RUNNING HEAD: Dislocated Workers Return to School

Back to School: Meeting the Needs of Dislocated Workers at the Community College

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Abstract

When companies reduce their labor costs by taking their jobs to underdeveloped nations, they leave behind workers who are suddenly faced with the need to quickly update their training and education. These dislocated workers often turn to the community college for assistance. Drawing upon existing research, this paper explores the challenges facing dislocated workers and the community colleges that strive to serve them, culminating in a service plan to meet those challenges and implications for practice.

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Two-year colleges have long provided programs and services for a highly diverse student population. Based on the needs of the local community (i. e., single parents, traditional-aged, immigrants, first generation, dislocated workers), two-year institutions must understand each population being served to better design and offer programs and services (Bulger & Watson, 2006; Jenkins, 2003; Nora, 2000). These institutions provide a variety of activities that foster community, economic, and workforce development, leading to direct, positive outcomes in the lives of their learners (Grubb, Badway, Bell, Bragg, & Russman, 1997).

One critical activity is meeting the training and education needs of dislocated workers. Dislocated workers, also known as displaced workers, are those who have lost their jobs involuntarily due to an employer's decision to close a plant or eliminate positions. Federal and state programs, under the provisions of NAFTA, provide Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) giving workers the opportunity to retrain via two-year college offerings (or other programs) designed to prepare the worker to re-enter the job market within two years (Karoly & Panis, 2004).

Although literature examines a plethora of community college-related topics, such as the factors generally associated with persistence and academic success (NCES, 2003); academic self esteem (Woo & Frank, 2000); classroom environment (Schuetz, 2005; Veltri, Banning, & Davies, 2006); student engagement (Chang, 2005; Miller, Pope, & Steinmann, 2005); college readiness and goal achievement(Byrd & MacDonald, 2005); and student development (Tinberg & Weisberger, 1998), little literature exists to help college personnel on two-year campuses understand the unique needs of dislocated

workers. This paper synthesizes the research on dislocated workers, first addressing their challenges to employment and academic success, followed by the challenges faced by the two-year institutions who are trying to serve them, then addressing future implications for research and leadership.

Demographics

The U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2007) reported seven million people were unemployed in January 2007, resulting in an unemployment rate of 4.6%. Although job growth continued in several service-providing industries in January 2007 and construction employment rose, the number of manufacturing jobs continued to decline. The unemployment rate for Hispanics (5.7%) continued to rise while the rates for other major worker groups remained unchanged, i.e., adult men at 4.1%, adult women at 4.0%, teenagers at 15.0%, whites at 4.1%, and blacks at 8.0% (BLS, 2007a). Over 48% of those who were unemployed in January 2007 were classified as job losers and those who had completed temporary jobs, with 14.4% of those on temporary layoff and 34.1% not on temporary layoff. Over 31% were reentrants and 8.7% were first time unemployed (BLS, 2007c). Of those age 25 and older, the unemployment rate for those who lacked a high school diploma was 6.8%, compared to the 4.2% rate for those with a high school diploma and no college, a 4.2% rate for high school graduates with no college, 3.7% for those with some college or an associate's degree, and a 2.1% unemployment for those with a bachelor's degree or higher (BLS, 2007b). These numbers are expected to increase as jobs continue to be outsourced to other countries and as developments in technology affect those jobs that remain stateside (Saunders, 2005).

Where Have the Jobs Gone?

While American schools are being criticized for the erosion of education (Couturier & Scurry, 2005), the quality of education abroad is increasing rapidly. In 2002, more than 9 million students worldwide earned their first university degree, with more than 3 million of these in science and engineering fields. Asian universities accounted for almost 1.5 million of the world's science and engineering degrees, more than 600,000 of them in engineering. Students across Europe (including Eastern Europe and Russia) earned about 930,000, and students in North and Central America earned almost 600,000 Science and Engineering degrees in 2002 (National Science Board, 2006). As the number of United States-born science and engineering graduates decreases, the global competition for technical expertise is increasing. Foreign-born engineers and scientists who were educated in the United States are frequently recruited by their home countries and promised competitive salaries, benefits packages, stock options, and housing. As these graduates leave the United States, the talent pool in the United States dwindles, decreasing the ability for the remaining labor pool to compete with those in other countries (Koehler & Hagigh, 2004).

Labor abroad is often more affordable than it is in the United States. In fact, a surplus of labor coupled with the low cost of living in underdeveloped nations allows companies to reduce labor costs by as much as 90% (Koehler & Hagigh, 2004). In some cases federal legislation such as the North American Free Trade Agreement allowed companies to relocate jobs and/or trade to Mexico and Canada. This outsourcing of jobs permits companies to move the low-skill-intensive components of their production to other countries with lower wages while keeping the high-skill-intensive components local. When the low-skill activities are complete, the company imports the goods back

from the low-wage countries to be completed and sold. This practice frequently squeezes out less competitive firms, those which are often low tech and which employ a high number of low-skilled workers as the imported goods become cheaper than locally produced goods (Anderton & Brenton, 1998). America has lost 2.7 million manufacturing jobs since 2000 (Koehler & Hagigh, 2004), and labor experts predicted a loss of 406,000 jobs to other countries during 2004 alone (Bronfenbrenner & Luce, 2004). In fact, manufacturing and production jobs are expected to continue to decline through 2014, with construction and trade jobs growing more slowly than average (Saunders, 2005). Add to this the prediction that workforce growth will continue to slow down dramatically. Between 2000 and 2010, the annual growth rate is predicted to be 1.1%, equal to that in the 1990's. This rate is expected to slow even more to .3% between 2020 and 2030 (Karoly & Panis, 2004).

Challenges Facing Dislocated Workers

Displaced/dislocated workers face a variety of challenges to finding new employment. While the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act of 1989 provides guidelines regarding provision of rapid response services for dislocated employees, this act does not apply to all companies or even to all employees at the same company (DOL, 2003). Small-scale layoffs may even pass unnoticed in some communities (DOL, 1994). Thus, dislocated workers may be unaware that they need additional education and training to secure new employment or that such training and education is even available. They may also be unaware that the community college can assist them.

Other challenges to reemployment frequently include transportation assistance (Schweke, 2004); child care support and elder care support (DOL, 1994; Schweke, 2004); evictions, foreclosures, and other financial hardships (Broman, Hamilton, Hoffman, & Mavaddat, 1995; Schweke, 2004); and marital instability (Ahituv & Lerman, 2004). Bradley (1990) contends that the loss of a job parallels the loss of a loved one, with dislocated workers experiencing grieving and moving through the stages of grief put forth by Kubler-Ross (1975). These five stages of grief begin with denial, and then move through anger, bargaining, depression, then on to acceptance. While dislocated workers often move through all five stages, some workers become stuck in one of the first four stages, finding it difficult to move toward acceptance of their job loss. Those displaced workers stuck in an earlier stage often choose not to job search or may choose ineffective job search methods or coping skills that inadvertently reinforce their maladaptive beliefs. Long term joblessness has been linked to depression (Broman et al., 1995); an inability to concentrate (DOL, 2004); anxiety, especially those who experience repeated episodes of unemployment (Broman et al., 1995); and other indicators of stress (i.e., irritability, domestic violence, and behavioral symptoms such as increased eating, smoking or drinking) (DOL, 1994). Loss of self esteem and low self-confidence often affect dislocated workers (Wanberg et al., 1999; DOL, 1994). Long term joblessness may even result in homelessness and increased medical problems due to a lack of health care (Broman et al., 1995).

Education and Training Needs of Dislocated Workers

Wages are determined by two types of skills: physical skills and cognitive skills. Low-wage, low-skilled jobs require workers with physical skills while high-wage, high-

skilled jobs require workers with cognitive skills (Juhn, 1999). In fact, workers with less education have greater fluctuations in earning and more job turnover (Fitzgerald, 1999). As the number of low-skilled jobs decreases due to outsourcing, the need for more highly skilled employees increases. When higher-wage jobs replace those jobs lost to outsourcing, workers need to improve their education and skills to be competitive (Bardhan & Kroll, 2003). Education and training often reduce the uncertainty connected to job loss (Aaronson & Housinger, 1999).

Long-term unemployment has a more severe impact on less educated workers as opposed to more educated workers, and on less educated African Americans in particular. When severance packages include provisions for basic education courses to improve reading, writing, mathematics, and computer literacy, displaced workers who lack a GED and made lower salaries are more likely to enroll in such courses as compared to workers who do not receive a severance package or who are more educated (Broman et al., 1995). Even so, few dislocated workers who are high school dropouts take advantage of the general education courses, opting for training instead. Enrollment in education and training classes sometimes has little effect on the starting pay of new jobs, although enrollment often increases the chances of workers changing their lines of work, moving into jobs with better long-term possibilities (Kodrzycki, 1997). Some research suggests that the impact of education may reflect the worker's ability to look toward the future rather than the past (Broman et al., 1995). Programs such as STRIVE report 80% job placement rates for those who have completed their training and education programs (Schweke, 2004). Since dislocated workers' existing occupational skills are frequently in

obsolete fields or in areas not in demand in the current economy, additional training and education are often necessary for reemployment (DOL, 1994).

While job displacement can occur in any field or industry, and with workers of any educational background, dislocated workers from manufacturing plants or other work sites with site-specific cultures may find themselves missing certain pre-vocational skills necessary for new employment positions. Referred to as workplace behavior skills (Worksystems, 2004) or soft skills (Schweke, 2004), these skills include workplace dress and behaviors, work attitudes, communication skills, working as a team, motivation, and the ability to adapt to varied work cultures (DOL, 1994, Jenkins, 2003). Dislocated workers who lack these skills often face an additional hurdle to reemployment when seeking jobs outside their field or those jobs that differ from their previous positions.

Barriers to employment success may well impact a dislocated worker's education and training success at the two-year college. The National Center for Education Statistics [NCES] identified seven risk factors affecting student persistence and degree attainment: (1) delayed postsecondary enrollment; (2) students who were high school dropouts or GED recipients; (3) students enrolled part-time; (4) financially independent students; (5) students with dependents other than a spouse; (6) single-parent students; and those (7) employed full-time (2003). Dislocated workers entering a two year college for education or training may possess many of these risk factors. Fewer risk factors, however, are associated with higher rates of completion (NCES, 2003). Still other literature has suggested that substance abuse (Bergen-Cico, 2000); stress (Dusselier, Dunn, Wang, Shelley, & Whalen, 2005); depression (Veeser & Blakemore, 2006); and self esteem (Woo & Frank, 2000) frequently impact academic success. Dislocated workers attending

community colleges may, therefore, possess a higher number of risk factors than other two-year college students.

Workforce of the Future

According to *The 21st Century at Work: Forces Shaping the Future Workforce and Workplace in the United States*, the workforce is expected to continue to increase in size although at a much slower rate. The elderly, women with children, persons with disabilities, immigrants, and other groups with relatively low current workforce participation are expected to enter the workforce in higher numbers. Technological change is expected to continue to increase, requiring more advanced technology skills in a more highly skilled workforce, in particular the ability to adapt to changing technologies and shifting product demand. Other technology-related skills include highly skilled workers who can develop new technologies and bring them to market. The continued move from a product-based economy to a knowledge-based economy reinforces the need for well-educated workers. This report also cites the increased need for higher-level cognitive skills in abstract reasoning, problem-solving, communication, and collaboration, with education and training becoming "a continuous process throughout the life course involving training and retraining that continues well past initial entry into the labor market" (p. xiv). Other predictions include a shift away from more permanent lifetime jobs toward less permanent, almost non-standard types of jobs such as self-employment and telecommuting (Karoly & Panis, 2004).

Goods and services are also expected to shift as the population ages. Younger households spend money differently from older households. While the amount of money spent on health-related expenses and gifts increase with age, younger households tend to

spend their money on childcare, insurance, and transportation. Older households, then, tend to employ more healthcare workers and increase the demand for healthcare-related products and services as opposed to younger households which tend to employ more daycare workers and increase the demand for cleaning services, gardening, and home improvement services (Karoly & Panis, 2004).

Despite the steady increase in educational attainment in the U. S., achievement scores of U. S. students are only average when compared to those of students in other developed countries. Adults in the United States also rank in the middle as compared to adults in other developed countries on a test of skills measures of workplace literacy, the *International Adult Literacy Survey* (IALS). This assessment measures skills in three areas associated with white-collar jobs: prose literacy (the ability to process narrative text); document literacy (the ability to process forms, charts, tables, schedules, and maps); and quantitative literacy (the ability to perform practical arithmetic operations). The Unites States also tends to have a wider spread in the distribution of such skills, which means that many very low-skilled and many very high-skilled individuals work in the United States (Karoly & Panis, 2004).

Enrollment in a two-or four-year colleges has been linked to an increase in earnings (Kane & Rouse, 1993, 1995; Leigh & Gill, 1997). These earlier findings suggest that attending a community college raises one's earnings in the workplace, whether or not the individual earns a degree. In fact, between 1973 and 2001, high school dropouts and workers with a high school diploma saw a decline in wages as opposed to those workers with a college or an advanced degree. According to Kanoly and Panis (2004), a college education will be critical in the 21st century, "but the most successful workers will be

those who can retrain in midlife in response to technological change and shifting demand" (p. 222).

Dislocated Workers in the Two-Year Institution

Today's two-year institutions often partner with the U. S. Department of Labor's Workforce Investment (WIA) Act one-stop system to serve the dislocated worker population (Hawley, Sommers, & Melendez, 2005; Jacobs, 2001; Walters, 2003). What does this mean for two-year colleges? Since local dislocated workers may be unaware of the services offered by the college, then two-year institutions need to be aware of the local economy and its effect on all businesses, whether large or small. This awareness allows the institution to step in as soon as possible to offer services for dislocated workers. These services can include assessment, counseling/advising, mentoring, referrals for agency assistance, life skills, training, and education. Since these dislocated workers present so many risk factors, providing a series of additional supports may help them better adjust to their new role as student.

The proposed Dislocated Workers Service Model for the Community College (see Figure 1) is derived from a Displaced/Dislocated Workers Career Development Program Model designed for use in career centers (Duggan & Jurgens, 2007). The community college-based model concentrates on the services available through local Workforce Development Centers and through the community college. This model helps dislocated workers identify their personal and career goals while addressing their needs and barriers to reaching those goals. Because of the varied educational, skill, and employment backgrounds of displaced workers, community college staff will need to consider each worker individually in developing a series of interventions to help them achieve their

goals. This model focuses on the services necessary to assist dislocated workers in attaining their goal.

Dislocated workers bring with them their *Educational Background* and their *Employment and Training Background* when they enter the community college. Once dislocated workers are on campus (or in training), these barriers may combine with other barriers newly encountered through their displacement. Community college staff, therefore, will help the dislocated workers explore their values, barriers, and goals to determine which interventions are the most appropriate. Dislocated workers may need to cycle move through the interventions and return to exploration several times, overcoming their previously identified barriers to attain their desired goal. The goal itself may change, as workers move through the interventions then return to exploration. The aim here is for the dislocated worker to set a goal, whether that goal is education-based, training-based, or job-based, and overcome the barriers related to attaining that goal.

[Insert Figure 1 here]

Exploration Phase

Intake interview. The Exploration Phase begins when dislocated workers first come to campus. Staff complete an intake interview with each dislocated worker to identify each person's needs and determine the best course of action for the worker at this time. During this interview the workers and staff begin to explore the worker's family, work, and education values. Identifying these values helps staff determine appropriate interventions as well as training and education that truly meets the needs of the worker, increasing worker satisfaction with the training as well as the new job. The dislocated worker and staff also explore current survival strategies to determine their suitability.

Other issues to explore include the amount of unemployment insurance and benefits along with severance pay and the length of time remaining before those subsidies expire to assist the worker in planning for the future.

Provide assessment. During the Exploration Phase, staff also determines the educational and training needs of the worker. The level of formal education a worker has completed may not be an accurate indicator of whether or not basic skills remediation is required. Workers with a college degree may still need to refresh skills they may not have used recently in order to succeed in training. However, workers who lack a basic education may have picked up the basic skills through jobs or other experiences. Staff needs to carefully explore the worker's need for further education and training without making assumptions regarding the worker's needs. Some workers may not be ready to acknowledge the need for additional training and education until they have completed a lengthy job search and have been unable to obtain reemployment at a similar wage level. Workers with the least education and the fewest transferable skills are often hesitant to enter classroom-based training because of previous lack of success (DOL, 1994). Other workers may not immediately see the need to improve their soft skills. Community college staff, therefore, can greatly assist dislocated workers by assessing their actual educational and training needs.

While community colleges often require placement tests for English, writing, and math coursework, other assessments are also useful. Staff can administer interest inventories to ascertain career leads for possible training and education. Consideration of *future* jobs, however, needs to be foremost in the minds of both the community college staff and the worker in deciding which training programs and skills to pursue.

Technology skills, in particular, are very important skills to develop. Staff will want to help dislocated workers avoid training that reinforces obsolete technologies and unstable jobs. Instead they need to match skills development and support with *local* economic opportunities. The modern American factory worker now needs to be able to read, work in teams, compute, solve problems, and to take on many more tasks during a typical day in order to be competitive with workers in another nation who can work for less money (Goozner, 2004). The American worker, then, needs to work 10 times smarter and know how to work in a modernized environment filled with robots and other technological advances. The community college has a crucial place in helping the displaced/dislocated worker prepare for and transition into these new jobs.

Where should staff begin with assessments? Determining dislocated workers' comfort level with technology is the first step. Depending upon the level of automation in their previous positions, displaced workers may have experience with computer-controlled machine tools, but may lack other computer skills. Abilities tests such as *WorkKeys* (ACT, 1993) help workers explore their current skills to determine how those skills might transfer to other careers. Other possible assessments include interest inventories such as *Guide for Occupational Exploration Interest Inventory* (Farr, 2002) and *Self-Directed Search* (Holland, 1990, 1994, 1996a, 1996b). If dislocated workers are not interested in pursuing additional education, completing the *Voc-Tech Quick Screener* (JIST Works, 2002b) will help them match interests and goals with a job, leading them to jobs for which they can train in a short period of time. Care must be taken to steer dislocated workers toward stable employment that will meet their financial needs.

Exploring workers' values is another component in career assessment. Workers need to choose careers that support their values, making for a better fit between worker and job by leading to increased job satisfaction due to the similarity between one's values and the values of the job. The *O*NET Career Values Inventory* (JIST Works, 2002a) can help workers identify work groups that include their values while pinpointing specific jobs for further exploration. Dislocated workers also need to complete career-development inventories to help identify which aspects of their personal growth could hinder their obtaining and keeping a job. This assessment component is particularly important for workers moving from one field to another, necessitating a different skill set. The *Barriers to Employment Success Inventory* (Liptak, 2002) helps dislocated workers identify career planning, personal, physical, psychological, job-seeking skills, along with education and training barriers that might impede their employment while helping them develop action plans to overcome those barriers.

Identify goals and barriers to achieving goals. Once workers have completed a variety of assessments, the next step is to help them identify an overarching goal. Assessment results can help guide workers to several possible careers, but workers need to make the actual decision themselves as to which career move is the best for them. In addition to education and training necessary for a new career, the assessment results can also identify life skills training needs that may serve as a barrier to success (i.e., time, stress, or money management; balancing work, education, and family commitments). Incorporating information on the workers' soft skills is crucial, particularly as employers are looking for employees who exhibit with positive work attitudes and behaviors, strong

communication skills, solid team-working skills, and the ability to adapt to varied work cultures.

Early identification of barriers to success will increase the likelihood of workers reaching their goals. Staff assists dislocated workers in identifying specific barriers to reemployment success by integrating information obtained through the intake interview, assessments, and discussions, then exploring issues of mental and physical health to provide referrals where necessary. After staff helps workers identify possible barriers to career success, they can then help the workers integrate their values into the planning process, combined with career and personal goals, thereby empowering the workers and assisting them in moving toward self-sufficiency, particularly important for those who have just been laid off. Staff and workers will work together to determine which barriers to address, thereby creating a timeline for meeting each goal. Establishing mini goals to meet along the way will help the workers see their progress, increasing their likelihood of success.

Fin funding. The WARN Act (1989) requires eligible companies to provide 60 days notice of job layoffs which gives the company and the State Rapid Response Dislocated Worker Unit time to coordinate services to provide on-site information about employment and retraining services available (DOL, 2003). Workers may also qualify for Trade Act Assistance funding for education and training. Federal financial aid packages are still another possible funding source. Workers may have received dislocated worker severance packages that provide funding for retraining and education as well (Kodrzycki, 1998), and workers whose employers were not covered under WARN (1989) or whose employers did not provide severance packages for dislocation are eligible for funding for

training and education through the federally funded One-Stop Career Centers of the Workforce Investment Act (1998).

Intervention Phase

The Dislocated Workers Service Model for the Community College has five categories of interventions: Training, Education, Support Services, Referrals, and the Re-employment Campaign. Workers and Staff need to determine whether the best approach is that of individual or group, and whether the interventions need to be provided concurrently or in phases. Some workers may need all five while others may only need one or two interventions. An individualized approach, therefore, helps workers be more successful in reaching their goals.

Training and education. Frequently community college staff meets with workers before their jobs actually end. In these instances, staff can often help workers transition directly into another job without any loss of income. Soon-to-be dislocated workers may need encouragement to continue training and education while still employed in a job that they know will soon end. Despite advance notification of an impending layoff, some long-term employees may respond with shock and denial to a job loss, refusing to believe that they have just lost their jobs. Normally this stage is short term, however, and reality sets in (Bradley, 1990). Even those workers whose jobs have already ended but are receiving unemployment insurance and severance pay often need encouragement to pursue education and training. Helping these workers prepare for stable careers that will bring them similar or higher wages is extremely important, and technology skills need to be provided whenever possible. Those workers with limited job experience may benefit from such activities as shadowing, community work experience placements to help

provide social skills and training, and entry-level forms of networking. Another part of education and training involves life skills. Classes, seminars, and/or support groups dealing with topics such as time, stress, or money management; balancing work, education, and family commitments can be provided by community college staff. Allowing workers to select and attend the classes/seminars/groups they feel fit their goals will increase their self-sufficiency (Duncan, Dunnagan, Christopher, & Paul, 2003).

Support services. Dislocated workers may need support services in addition to training and education. These interventions could include personal and family counseling and might contain role-plays, support groups, and mentoring. Workers may be referred elsewhere for these services or kept in house. Personal/family counseling would address such issues as depression, anxiety, and substance abuse.

Referrals. Dislocated workers need a case manager to oversee their services and complete referrals for training, education, social services, housing, and possible health needs, and community college staff have access to the resources necessary to provide this coordination of services. Once all other funding has been exhausted, the local One-Stop Center will be able to refer the worker for training (DOL, 2000; GAO, 2003). Other services requiring referrals include medical coverage and mental health counseling. Life skills and soft skills training can be provided by a variety of non-community college agencies, but keeping workers at the community college for as much training and education as possible will make case management easier and services less confusing for workers.

Re-employment campaign. Workers' needs and goals determine their re-employment campaign. While some workers may need to begin their re-employment

campaign immediately, others may have time to complete education and training activities before beginning their campaign. When workers are unable to begin training and education immediately due to financial reasons, they may need to complete several activities at once (i.e., attending training while working part-time in a less-than-desirable job), emphasizing the need for intensive case management by community college staff.

The re-employment campaign includes several components: job search, job search correspondence, resume writing, and interviewing strategies. Motivating dislocated workers to begin their job search while still employed and while they are receiving benefits may be difficult, especially with the time constraints of working fulltime when trying to search for employment. Research suggests, however, that job searching while employed actually reduces the length of time that one is unemployed, sometimes, eliminating it all together (Burgess & Low, 1992, 1998). Community college staff, then, want to encourage workers to begin their job searches as soon as possible. Such assistance may include helping workers develop an informal network of job contacts with people already in the field in which the client plans to work, extremely important for dislocated workers changing fields (Henley, 2000). Staff also needs to consider the geographical area of the job search. Workers with higher skills tend to job search more broadly geographically while lower-skilled workers tend to job search closer to home (Immergluck, 1998; Simpson, 1987). Workers who are unable to relocate will necessarily narrow their job search.

Implications for Two-Year Institutions

Our national economy continues to be shaped by economic globalization at an ever increasing pace (Karoly & Panis, 2004). As this phenomenon continues, our

workforce will continue to be displaced and replaced at an ever faster pace. Two things that we know already: 1. worker training and retraining is critical, and 2. community colleges are the training provider of choice for several reasons.

By their very mission, community colleges have for several decades been the provider of workforce training and retraining at the local level. While experts at academic assessment, remediation, and career-specific training, they are just beginning to understand their role in working with dislocated workers and the many barriers they face. The first step is a comprehensive understanding of dislocated workers and effective communication about programs and services.

Initiated by federal legislation, each state has established Rapid Response programs to anticipate and assist dislocated workers (U. S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration, 2006). Community colleges often have a role in developing intervention activities that provide immediate outplacement services to dislocated workers. By partnering with local workforce development centers, community colleges are able to provide skill-enhancement and a variety of short- and long-term job-specific training programs. As mentioned previously, the challenge is many dislocated or soon-to-be dislocated workers are unaware of these services. This challenge is compounded by the fact that community colleges are often unaware of and ineffective in dealing with the many barriers faced by dislocated workers.

Comprehensive training for community college staff is necessary to respond effectively to dislocated worker needs. Training needs to include counselors, faculty, and administrators throughout the institution to help them gain an understanding of dislocated workers as well as the community services available to them. By implementing a services

model such as the one presented here, service providers at all levels will have a comprehensive approach to providing an effective response. To be fully effective, this training needs to be extended to include local workforce center employees and other local service providers to ensure comprehensive services for all dislocated workers. Involving all service providers in the training, making sure that each service provider understands the services the other can provide, will result in a more integrated approach to assisting dislocated workers in meeting their goals.

Too often, dislocated workers are not aware of the full breadth of services available to them. The same is true of many community college representatives who are charged with designing and implementing response programs. Clearly, the community college will only be able to effectively serve dislocated workers by partnering with other local entities, including both the public and private sectors, to share expertise and resources, as well as ensure effective communication about programs and services.

The Dislocated Workers Service Model for the Community College presented here has five categories of interventions. While a percentage of dislocated workers may or may not need all five, do dislocated workers require additional interventions not listed here? This question will only be answered as individualized plans are designed, implemented, and reviewed. Additionally, the effectiveness of service provider training programs needs to be analyzed and programs refined based on a variety of factors including demographics; individual and community, as well as training program participants, and the training itself. In addition to these practical steps, further research is necessary across the broad spectrum of workforce development programming.

As previous research suggests, too often workers are not aware of services nor are they able to access comprehensive training and retraining opportunities. The strategies suggested here are intended to offer a comprehensive approach, but their effectiveness in reaching a broad spectrum of dislocated workers is based on comprehensive training, effective implementation, and ongoing feedback to service providers to continue to refine their practices and procedures in the community college and beyond.

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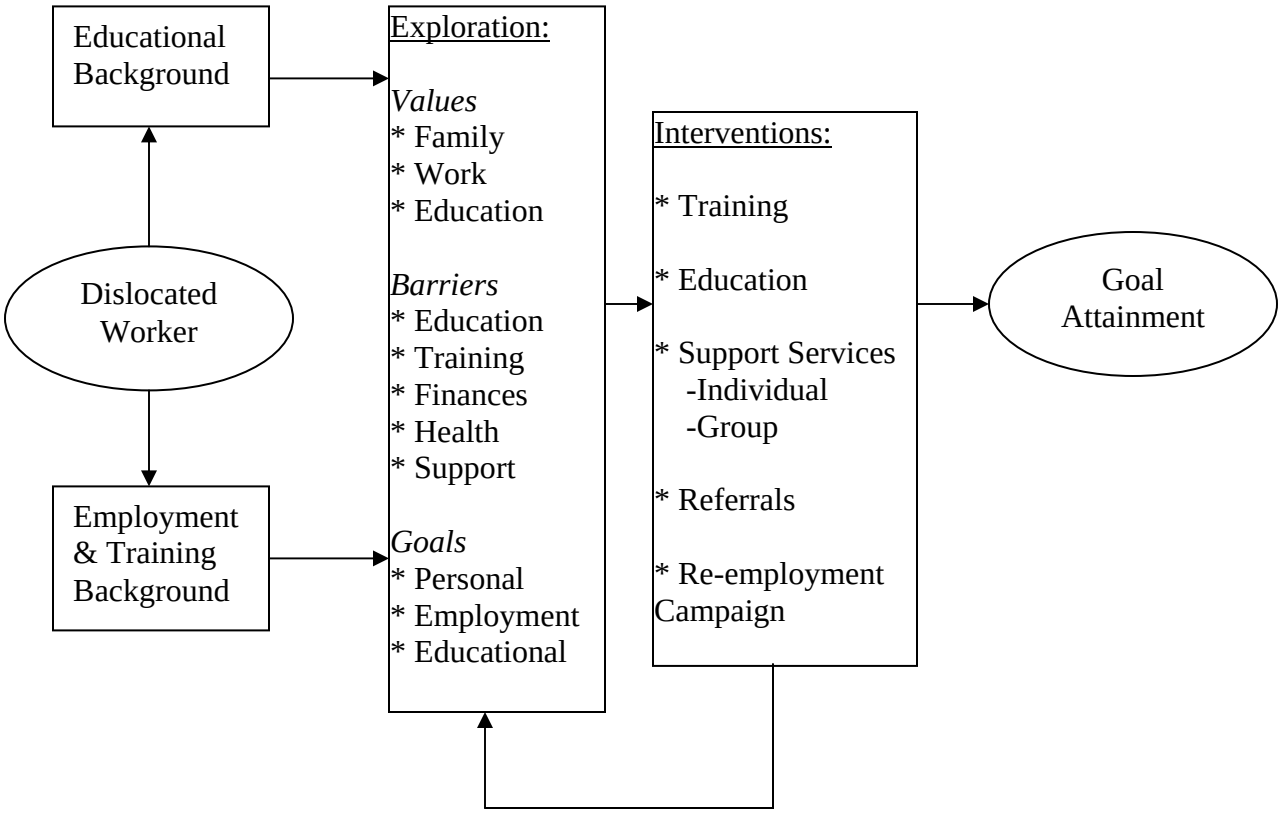

Figure 1. The Dislocated Workers Service Model for the Community College