

**My trip to Washington DC to attend the
White House Forum on Job Clubs and Career Ministries
– September 20, 2012**

About 100 people stood at the visitors' entrance at the Eisenhower Executive Office Building of the White House. After handing over my ID to the White House security, they gave it back and let me through the gate. I learned that this was only the first level of security to get into the building. After hauling my overnight bag up 50 or so steps, I was in line again waiting to get into the building. This time another security guard asked for my ID and checked my name off in the computer and gave me a green visitors badge to wear and into the next line to wait to get through the metal detector. By the way, the security force is made up of some really big guys!

Once inside, it was up to the 4th floor of the building. As I passed office doors, signs on the doors read..."The _____ office for the President," or the "White House office of _____." Not everyone can fit into the West Wing, so here is where the rest of the offices are located. Our meeting room was the Indian Treaty Room.

About 110 people attended the morning session and as I was about to find out, from all points in the US.

Our meeting started at 9:15am with greetings from 4 people.

1. Max Finberg (a senior policy advisor in the White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships.)
2. Joshua DuBois (Special Assistant to President Obama and Executive Director of the White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships.) Joshua talked about how *Employment groups help expand members networks who attend and Job Clubs offer fellowship.*
3. Portia Wu (Senior Policy Advisor for Mobility and Opportunity at the White House Domestic Policy Council.
4. Ben Seigel (Deputy Director of the Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships at the U.S. Department of Labor)

The morning was divided up into three panels.

The first was called "Congregations as Catalyst: Job Clubs and Ministries in Service to the Community." The panel included 4 religions. Each one spoke about what they did in their organization. Here were some of the comments:

The Reverend Paul Hobson Sadler of Mt. Zion Congregational Church and Elder Yvonne Jeans of the Job Partnership of Cleveland (Ohio) spoke about their program. It consisted of 10 class sessions. They have 30+ mentors (all volunteers) to work with and follow up with each person going through the program. Their program was designed to be a transformation for the job seeker. 30% of the participants were ex-offenders. They said that 83% of the people who graduate were employed 1 year later. A question was asked how do you know, and they replied that the mentors stay in touch with the graduates to follow up with them. Their program is faith based. The first hour of the program is bible study and the second hour is a professional speaker.

Pastor Joseph Henrigies and Mallar Owens from the McLean Bible Church and Career Network Ministry in Vienna VA spoke about their program. It ran from 6:30-10:30 each week and drew about 125-175 people. The first hour was consisted of resource and breakout sessions. You would go to the room or table for help with resumes, LinkedIn, interviewing, etc. The next half hour the entire group was back together and they did success stories from the past week. Landings, interviews, etc. The next 90 minutes was for main speaker and the last hour was for networking with the speaker and other job seekers. The also had a clothing ministry to make sure job seekers had the right clothes for the interview.

Father Paul Hruby and Suzanne Freiberg from St. Julie Billiard Catholic Church's RECONNECT Ministry in Newbury Park, CA talked about their program. It consisted of a 6 part program spiritual based. Their program was only 2-3 years old.

Guy Felixbrodt from B'nai Jeshurun Synagogue of New York, NY talked about how more people get jobs from people their friends know. They were not a matchmaker. They did not have a job bank, because they did not want the employer or the employee to look bad upon the program if the job, employee or company did not work out. They wanted to give the person the tools, the network, the empowerment to find the job. They looked at their program like a stone being thrown into a pond. You never know which ripple will affect someone's life. "Throw a stone in the pond and find out!"

The second panel was called Workforce Partnerships: Local Workforce Agencies and Job Clubs. A couple of new terms I had never heard before: one-stop = the local workforce office. WFB = Work Force Board. Also all listed below are independent contractor operations that work for their state, (just like here in Texas.)

Our moderator was Jane Oats who is the Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training at the US Department of Labor where she oversees the nation's public workforce system. Her opening comments included that the Workforce Investment Act was created in 1998 and the current system has about 3000 offices in the US.

Lisa Rice and Joyce Young of the Brevard Workforce agency in Rockledge FL talked about the 8000+ people who were laid off after the shuttle program ended and how they handled the situation. They listed to the 30+ faith based groups to what was needed and provided those services. Flexible was how they described the office. They have a 147 page manual that they got to each of the groups that explained all the services offered. They talked about the 211 system in their county where anyone can call for help. They also put out a weekly email with hot jobs, career and job fairs and special events from any of the job clubs in the area.

Jeff Whitehead and Traci Nolen from the Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program Inc. in Hazard KY talked about the struggles they have serving 23 counties in hilly eastern Kentucky. They have 15 jobs clubs in the area. Their motto is "People lead people to jobs". The job clubs are the portal to the WFB. All of their counselors have the GCDF certification (Global Career Development Facilitator) for more info go to <http://www.cce-global.org/GCDF> . They are working on keeping people in the area and not having them move. Many people only have dial up in

the area. So they set up one center with 23 computers with high speed connections for people to come to so they could do the work-from-home jobs at the center.

Kirkland Murray and Paula Brand from the Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation in Millersville, MD talked about how they have 4 divisions. Two are closed to the public, as they are for federal jobs and workshops, and two are open for all in day and night programs. Yes, there office is open at night.

Jaime Pacheco-Orozco from the City of Los Angeles Workforde Development System talked about the challenges in their 18 one stops that oversee 170,000+ people a year. 27% do not have a high school diploma.

This group then had time for some questions and one was about the testing they do and what they use. CareerScope is about \$6000 per year. Another was about \$9000 per year. They also mentioned the Interest Profiler on ONET (government DOL website) which is free but very hard to use and understand. They did say they liked the My Skills, My Future, My tools on the dol.eta.gov website <http://myskillsmyfuture.org/>

Next up we heard from Labor Secretary Hilda L. Solis of the Department of Labor. She is the first Latina cabinet member. She spoke for less than 10 minutes, thanking us for helping those who need it. Government cannot do it all and needs the partnership with the Job Clubs and Career Ministries around the US.

The third panel was called Job Clubs 2.0: Innovations in Job Support Groups. Here we heard from six people about what they do in their job clubs.

Diana Miller from the Community Job Club in Stow, OH talked about how this group was started in April 2010 and consists mostly of mid to upper level people.

Steve Colella who leads the Job Club RI in West Warwick RI, talked about their unemployment rate is at 11.2% and that networking is NOT enough. They connect and reach out to employers. This group started in 2009 and the average age is 45.

Patricia Norman from the Employment Network Ministry at New Birth Missionary Baptist Church in Atlanta, GA talked about the clothing bank and how important it was for job seekers to dress for success. Their group had been around for 20 years.

Jessica Pierce from Career Connectors in Phoenix, AZ, talked about how she started this group 3 years ago. They have 6 meetings a month at three locations. Each of the 3 hour meetings (at night) consists of 1 hour of content, 1 hour for employers to talk about what they are looking for and 1 hour of networking.

Brian Ray of Crossroads Career Network in Charlotte, NC talked about his faith-based program being used in 80 locations in 14 states. (There are a few here in the DFW area.) There is an online workbook that they use. He also invited anyone who wants to come to the free Faith-based Collaboration, Resources and Services National Career Ministry Leaders Conference 10/19-20 in Atlanta.

Tim Krauss from Job Connection in Spokane, WA talked about www.thejobconnection.org website and the websites he has done for some of the faith based ministries around the country. They are going to work with the Crossroads Career Network in a partnership.

The closing remarks for the morning session were from Daniella Gray, who is the Deputy Director of the National Economic Council at the White House. She talked about the last 30 months of positive job growth. We lost about 8 million jobs, but have gained back about 4.5 million of those in the past 3.5 years. She had three points to talk about. One, how to build skills, how to re-skill the workforce for today's job. 2) Provide networks in communities – she sees the strength of what the job clubs do. 3) All hands on deck – both government and private sector – we all have to leave no stone unturned.

That ended our morning programs. We broke for lunch and I had an opportunity to meet other attendees.

The afternoon had three breakout sessions.

- 1) Meet with people from the Department of Health and Human Services
- 2) Meet with people from the Small Business Administration and the US Department of Commerce
- 3) Meet with people from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and US Department of Justice.

I went to the second and third sessions. These were located in brownstones across from Lafayette Square (this is the park where protesters show up to protest in front of the White House on Pennsylvania Ave.)

In these sessions I learned that there are 13 offices of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships in the government. The first one was in at HUD which was formed in the Clinton administration. Three others formed under President Clinton. When President Bush took over, he created the White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships. During the Bush years, the 4 department offices grew to 11 and under President Obama, there are now 13 of these offices. They all report to each of the Cabinet Secretaries and also the to White House office. Most of the people in these offices are professional staff, but there are some political appointments at the higher levels. Some of these offices only have 1-2 people.)

These offices are set up to work with the Job Clubs and Career Ministries to get the word out about the services they offer to help. The 13 offices have done road shows and gone to different locations around the US. I will work on getting DFW on the agenda.

Conclusion:

45 days ago, I had never heard of these programs and they had not heard of CareerDFW or any of the career groups in the DFW area

I had no idea what to expect at these meeting. I came away with a good feeling that there are a lot of great people helping the unemployed and under-employed across the US, including those in the government in these departments. It is actually overwhelming to think about the wealth of knowledge that is available for groups to share with job seekers. You could offer a 40 hour one week program and NOT share it all. Each job club or career group has its place and helps the job seeker in a certain

manner. The one thing lacking in our area, is the tie between the career groups and the local TWC offices. This could be an opportunity...to break into that group to help bridge the gaps.

Many of the career groups here in DFW have been around much longer than the groups that spoke. The leaders here in the DFW area should have been on the some of these panels...but they had no idea we existed.

I also know there is NO other organization like CareerDFW in the country. And no one is planning to pull it all together, as I plan to do with CareerUSA.org. The people I talked to at the meeting from other communities were very interested in CareerDFW and looking forward to CareerUSA.org. The CareerDFW website content is already 80% generic for the USA, only the local calendars and group listings are for DFW. Now that I have found this national group, it is the missing link for the website.

This was a once in a life time event to go to. It may never be offered again. I made many great contacts and this will help everyone in the DFW area.

For more information or questions, contact Jeff Morris at webmaster@CareerDFW.org