

VERA INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE JOB PATH PROGRAM

FIRST QUARTERLY REPORT

(October - December, 1978)

TO THE FDNA McCONNELL CLARK FOUNDATION

Vera Institute of Justice 30 East 39th Street New York, New York 10016

Introduction

Job Path is the Vera Institute of Justice's program of supported work for mentally retarded people. The following first quarterly report (October - December, 1978) reviews the project's evolution, goals, method of operation, progress to date, and concludes with a statement of objectives for the next quarter.

Eackground

Supported work programs are designed to accustom persons, traditionally regarded as unemployable, with the realities of the work place. Five "structural supports" or rehabilitative elements are integral to the concept of supported work: small work crews offering peer support to program participants; graduated stress or incremental demards for productivity; sympathetic yet firm supervision aimed at both productivity and rehabilitation: regular evaluation and feedback to the participants; and real job assignments.

The Vera Institute has had ten years of experience operating supported work programs for populations including ex-alcoholics and former drug addicts, which culminated in the establishment of the Wildcat Service Corporation in 1972. The success of Wildcat led the Ford Foundation and five federal agencies to establish the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation to oversee a three year experiment of supported work located in 15 sities across the nation. The results of these programs indicated that the concept of supported work might also be utilized to assist mentally retarded persons to enter the labor market.

Traditionally, employment opportunities for mentally retarded individuals have been limited to either low status, low paying jobs (often of short duration), or to work within the confines of sheltered workshops. Since the Willowbrook Consent Decree of 1975, calling for the deinstitutionalization of mentally retarded persons, the New York State Department of Mental Hygiene/Metropolitan Placement Unit (MFU) - recently renamed the Office of Mental

Retardation and Developmental Disabilities - has coordinated the effort to provide mentally retarded individuals with an opportunity for growth and development in "the least restrictive and most normal living conditions possible". Recognizing a need for an expansion of employment opportunities for this population, MPU asked the Vera Institute to test the feasibility of extending the concept of supported work to mentally retarded persons.

In February, 1978, the Vera Institute undertook an eight week pilot project which employed ten mentally retarded people with I.Q.'s ranging from 50 - 82. Six trainees were assigned to the Metropolitan Museum of Art and four were assigned to Chemical Eank. One counselor was available full-time at each location to provide support and assistance to the trainees, and to act as a liaison with the work site's supervisory staff.

The results of the pilot were impressive and indicated the appropriateness of supported work for this population. During the eight weeks, each of the participants displayed signs of personal growth, characterized by an enhanced self-concept. At the end of the training period, five of the participants were offered permanent jobs at their sites. The four who accepted positions are still working and have received pay increases. The fifth trainee chose to take an cutside job obtained by his mother. When the funds for his position were later cut, Job Path was able to place him as a mailroom clerk with the Singer Company. The other five supported workers from the pilot group were enrolled for continued training in the Job Path program, which began as a year-round project in August, 1978.

Program Goals

The goals of Job Path are as follows:

1. To facilitate the transition of 50-100 mentally retarded individuals yearly from sheltered environments to competitive jobs, thus enabling

- increased numbers of mentally handicapped persons to obtain meaningful competitive employment.
- 2. To demonstrate that mentally retarded individuals participating in the supported work program would:
 - develop the social skills and work habits that would permit them to acquire and retain competitive employment;
 - secure permanent employment in non-supported work settings, thereby increasing their capacity for selfsufficiency;
 - improve their sense of well-being by providing them with new and enlarged opportunities for personal achievement.
- 3. To introduce supported work as a method and technique for expanding the scope of vocational rehabilitation services for the mentally retarded.
- 4. To encourage other areas of the country to apply supported work techniques as transitional employment mechanisms for the mentally retarded.

To measure the effectiveness of the program, a year long comprehensive evaluation component is being established which has four major dimensions: 1) measurement of in-program work performance of trainees;

- 2) measurement of post-employment outcomes comparing supported workers with a randomly selected control group of similar mentally retarded individuals:
- 3) measurement of affective outcomes of program participation and 4) preparation of a detailed description of the program's job development efforts and its worker preparation activities.

Method of Operation

The staff consists of a project director, a job developer, a program coordinator, five ccunselors - including one senior counselor who supervises

the other four - a researcher, and an administrative assistant. The project director, the program coordinator, and the senior counselor participated in the pilot project. In July, the administrative assistant joined the staff. The job developer and the researcher began work in August, and the four counselors were phased in gradually from September to November.

Job Path has 50 training slots, 25 in the public sector and 25 in the private sector. As supported workers are placed into permanent employment, the slots will be refilled with new trainees.

The supported workers are recruited from three major sources: sheltered workshops, the New York State Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, and the New York City Board of Special Education. Personnel from these agencies submit Job Path referral forms when they have mentally retarded individuals who seem appropriate for the program. This provides Job Path with a pool of candidates from which to draw. In addition, whenever a special job opening arises which cannot be filled from the existing pool, Job Path solicits applications from the referral sources. This also serves to remind the referral agencies to refer clients to Job Path.

After the initial screening by the referral sources, which includes vocational testing, evaluations, and staff recommendations, Job Path personnel interview prospective program participants. The Job Path screening serves a dual purpose: to assess the applicant's attitude toward working, and his or her ability to participate in supported work; and it enables the staff to affect a close match between the prospective employee's abilities and interests and an available training position.

Thus far, most of the referrals to the program have been appropriate. This is largely due to the involvement of many of the referral agencies in the

planning of the program. Prior to the commencement of the pilot, the project director and the senior counselor visited sheltered workshops and other agencies working with mentally retarded adults in New York City to inform them of the program and to gather information about the needs of this population. The Job Path staff has continued to maintain a close working relationship with referral agency personnel through telephone communcations and visits to the workshops. Referral agency staff are also invited to see Job Path work sites. Thus, the referral sources have an excellent understanding of the program and are also kept informed of the progress and problems of their former clients.

Job Path initially assigns trainees to work sites where all the supports, including peer support and daily visits by a counselor, are present. These sites are often governmental or non-profit agencies located in office buildings such as Two World Trade Center. Ten person crews work singly or in pairs in different agencies or departments. A full-time counselor visits each trainee daily to monitor the trainee's attendance, punctuality and productivity, to guide and assist the individual in his or her personal growth, and to act as a liaison with the site's supervisory staff. One hour of group counseling, plus one hour of individual counseling each week, are integral parts of the trainee's supported work experience.

The fully supported work experience often leads to another less supported work experience in the profit sector. For most of the participants this second work site, where the counselor's support as well as peer support are diminished, represents the final step towards competitive employment. After a few months, trainees are either hired by this training site or placed by the job developer in an unsubsidized position in a similar organization.

Program Activity

The program is progressing well, although there have been several unanticipated occurrences which have caused the staff to alter plans or modes of operations.

It was anticipated that the year round program would begin in July, but a combination of events delayed the intake of the first supported worker until August, and the first full group of 10 until September 5th. Before Job Path could begin, four major program components had to be coordinated simultaneously: the funding, the work sites, the supported workers for those work sites, and the hiring of the program staff.

Although verbal approval for the CETA application (to fund the salaries of 25 supported workers in the public sector plus several staff lines) had been received by March, the actual contract did not arrive at Vera until August.

Job Path was advised by CETA personnel not to hire anyone, pending receipt of the contract.

Work site development had been an ongoing responsibility of the project director since the completion of the pilot project in early April. However, without the funds to pay for the salaries of either the public or private sector slots, Job Path could not negotiate a firm starting date with any of the prospective work sites.

Because supported workers are carefully matched to job tasks at a work site, a number of cardidates were interviewed for the types of positions expected to begin first. As it turned out, these work sites did not begin first for two reasons: several sites could not wait to employ Job Path trainees and made other arrangements; and at other sites, the summer vacations of key personnel postponed the commencement of work projects. New referrals then had to be interviewed and matched to the work sites which were ready to start.

The delay was naturally disappointing to the members of the Job Path staff, who were eagerly anticipating working in the full-scale, year-round program. However, this short set-back was quickly forgotten as one job site after another was phased in after Labor Day.

On September 5th, 1978, ten trainees began working in public sector training positions in Manhattan's City Hall area. Since this date, 42 participants have been phased into the program. Of these, only two have been terminated for negative reasons. One was released for inappropriate behavior and one left of his own accord. A list of Job Path work sites, the type of work performed at each, and background information on the trainees (names cmitted) can be found in Attachment A.

In November, the first Job Path trainee, whose transitional phase was funded by the Clark Foundation, was placed in permanent employment. This participant took part in the pilot project, and after one month as a Job Path messenger trainee in a small printing company, was hired. (The employer is so delighted with this messenger's performance that he gave him a special cash bonus for Christmas).

Ten other program participants are scheduled to be hired by their sites during January and February, 1979. Surprisingly, nine of these ten site hires will be in the public sector. Since many governmental and non-profit agencies are facing financial problems, it was anticipated that for most of the trainees, the public sector work experience would serve as the first phase of supported work. The next step would be to work in a less-supported environment in the private sector. However, a number of public sector sites are making arrangements to hire their trainees rather than lose them.

In one instance, plans were initiated to transfer two supported workers from their municipal work site, where it seemed there was little chance for permanent employment. As soon as the supervisor was informed of plans to move the two, he succeeded in finding the lines to put both trainees on the payroll as office clerks earning \$7,000 per year. (January 16th is the hire date).

Another program participant worked as a clerk-typist in a state agency, where the supervisor initially maintained that there was no chance for permanent employment. After the supported worker had worked for three months, her counselor recognized that she was ready for permanent employment. The counselor discussed the possibility of a transfer with the site supervisor, prompting the supervisor to obtain budgetary approval to employ the trainee.

The flexibility to transfer trainees from one site to another gives Job Path real leverage in negotiating with work site supervisors. Thus far, this is proving to be especially effective in the public sector. However, the higher than anticipated rate of public site hires has created two operational problems: one concerning work site development and one in connection with the rate of enrollment of trainees.

The job developer must continually develop new sites to replace those that have closed. Once an office permanently employs Job Path participants, it usually does not have enough work to accommodate additional trainees. Now that Job Path knows to expect a higher percentage of public site hires, the job developer will concentrate on developing a larger pool of these work sites.

When plans to transfer a specific trainee from a public sector site to the private sector are changed, the program coordinator has to recruit again for the private sector positions. This is time consuming and delays the filling of the slot, particularly when the coordinator has to interview outside cardidates. To help alleviate this problem, Job Path has adopted a group intake procedure.

The use of a group intake procedure should also enlarge the pool of available applicants. A large referral pool is desirable because applicants selected for particular positions are sometimes unavailable by the time they are chosen. (The cardidates may have moved away, become ill, etc.) In some cases, applicants do not accept positions offered to them. One individual, for example, was dissuaded from taking a messenger job by his wife and mother-in-law, who convinced him that the salary was too low.

Job Path had hoped that each employer could accommodate large groups of trainees (from 5 - 10), thus minimizing the amount of traveling that counselors would be required to do. Since this is frequently not possible, Job Path is assigning a counselor to a group of four to five work sites located in a particular area such as City Hall or Wall Street. The counselor thus travels back and forth between work sites as needed. This arrangement is working out well, however, since the trainees do not need the constant support of the counselors. In addition, the continual presence of an on site counselor sometimes poses problems for the sites in terms of space, and a fear (real or imagined) that the counselor may interfere in the normal work day routine.

The above problems have made the staff aware of the need for flexibility in the program operation.

The positive outcomes of the pilot project continues to be evident in the full scale program. A majority of the Job Path trainees exhibit signs of emotional and psychological growth as a result of participation in the program. Many are beginning to dress better, to act—out less, and to socialize more easily. "I love this job" or "I love working" are statements frequently made by Job Path trainees.

Employers are also pleased with the program since it offers them a convenient opportunity to try cut mentally handicapped workers at minimal costs. The trainees usually prove to be extremely conscientious and productive. In addition, the availability of the counselor is reassuring to the work site personnel who have questions regarding the supervision of mentally retarded workers.

One of the original program objectives is to break down stereotypes on the part of prospective employers, and this is happening. Another unforeseen result is an increasing awareness on the part of mental retardation agency personnel as to the capabilities of their "clients". On several occasions a vocational rehabilitation counselor or an agency director has said to someone on the Job Path staff that he/she never dreamed a particular individual was capable of doing a certain task, or of holding a job.

Marketing & Job Development Activity

Since June, approximately 300 companies have been contacted regarding Job Path. Many employers have responded positively to the program although not all are able to utilize the services of Job Path trainees. Some employers cannot or do not wish to be involved in the training aspect of the program, but are using Job Path as a referral source from which to recruit job applicants. This was the situation with the Singer Company which, as mentioned previously, hired a former program participant to fill an opening for a mailroom clerk.

Initially, the job developer sent a marketing letter to employers in order to introduce them to the program, but whenever she followed up with a personal visit, the employer asked to see a brochure. Therefore, during the first month of operation, Job Path had a brochure designed. This

brochure (Attachment B) has since become an irdispensable marketing tool.

In October, Job Path held a seminar for prospective employers at the Ford Foundation. (A second seminar is being planned for February, 1979). The Vice President of Personnel of Chemical Bank and the Manager of the Mail Order Department of the Metropolitan Museum of Art made presentations describing their companies' involvement with Job Path. Their enthusiasm helped convince Irving Trust Company, United Parcel Service, WINS Radio, and J. C. Penney Co., among others, that they too should employ Job Path trainees.

In December, Job Path was able to obtain a public service announcement on WINS Radio. This spot is aired several times a week.

As a result of these marketing techniques, word is spreading.

Employers in the private sector have begun to contact Job Path to request information about the program. (Current and prospective private sector employers are listed in Attachment C).

Job Path training positions currently include the following: assemblers, cafeteria workers, file clerks, general office clerks, mailroom clerks, messengers, microfilm clerks, packers, porters, pullers, reprographic clerks, stock clerks and truck loaders. Future openings are expected to develop for: safe deposit attendants, pages, and dietary aides. At present Job Path does not have enough manufacturing positions to meet the needs of blue collar cardidates; therefore work site development will be stepped-up in this area.

Objectives for the Next Quarter

In the next quarter, Job Path's primary objectives will be to maintain a constant enrollment of 50 trainees (25 public sector and 25 private sector), while placing many of these mentally retarded workers as possible in permanent positions. In addition, Job Path will attempt to develop more work sites involving manufacturing and assembly work, since many mentally retarded people are proficient in this area.

Vera Institute *	N.Y.S. Department of Employment	Ep:loure Cheese Shop *	Metropolitan Museum * of Art - Mail Order	N.Y.S. Department of Insurance	N.Y.C. Department of Corrections	A&M Leatherlines *	N.Y.S. Department of Housing & Community Renewal	N.Y.CH.R.A.	Vera Institute	WORKSITE
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38 Trainees have occupied CETA lines

Denotes private sector employer: by Clark Foundation. Salaries of these trainees is partially funded

REFERRAL AGENCIES

- A.C.R.M.D. Association for Children with Retarded Mental Development
- A.H.R.C. Association for the Help of Retarded Children
- B.B.D.S.O. Brooklyn Porough Developmental Services Office
- B.C.R.M.D. Bureau for Children with Retarded Mental Development (N.Y.C. Bt. of Education)
- B.B.C.S. Brooklyn Bureau of Community Services
- F.E.G.S. Federation Imployment & Guidance Service
- I.C.D. Institute for Crippled and Disabled
- U.C.P. United Cerebral Palsy of N.Y.
- P.I.P.P. S.I.B.D.S.O. Post Institutional Placement Program Staten Island Forough Developmental Services Office (Willowbrook)
- O.V.R. Office of Vocational Rebabilitation

S.S.C. Holland Group Home - N.Y.C. Special Services for Children

Goodwill - Goodwill Industries

Financial Information

- .S.I. Supplemental Security Income
- S.S.D.I.B. Social Security Disability Insurance Benefits

Private Sector Companies Currently Working With Job Path

Advertising Checking Bureau, Inc.
AGS Information Services, Inc.
A&M Leatherlines, Inc.
Chemical Bank
Con Edison
Epicure Cheese Shop
Four Color Lithograph Company
Hudson Printing Company
Trving Trust Company
Metropolitan Museum of Art
Metropolitan Music School
Metropolitan Opera Guild
Singer Company
United Parcel Service

Prospective Private Sector Work Sites

AMS Trims, Inc. Anglers Company Automatique, Inc. Bulova Watch Company Citibank Children's Television Workshop Dollars Savings Bank of New York Louis Frey Company, Inc. Gulf & Western Energy Product Group Marsel Mirror & Glass Products, Inc. Metropolitan Life Insurance Company Mobil Oil Company Mutual Insurance Company of New York National Cash Register Corporation J.C. Penney Company Pfizer Company Plymouth Shops, Inc. Touche Ross & Company WINS Radio Zauder Brothers, Inc.