



Women Employed

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WEI Publishes Innovative Training Guide to Meet Advancement Needs of Low-Skilled Adults

CHICAGO - The Women Employed Institute (WEI) has published an important new resource for community colleges, community-based organizations, and other education and workforce agencies. *Bridges to Careers for Low-Skilled Adults, A Program Development Guide* provides concrete guidance on how to develop and implement "bridge programs," which help adult students improve their basic skills and succeed in college.

Today, millions of adults lack the skills needed to advance to jobs paying decent wages. Research shows that the most effective way to help adults improve their basic skills is to teach the basics in the context of training for jobs, preparing for employment, or some other activity that is meaningful to their lives. Bridge programs do exactly that, preparing adults who lack adequate basic skills to enter and succeed in postsecondary education and training and to advance on the job.

"Millions of adults are stuck in low-wage jobs without the skills to advance, yet today's job market increasingly demands and rewards those who have at least some postsecondary education and training," said Anne Ladky, Executive Director of Women Employed. "Bridge programs, by combining basic literacy and job skills, can help low-wage workers get on a career path to better employment."

The 125-page guide supports program developers and managers through interactive worksheets and sample program materials. It contains thorough information on program and curriculum development, costs and funding, implementation and management, evaluation and continuous improvement.

Women Employed will continue to advocate for greater support for bridge programs, including a dedicated funding stream, through the Illinois Career Pathways Initiative, a

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collaborative effort to enable low-income adult students to successfully enter and complete educational programs leading to good jobs.

“Bridge programs need to be sustained over time to have a real impact on the prospects of low-skilled adults and improving Illinois’ workforce to better meet employer needs,” says Toni Henle, Director of Workforce Development Policy.

The guide is a project of the Women Employed Institute, the Chicago Jobs Council, and University of Illinois at Chicago Great Cities Institute. The publication is available for downloading at www.womenemployed.org.

About Women Employed

Since 1973, Women Employed has been a leader in every major advance that working women have made. Today, Women Employed promotes fair employment practices, helps increase access to training and education, and provides women with information and tools to plan their career. The Women Employed Institute is the research, education and policy affiliate of Women Employed. For more information, visit www.womenemployed.org.