fifth Avenue Committee in Brooklyn, NY; Goodwill Staffing Services, operated by Goodwill Industries of Central Texas in Austin, TX; Goodwill Staffing Services, run by the Easter Seals–Goodwill of the Northern Rocky Mountains in Boise and Nampa, ID; and EMERGE Staffing in Minneapolis, MN, an affiliate of Pillsbury United Communities.

P/PV’s report, *A Foot in the Door*, is available at www.ppv.org.

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Public/Private Ventures tackles critical challenges facing low-income communities by seeking out and designing innovative programs, rigorously testing them and promoting the solutions proven to work. For more information, please visit www.ppv.org.

The Mott Foundation, established in 1926 by an automotive pioneer, is a private philanthropy committed to supporting projects that promote a just, equitable and sustainable society. It supports nonprofit programs throughout the U.S. and, on a limited geographic basis, internationally. Besides Flint, offices are located in metropolitan Detroit, Johannesburg (South Africa) and London. More information is available at www.mott.org.