



Job Club Benefits Job Seekers in Belleville, Illinois Area

by Vicki Niederhofer

Adam Boker was laid off from his janitorial job in April 2012. After four months of sending out resumes, Boker became frustrated and depressed. His wife had recently started a new job at the Illinois workNet Center in Belleville, Ill. and told Boker about the center's Job Club. After attending an Aug. 22 Job Club meeting, Boker left with a much better outlook and more hope.

"There were things I didn't even think about when it comes to finding a job, and it was a very positive atmosphere," Boker reported. Job Club gave Boker some ideas about networking. So later, when Boker went to his church, he networked his way into a new job.



Adam Boker used Job Club tips to land his current job.

Just a week after attending his first Job Club meeting, Boker began working at Eckert's Fun Farm as the emcee for the school tours. "I love kids and never really thought I could get paid doing something that is fun! If not for Job Club, I may not have even given this type of job any consideration. It is currently part time, but I am hoping for it to go full time."

Boker is one example of how job seekers in southern Illinois are benefitting from the shared information, resources and camaraderie of Job Club, held weekly at the Illinois workNet Center in Belleville, Ill.

Job Club, which held its first meeting on July 11, 2012, stems from a collaboration of Illinois workNet partners committed to making the job search process more efficient and effective for job seekers and making resources available to them under one roof. Partners from Southwestern Illinois College, Illinois Department of Human Services and Illinois Department of Employment Security provide information and services to job seekers during the weekly Job Club meetings.

The Job Club meetings provide opportunities to network and learn about free online classes, upcoming job fairs and hiring events. Each Job Club participant is offered a TORQ analysis. TORQ stands for Transferable Occupation Relationship Quotient. This online tool helps job seekers determine how their experience and skills can transfer to different occupations and how to close gaps in their current skill set. TORQ helps job

seekers expand their search strategy and delivers job ads directly to their e-mail.

A thorough discussion of skills occurs in Job Club each week to prepare job seekers to market themselves. Southwestern Illinois College Employment and Training Specialist Janet Field offers guidance on resume development and cover letters at the meetings. Employment Resource Specialist Mark Augustine provides Job Club participants information on disability services offered through the Illinois Department of Human Services' Division of Rehabilitation.

Sylvia Morrisette, IDES' Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program Representative, helps jobseekers focus and chart direction while offering them encouragement. Doug Coleman, a disabled veteran, benefitted from Morrisette's help. Coleman was skeptical about attending Job Club because it appeared to be a class. He attended Job Club and spent time with Morrisette, who directed him to Labor Ready, a temporary staffing company. Within days, Coleman landed a temporary job, which has since become permanent, at Reusche Enamels, Inc. He works as a press brake operator.

People coming to the Illinois workNet Center office for the first time are often not aware of how many services are available under one roof or how many agencies and partners are ready to assist them with their employment goals. Joining a job club is a good way to begin the process of finding employment. The resources available online, in the resource areas and



Janet Field, of Southwestern Illinois College, discusses resume development and cover letters at Job Club meetings.



Mark Augustine links Job Club participants to disability services offered through the Illinois Department of Human Services.

through workshops are just a part of what the Illinois workNet Centers can offer job seekers.

The combined experiences of professionals and fellow job seekers, plus the networking possibilities and the opportunities to practice new job hunting skills, build confidence and competence and can ultimately lead to a new job.

Vicki Niederhofer is IDES Labor Market Economist for the Southwest Region of Illinois. Niederhofer started Job Club at the Illinois workNet Center in Belleville, Ill.



Doug Coleman, a Job Club participant, displays his first paycheck from a temporary job that later became permanent.



Sylvia Morrisette, of IDES, helps disabled veterans with their job search. She helped Doug Coleman (on left) find a job.

Job Clubs in Illinois

At Illinois workNet Centers:

To identify a nearby job club at an Illinois workNet Center, contact local workNet Centers directly. For an online listing of centers, visit http://www.illinoisworknet.com/vos_portal/residents/en/Career_Specialist_Directory/.



At Community and Faith-based Organizations:

The U.S. Department of Labor publishes information about job clubs hosted by community and faith-based organizations. Find out more at <https://partnerships.workforce3one.org/page/resources/1001107640434907786>.

Job Hunting Resources from the Illinois Department of Employment Security



1. ReNew

This is an online career information system geared toward adults.

To access:

1. Go to www.ides.illinois.gov
2. Follow these links:
“Individuals” > “Career Information” > ReNEW.

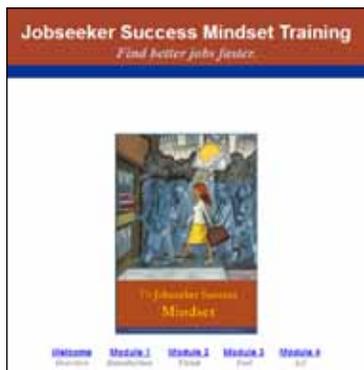


2. Jobseeker Success Mindset Training:

an online training tool resource that teaches coping skills to decrease job seeker stress and increase optimism for the job hunt.

To access:

1. Go to www.ides.illinois.gov
2. Follow these links to the Mindset Training:
“Individuals” > “Career Information” > ReNEW
3. Create a username and password



4. Click the link for “The Jobseeker Success Mindset Training.”

3. Illinois JobLink

IDES’ online help-wanted system, where businesses post job ads and individuals post resumes.

To access:

Go to www.ides.illinois.gov/page.aspx?item=34.



4. TORQ

an online tool for determining how one’s skills and work experience can transfer to different occupations.

To access:

Visit any IDES local office or Illinois workNet Center and ask to register for TORQ.



5. Focused Job Search

a Bureau of Labor Statistics article on conducting a strategic job search.

To access:

Go to www.ides.illinois.gov/page.aspx?item=3799.