

FIFTH CITY BUSINESS CAREERS

PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

The objective of Fifth City Business Careers is to develop economic self-reliance and professional self-confidence in people who are unemployed. The 13 week training program in clerical skills and a professional style enables participants to obtain a job following graduation.

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

The Fifth City Community initiated a plan in 1976 for an evening commercial training school. With the urgent demand presented by the increasing unemployment on the Westside (now 40%) Fifth City sought the support of the government and business community to provide a full time program. Fifth City Business Careers began on January 21, 1980, with 27 students in each session.

PROGRAM ACCOMPLISH- MENTS

1. Job placement in 1981 is 70%, which is an increase of 20% over 1980.
2. Employed graduates repay their program tuition within one year through their income taxes.
3. Computer curriculum has been added as a major focus.
4. There is an 85% job retention for the past two years.
5. Participants come from across the city of Chicago (see enclosed geographical analysis).

PROGRAM UNIQUENESS

The three sector partnership and the unique teaching methods are the keys to Fifth City Business Careers success.

I. THE THREE SECTOR PARTNERSHIP

Fifth City Business Careers sees itself in an active partnership with the Mayor's Office of Employment and Training (public sector), the corporations that have hired graduates and funded program expansion (private sector), and the Fifth City Community (local sector).

The public sector provides the direct training funds administered by the Mayor's Office of Employment and Training. These funds have the effect of being a one year government loan since tuition is repaid by graduates through their income taxes. Additional tax dollars are saved because these families are no longer drawing on welfare. The result is a lightening of the public tax burden.

The private sector provides the funding for the equipment, the model office environment and the space expansion. As business consultants, they 1) give advice in curriculum development, 2) host field trips to their companies, 3) participate in business panels, and 4) do mock interviews. Most importantly 88 companies have hired graduates (see business list enclosed).

The local sector, represented by the Fifth City Community, provides the ongoing social and economic services for the program participants. Particularly helpful are the preschool, shopping center and the community leadership support.

II. THE TEACHING METHODS

The teaching methods are based on the philosophy of Imaginal Education. The curriculum design aims to change images of self-depreciation to those of a professional business style.

Imaginal Education begins as the participants arrive the first day ready to begin as the "new employees". The office is set up as a business environment to approximate actual work experience. As an example on a typical day of work the "employees" begin in the Accounting Department of Mountain View Office Supply Company. In Accounting the employees do accounts receivable, accounts payable, and the combination journal for the company while becoming skilled on the ten key calculator. The simulation is repeated as they move on to other departments operating as Clerk Typists and Data Entry Operators. This office simulation approach results in individuals who see themselves as achievers with drive and commitment. They are confident of their knowledge in the professional style and skills that are being asked for in today's job market.

PROGRAM INNOVATION

Fifth City Business Careers has been watching the shift in job opportunities which calls for increased entry-level clerical skills. We have been advised by the private sector that there is a dramatic increase in the demand for computer skills. Therefore in the last six months, computer curriculum has been added as a major focus. Space expansion was done by volunteers, including past graduates, to create a Computer Center. The curriculum introduces computer language and word/data processing projects.

LONGRANGE GOALS

Our next step is to complete the building renovation to add a GED program. This would allow us to serve the 70% who are unable to pass the reading and math tests in the application process for Fifth City Business Careers.