

Home Free's Employment Access Services

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Evolution of E.A. Services

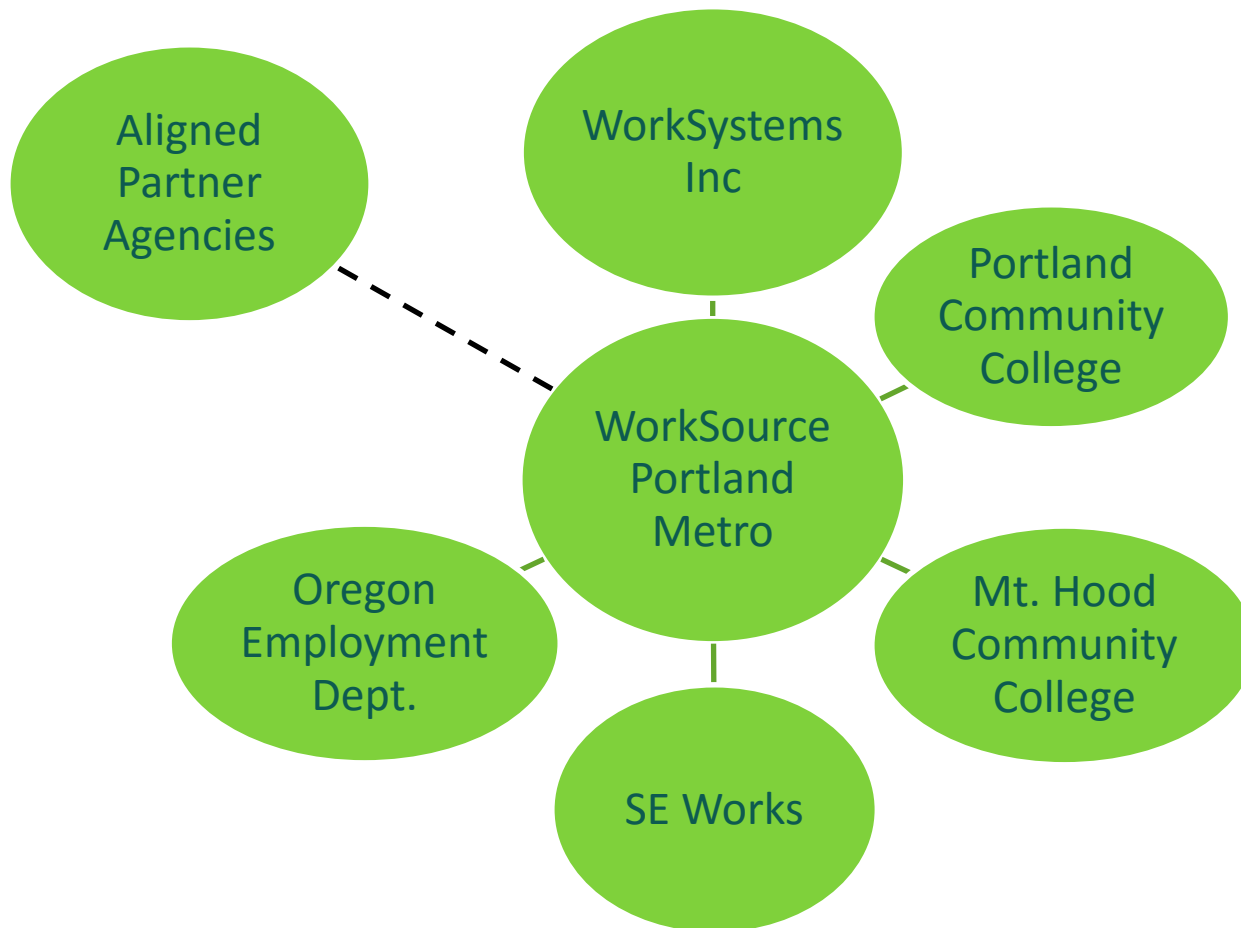
- Implemented with OVW Recovery Act dollars in 2009
- Eligibility: Survivors receiving housing services through any DV program
- When ARRA funds expired, County saw services as a priority and picked up some of the costs with general funds
- Eligibility now extends to all DV survivors seeking help with employment goals

Is This in My Job Description?

- Like housing, economic justice issues intersect with DV; our advocacy is stronger with tools/knowledge
- Job market a stark reality in our communities, but survivors must face it with or without us
- Though Home Free has a designated position, all advocates can benefit from getting “trained up” in this arena
- Financial empowerment classes are part of our E.A. program and can be a start toward income development

What is WorkSource?

Oregon's 'One-Stop' Employment Centers



Working with WorkSource

- Important: Early and ongoing conversation about safety issues and sensitivity to privacy for participants
- As an Aligned Partner, we have an assigned WS Liaison, who is key to communication and trouble-shooting
- E.A. Specialist commenced her training by participating in all the WS classes and “products”

Advantages of Aligned Partnership

- Direct avenue to introducing deeper DV expertise into WS system
- Increased capacity within Home Free to provide effective advocacy around employment-related issues and/or successful navigation of WS system
- Access to “products” not available to general public (paid internships, on-the-job training spots, training funds)

Coaching Survivors About WorkSource

- Must have valid ID and SSN to register
- Participant information may be accessible by ALL of the agencies that make up the system
- These are public centers available to anyone in the community; abuser could be accessing them, too
- Survivors may be asked triggering and difficult questions, and WS staff is not routinely trained re: DV
- It can be hard to access individual assistance at the centers, but some services available online
- May be steered into directions or jobs that don't feel suitable or may be unsafe

“The Job Lady’s” Menu

- Career/Job Field Exploration
- Resume/Cover Letter-Writing Assistance
- Job Search Assistance
- Interview Practice/Preparation
- Safety Planning Related to Work/School
- Help choosing and applying for job training program, college, or GED
- Assistance with applying for financial aid/scholarships
- Assistance with navigating employment-related systems (WS, Voc. Rehab., Unemployment Insurance, etc.)
- Tools for increasing skills (classes and one-on-one)
- Transportation assistance

What Can We Do Without New Funding?

- Build partnership with WorkForce - take full advantage of any and all training
- Increase DV awareness within WorkForce through partnership and by providing trainings to their staff
- Get list of “felony-friendly” employers that may be available through your local probation and parole office
- Investigate/visit employment-related services in your community so you can prepare survivors as to what to expect

What Can We Do Without New Funding?

- Include “career mapping” activities in your advocacy visits, with ear to DV’s impacts
- Provide coaching/emotional support as survivors take steps in job-seeking . De-brief afterwards.
- Interview Practice
- Prepare/rehearse “elevator speech” about felony convictions, drug history, how DV may have played in
- “Front end” research: Some career paths NOT realistic, and student loans only temporary income
- Normalize fears. Confidence-building HUGE aspect of “putting yourself out there” – for all of us

“The Employment Services will help set up financial independence to get away from my abuser. I learned a lot about how my financial circumstances left me vulnerable to abusive individuals who prey on people in need. I was choosing partners based on need, not compatibility. They weren’t good people....”

- Home Free E. A. Services Participant