

# Workforce Strategies During the Holidays

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The holiday season usually offers time for thoughts about family and future as we celebrate religious festivals and begin a new year. For people who are unemployed or are concerned about company downsizing, the season can be filled with great uncertainty. The Berkshire County Regional Employment Board wants people who are challenged by unemployment or facing an uncertain future to understand that training and employment opportunities can be found during the season – even in this tough economy. Here are some opportunities.

## **Berkshire Works – Assistance for Job Seekers/Claimants**

Berkshire Works Career Center has offices in North Adams and in Pittsfield and can assist job seekers with the following:

- Job search assistance and Career planning information
- Workshops on job search techniques including interviewing, networking, and resume writing
- Data on current labor market trends
- Resources to help find the right training opportunities
- Tools to help you conduct an effective job search

## **Berkshire Works – Assistance for Employers**

Berkshire Works Career Center will assist employers with the following:

- Post job opportunities, pre-screen potential employees; job/career fairs
- On-the-job training opportunities
- Simplify the unemployment insurance law
- Recruiting and hiring
- Business support services including Rapid Response
- Workforce Training Fund and other training programs

## **Learn at Work Request for Funding Proposal**

The Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education have committed \$1.4 million towards a grant opportunity to provide workers with the basic skills required to pursue careers in high demand occupations and to provide businesses with workers who can contribute to the businesses' productivity, performance or competitiveness. Grant awards are a maximum of \$225,000 for a three-year duration. Program services include Adult Basic Education (Beginning literacy/GED); English Speakers of Other Languages; Pre-college literacy or numeracy; and Computer Literacy in context of ABE/ESOL. Training must take place at the worksite. More information and the application can be found at [www.commcop.org/sectorstrategy/learnatwork/html](http://www.commcop.org/sectorstrategy/learnatwork/html). The grant application deadline is December 23, 2009.

# Ten Do's and Don'ts this Holiday Season

■ Do take Part-time work. Part-time work is better than no work at all. Part-time work adds to your unemployment credits and is an excellent way to show your talents to a prospective employer.

■ Don't put off applying for full-time work during the holiday season. Companies operating on a calendar year budget will make decisions about personnel and there is always turnover – no matter what time of year.

■ Do exploit the season by attending parties or gatherings and networking yourself with people who might know of job openings. Many times your best source for job openings is friends and acquaintances with insider knowledge about current or future job openings.

■ Don't complicate your situation by overspending during the holidays. Try to avoid debt and cut expenses.

■ Do seek help from workforce and financial professionals for job counseling and financial assistance.

■ Understand that job loss, unemployment and job seeking are stressful situations and know that you are not alone. Many people are experiencing this same situation or have gone through periods of unemployment.

■ Do get organized. Design a new resume, post on-line and be methodical about your job search.

■ Avoid bad habits – get yourself in shape and focus on your health. Do not let those negative voices in your head get the best of you.

■ Do try to keep a positive attitude and be patient. Understand that it does take some time to find employment, but that your upbeat attitude will help you be successful. Today's new education and training opportunity can become tomorrow's job.

■ Do not forget to spread good cheer to everyone you love!

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