

## Solowork Pilot Program Update – Cibola County

The Cibola County Economic Development Foundation, The Northwest COG and the NM Jobs Council have been working with the CELab and a consortium of service providers to develop a pilot program to test the concept for a statewide Solowork Job Creation program model.

The first pilot to demonstrate this program model is fully funded and set to start October 1st in Cibola County. A recent announcement that 480 jobs will be cut in coal mining and corrections has created an urgent need for a new source of economic base jobs in the County. The program model is called a SoloWork Center Program and is designed to create new economic base jobs in a community in two ways:

- **Employer placements;** by training, placing, retaining local residents who choose to work remotely or independently in W2 and 1099 jobs with economic base employers who hire and manage employees who work from home or a community sponsored co-working center. These jobs will be sourced from employers nationwide that hire and manage employees that work remotely.
- **Starting up solopreneurs:** by helping local residents start their own economic base sole proprietor enterprises (with no employees).

The program can be conducted anywhere at any scale. It is the least expensive way to create economic base jobs. (creates jobs at a fraction of the cost of other programs) The jobs are created within 30 days of program launch. The rate and volume of e-base job creation is only limited by the number of candidates in the market. The jobs offered include both 1099 and W-2 are tailored to the skills, experience, and aspirations of each candidate rather than forcing local workers to choose from jobs that happen to be offered locally.

The SoloWork Center Program consortium is comprised of the following organizations and respective roles:

- **CELab** - Site Selection, Program Design, Coordination, Recruiting, Screening, Testing
- **Digital Works** - Assessment, Training, Placement
- **FatPipe ABQ** - Facility development, management and solopreneurship
- **Circles USA** - Retention and Attrition Management

### Program Costs:

The program requires a post-performance fee of \$3,500-5,000 per economic base job created.

The Cibola County pilot is funded to run three to four months and is scoped to create 30-50 economic base jobs exclusively through an employer placement process operated by Digital Works of Columbus OH. If the program model proves successful and is funded to proceed, the goal is to create 200 to 350 new jobs.

The Northwest COG/CCEDF has secured over \$95,000 in cash funding from federal, state and local sources plus a significant contribution of time and in-kind support from NMSU, the CCEDF, and the Consortia providers.

The pilot funding mix is a combination of grants from USDA, NMFA, LEEDS, CCEDF, and in kind contributions from each member of the consortia as well as CCEDF and NMSU Grants branch campus.

## **Immediate concerns/requests:**

### **Scoping the potential for long term funding for the program**

The pilot has enough funding in place to run for three months and produce 20-30 new jobs. We do not want to start the program and have to suspend it three months in because there is no long term funding. We think it is important to try to secure long term funding sources before launching the pilot. Long term funding is expected to run from \$3,500-5,000 per economic base job placed depending on how much training and mentoring is required for the candidate pool.

Following the initial pilot period, the program is designed to operate on post performance basis, paying only for jobs placed. The post placement fees are used to cover the following costs:

- Recruiting, screening, testing
- Training, soft skill development services
- Job Placement, post-placement mentoring
- Ongoing advancement/retention Services

### **Potential long term funding options**

The potential sources for long term funding for the program include:

- The state JTIP program (managed by NMEDD),
- The Rapid Workforce Development Program (managed by Higher Ed),
- Federal workforce funding (Northern Workforce Board and DWS) and
- Long term grant funding such as the federal Power grant and Kellogg Foundation.

We are updating an extensive briefing memorandum for the program and will be able to make that available shortly.

# SoloWork Economic Base Job Creation



**Solo W2 Workers**  
Recruit, Screen  
Train, Place  
Support

W2 Solo workers employed by an economic base employer and allowed to work from home or the Solowork Center.

## Solowork Center



A community supported program platform to create, advance and retain new economic base jobs.

Solopreneurs who own their business have no centralized workplace or onsite employees.

New entrants to the solowork workforce, i.e. students, hard to employ, & chronically poor candidates.



**Solopreneurs**  
Recruit, Plan  
Incubate or Convert  
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**New Solo Workers**  
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