



June 22, 2016

Dear Partner,

WorkSource Montgomery and the Montgomery County WDB are pleased to introduce Grant Associates, our new vendor for the county's WIOA Youth program.

Since opening their doors nearly 20 years ago, Grant Associates, a national, award-winning workforce development company, has collaborated with government agencies to develop workforce programs and business solutions that create opportunities to advance job seekers, businesses and local economies. During that time, the company has served more than 20,000 U.S. businesses and assisted more than 100,000 low-income workers in preparing for and finding quality jobs that lead to advancement opportunities.

Grant Associates is highly experienced in operating large-volume One-Stop and sector centers, programs for special populations including TANF recipients and the justice involved, and community job placement programs. This summer, the company will launch an extensive program in New York City for out of school youth (OSY) ages 16-24.

As you know, engagement of this population is often challenging. Grant Associates has proposed a robust outreach strategy to draw youth and keep them engaged through successful goal completion. An important part of outreach will be partnering with employers and CBOs to connect youth to supportive services, education, training and employment.

Outreach techniques will involve 1) becoming deeply entrenched in the community and meeting youth where they are – on sports fields, in rec centers, at community partner locations and churches, engaging them in conversation about services and inviting them to an orientation; 2) hosting sports games and youth events to recruit participants; 3) peer referral; 4) sending street teams out to knock on doors and hand out program flyers; and 5) through social media.

A flexible Orientation has been designed to make youth feel comfortable, allow them to talk freely about their needs and goals, help them to understand the program's benefits, incentives and rewards (including raffles and movie nights), and to assure them of ongoing support.

Youth will be assessed to determine their skills, aptitude, competencies and internal motivations and to identify the careers and industries that would be a best fit for their strengths and interest. All participants will attend work readiness training focused on developing essential workplace skills and to assess soft skills in simulated workplace scenarios. The program will offer short-term, in-house training in Retail, IT and Food Service and will refer youth off-site for longer-term vocational training in the participant's selected career pathway.

To further engage youth, exciting events will be scheduled with employers to provide first-hand experience to the career pathway. Examples of these events include:

- Company Visits – Youth and staff will prepare for and take guided tours in businesses from each of the six priority sectors where they can meet employees, ask questions, and even potentially participate in a small hands-on experience.

- Training School Visits – Pursuing a training or higher education pathway is a significant commitment and to help youth gain confidence in their decision to pursue a certain path, tours to training and education partners will be arranged to allow the youth to see the school, meet instructors, and try on the experience.
- Job Shadowing – Speakers, videos, and even hands-on activities in the office are helpful tools for exploring a certain occupation, but an even stronger resource is giving youth an opportunity to job-shadow someone. Youth still working to identify core interests and abilities will be given opportunities to shadow someone in a specific field to better understand the job and occupation.
- Work Experience – The best exposure to work is firsthand experience. After youth have completed self-discovery and research activities, they will be eligible to be matched with a paid work experience for a test-run of the field. Both sets of input will be valuable data for helping Case Managers guide youth into their next steps.

There is much more about this exciting program than the space in a brief letter allows us to share. You will soon hear about it first-hand from the Grant Associates team who will be reaching out to learn about your services, establish a strong working partnership, and answer any questions you may have about the company and the WIOA Youth program.

We know you will be as pleased as we are to partner with Grant Associates.

Sincerely,



Ellie Giles

CEO, WorkSource Montgomery, Inc.