

**Community Bridging Services (CBS) Inc. Jobnet Employment Program
Torrens Valley Institute TAFE
Blacks Road
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**Jobnet Flexi Program
Assisting Youths to Find and Keep Employment**

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INTRODUCTION

The Community Bridging Services (CBS) Inc provides employment, further education and recreation/day options services to people with a disability, or others with specific needs. Our budget for all programs is about \$1,600,000 pa with most funding coming from the State Government of South Australia (recreation/day options) and the Commonwealth Government (employment). Having the status of a non-profit community organisation, CBS has an independent Board of Directors, one member being a consumer of our services and another an advocate.

CBS uses the Positive Interactions Model to guide us in our daily work activities. Our focus is on identifying and developing a person's strengths and interests. We want to promote and record the positives rather than the negatives. This approach is easier said than done, but is crucial in guiding our everyday interactions with clients and the people who care about them.

The following information is about an innovative use of the Commonwealth Government's Department of Family and Community Services Case Based Funding Trial (CBFT). Our aim is to assist a group of youths in Cavan Youth Training Centre (a secure care facility) to find and keep a job in open employment. CBS Jobnet Employment Program staff have shown in the past that we are keen to try new ways to assist mostly young Australians with a disability, who need a fair go. This often includes potential job seekers who are put in the too hard basket and for some, not worth the business risk. Details below include organisational processes in setting up the project and a summary of progress since 1 July 2000.

OUTLINE OF THE JOBNET FLEXI PROGRAM

The Jobnet Flexi Program has four parts.

- **Pre-employment training** – is usually provided in Cavan for up to five months in partnership with TAFE using the nationally accredited Certificate 1 in Employment Skills Training. For some clients the time is extended relevant to their stay in Cavan, for others it is very short. This involves work experience and drafting a vocational plan for each client.
- **Job search** - is very individualised and flexible as staff and clients focus more in finding jobs based on strengths and interests. Meetings often occur in the client's home, or Cavan, and includes regular visits to potential employers.
- **Job support** - is provided to the client on an as needed basis. Each client is allocated to a staff member, who checks jobs for safety and

awards/enterprise agreements and learns the job. Staff then support our client to learn the job under the guidance of the employer until they are confident in their work and mix in socially with other workers. As our client's confidence and skills increase, support is reduced.

- **On going career development** - as funding continues at a reduced level while our client is employed, we provide ongoing support that includes an annual review of their vocational plan with the option to find another job if the need arises. If our client loses their job we assist in finding another.

OUTLINE OF THE CBFT PAYMENTS

There are five classification levels, increased from three previously. Levels of payment are based on a needs assessment conducted by the Commonwealth Government. Payments are made to the organisation providing a service to a specified individual. The funding follows the client, providing consumer choice. Total funds to clients in each classification are listed below. Only 75% of funding is paid in the first 12 months and the remaining 25% is only paid once an outcome has been achieved. An outcome is defined as a minimum of eight hours work per week, for a period of six months.

Level 1 -	\$3,000
Level 2 -	\$5,000
Level 3 -	\$7,500
Level 4 -	\$11,000
Level 5 -	\$15,000

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

During April to June 2000, CBS Inc negotiated a partnership with two other State Departments in South Australia to utilise the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services CBFT to assist 11 male youths under 19 years. The two State Government Departments are Family and Youth Services (FAYS) and the Department of Education, Training and Employment (DETE). Negotiations included the development of a model to assist jobseekers in the Cavan Youth Training Centre located in northern metropolitan Adelaide, to prepare for and find a job in open employment.

This was a challenging task, as it required a path to be negotiated respecting the operational procedures of the respective departments. There were also negotiations with another secure care facility at Magill, in the north-eastern suburbs of Adelaide. Magill supports girls under 18 years and boys under 15 years. In addition to this initial group of 11, another eight clients have been supported, giving a total of 19 – all males. There have been several clients referred from Magill Youth Training Centre who were supported when they were transferred to Cavan.

GOAL

Community Bridging Services (CBS) Inc. will support job seekers to find and keep a job of their choice in partnership with (FAYS) and (DETE).

PROCESS

In the initial group, 15 potential job seekers were interviewed from Cavan Youth Training Centre, of whom 11 participants were required and no less than eight to make the initial program financially viable. The program would run from Cavan Youth Training Centre. The process of initial consumer selection and training is described below.

1. Initial referral from FAYS/ DETE.

2. Completion of interview.

3. Registration with Centrelink and obtaining a Worker Assessment Tool (WAT) eligibility score.

4. Jobseeker Classification Instrument (JSCI) assessment to determine funding allocation.

5. Determine final Job Seekers with CBS Inc, FAYS and DETE.

6. Complete induction and begin the pre-employment program at Cavan, including enrolling job seekers with TAFE.

7. Determine employment strengths and interests and complete individual vocational plans.

8. Commencement of work hardening/work experience, depending on client restrictions and readiness.
9. Job seekers are provided with a more individualised program from their home on release. This includes job search, further studies and commencement of work trials, or employment.
10. Continuation of work hardening/work experience.
11. Review individual vocational plans. Emphasis on job search and job support and employment success.
12. Continual monitoring and evaluation of Job Seekers.
13. Outcome achieved.

OUTCOMES to 3 October 2001

At this time, all clients participated in our pre-employment program and were enrolled as students of Torrens Valley Institute TAFE, in the Certificate 1 in Employment Skills Training. CBS staff ran the pre-employment training while clients were in Cavan. A small number of job seekers continued to pursue pre-employment training from our Jobnet administration bases at Torrens Valley Institute TAFE and at our Berri office. This training has mostly involved the updating of CVs, interview preparation and jobsearch skills.

The pre-employment phase enabled the clients to get started, develop relationships with our staff and plan for their future. The main focus of this project over the whole period was the individualised vocational planning, job search and job placement.

Of the 19 clients involved:

- 15 job starts were achieved, spread between nine clients
- one client had four job starts and is currently in a job and is our six month outcome
- three clients held a job for three months (includes one for six months)
- one client held a job for six months
- six clients have been exited, the first after one month
- six clients re-offended and went back to Cavan, or Yatala Adult Labour Prison after release
- we continued to offer a service to all clients who re-offended
- one client returned to the Riverland, 300 kms north east of Adelaide and received support from our Jobnet Coordinator there
- one client returned to Ceduna, 800 kms west of Adelaide and we continued to provide support by employing a staff member to work locally
- one client moved to Pt. Pirie, 230 kms north west of Adelaide and we offered support from our Jobnet Coordinator there.

Clients had 12 different job types including:

- kitchen hand in a city café
- storeman in a suburban fruit and vegetable store

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At this stage jobs have lasted from a few days to six months.

PETE

Pete aged 16 years has acquired a job with a motor vehicle manufacturer after overcoming several obstacles. While being detained in Cavan Youth Training Centre Pete was isolated from the other residents due to exhibiting violent behaviour towards others. During this time we continued to provide pre-employment training and upon his release maintained regular contact.

Not long after being released Pete found himself in trouble with the law again. With little support from family members and other organisations, it looked as if he would be detained again, as he tried to negotiate the legal system on his own. It was found that in order for Pete to gain employment we needed to assist him to apply for Legal Aid.

This was not the only obstacle Pete had to overcome. After only being in the care of his mother for a short time he was told to leave home after an altercation. Now that Pete was homeless it made it even more difficult for him to obtain employment. With our help, he was able to link up to a service that was able to find temporary accommodation. This accommodation had strict rules and regulations and was clearly not suitable for him. He did however keep in contact with us through this time and his job search continued on a regular basis until he secured a job with a large car manufacturer.

At this point in time he is still attending court for his previous offences, but is managing to hold down a job at the same time. Since gaining employment he is more motivated to stay out of trouble with the law and is willing to pay for his own private lawyer as he is no longer eligible for Legal Aid. He is also experiencing greater support and respect from other family members and is living with his grandmother. From our observations, like most people his age, family respect is very important to him.

Pete wants to live more independently and closer to his workplace. Although Pete is now employed, Jobnet will continue to support him and keep in regular contact. Pete connected with Jobnet because we believed in him, did not give up on him when he made mistakes and he saw that we were committed to supporting him. This doesn't happen all the time, but are keys in making it happen.

PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

The Moving Holiday

After being restricted in a correctional service facility, it is to be expected that many of our job seekers in this project need a short moving holiday. It is difficult to get some clients to stay in one place for a length of time. It is important to assist job seekers to find some security and consistency so that they feel a desire to settle down a little more and develop positive networks in one place. Regular employment can help do this. Sometimes, a lack of steady family and friend relationships and a need to come to terms with the expectations and responsibilities of adulthood, makes this difficult.

Keeping In Touch

A great benefit of our service is that we have several Jobnet Employment Programs funded through various schemes from the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services. Programs include:

- Adelaide based at Gilles Plains (north and east metropolitan)
- Adelaide based at O'Halloran Hill (south and west metropolitan)
- Adelaide Hills and Murraylands based at Murray Bridge
- mid-north of SA based at Pt. Pirie and Pt. Augusta
- Riverland based at Berri
- Yorke Peninsula based at Yorketown
- Flexi Program based at Gilles Plains, Adelaide.

This has been very useful in continuing to provide a service close to where a job seeker lives once he is released from Cavan. Berri has been the main location outside

of Adelaide where this flexibility has been very useful. Other Jobnet Coordinators keep in touch with the progress of clients who are likely to move into their region.

Skills, Energy, Trust and Respect

All of our job seekers have excellent potential and many skills to draw upon and develop. It is important to establish trusting relationships and mutual respect. Our staff have done very well to develop these areas, in particular the trust and respect of our job seekers. This takes time and doesn't come easily. We are hopeful that the power generated by these positive relationships, and sticking with our clients, will be the key to turning a few of the short term successes into long term employment outcomes.

Our staff need to continue to provide non-judgemental, long-term support if job seekers in this project are to come to terms with the responsibilities of adulthood. All of us need people in our lives we can trust and who believe in our potential to succeed. The trust and relationship needs to be maintained even when mistakes are made and difficulties occur. Young offenders are in need of this support, often having a past lacking family support, trust and confidence. For job seekers to believe they are worth the effort our staff need to keep up the focus and continue to believe in their potential. This all takes time as we slowly build on the successes achieved so far.

The successful strategies we develop in this innovative project have the capacity to assist other young people in similar situations. The challenge will be to achieve success within the funding and time constraints of the CBFT.

SUMMARY

A key to the effectiveness of this program to date is the commitment of CBS staff to an absolute focus on clients' strengths and interests. Another is our commitment to doing the research and groundwork necessary to establish partnership relationships with other agencies and their staff with vested interests in the client group. This takes a little time. Our staff have a working knowledge of how other staff operate with-in their agencies and are able to work with them. This requires regular open communication and the sharing of information and resources. It is important to be a little different, but also to fit into the environment.

The limited time-lines of the current CBFT system places clients at a disadvantage. We basically have one year to find a client a job to continue to receive funding and therefore continue support. This is very difficult and devalues successes obtained in accessing further education and other personal development skills. These achievements are often essential in preparing clients for employment and are difficult to achieve with in one year. Currently, CBS is attempting to attract State Government, add on funding, to provide an additional six months lead in time, prior to moving a client to intensive job search. We could then access more intensive personal development, relationship, drug rehabilitation, and education programs. This would increase our time-line to 18 months from 12 months.

In terms of our outcomes for the program, a target of three clients holding a job for six months this financial year is possible. This would be an increase from the one job outcome last financial year.

To our knowledge, CBS is the only agency funded through the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services who has set up a program such as this

in Australia. It would seem logical to set up similar programs to support youths who enter other secure care facilities in other places.
