

## Specifications Regarding Support Services

### Use this resource to:

- Build support services into a career ladder initiative.

Many types of support services play important roles in career ladders. Mentoring programs, child care services, substance abuse services, transportation, and other support services not only benefit workers; they also can benefit employers by lowering turnover and raising productivity. They improve recruitment rates by increasing the candidate pool. They increase access to education and training to raise the skills levels of job candidates and incumbent workers.

To enable a career ladder initiative to provide the appropriate support services, program developers and workforce intermediaries:

- Work with employers, recruitment and screening providers, and education and training providers to identify the specifications for needed support services;
- Identify providers of support services that have the capacity to meet those specifications and negotiate agreements between support service providers and the career ladder initiative;
- Design services to support individuals in pre-employment recruitment and screening activities in response to specifications defined by recruitment and screening;
- Design post-employment services and processes in response to employer-defined specifications and work with employers to customize those services; and
- Design services to support individuals in education and training in response to needs that providers of those services identify.

Employers can assist support service providers with loans or donations of equipment, staff time, and capital. Employers also can adopt human resources practices to align their workplaces with support services; for example, employers could train supervisors, increase the work-time access of supervisors and workers to support services, and offer mentoring programs, flex-time, and peer support.

Support services that meet specifications related to the workplace, recruitment and screening, and education and training are the most effective. Key criteria for establishing those specifications include:

- *Hours of Availability:* Are the services available when they are needed? Is contact with service providers arranged so it doesn't conflict with work, recruitment and screening, or education and training?
- *Time from Request to Receiving Service:* Are support services made available in a timely manner?
- *Effectiveness:* Do the services address the need for support services?
- *Cost*
- *Languages:* In what languages can the support service communicate?
- *Continuous Quality Improvement:* Does the support service provider have a process for working with customers to improve quality?