

Job Training

With soaring unemployment rates in the country, it is more important than ever to minister to job seekers. As we strive to meet the physical needs of those facing a financial crisis, we need to remember to minister to the spiritual and emotional needs as well. A career support group in your church will allow participants to encourage, comfort, and assist one another during tough times.

PROJECT DETAILS

Steps

Get your pastor and church leaders on board with your ministry vision. It is important that you are also supported in this outreach ministry.

During the planning process, think about the following:

- What is the main purpose of the group? Consider having the group as a place for people to share, learn, and grow.
- Who are the participants of the group? Will the group be opened only to church members or to the community?
- What resources will you provide to participants? Spiritual guidance and encouragement? Job search skills? Workshops to learn new skills? Seminars on resume building or interviewing skills? Job placement/referrals?
- How often will you meet? Once a week? Twice a month?
- How many volunteers will you need to meet the needs of the group? For example, you may need a facilitator, church members with specific skills to serve as consultants, or special speakers for Job Search Seminars.
- What is the format of the meetings? Will prayer meeting and/or devotionals be part of the meeting?

Choose a meeting place, e.g. a home, in the church, or community building. Remember that participants may feel vulnerable, and need a place where they can feel safe and accepted. During the meetings, be sure to welcome participants and allow time for introductions. Serve light refreshments. Depending on the format of the meetings, consider doing the following:

- Have a brief devotional time
- Provide opportunities for participants to share their story as they feel comfortable
- Share prayer requests (be sensitive to non-believers)
- Invite guest speakers or have a workshop, but precedence should be given to time to care and share.

Tips

- While you seek to equip and enable participants in their job search journey, remember that your priority is to support and encourage them. Offer prayer support often.
- A support group, like any small group, should ideally have around 10-12 people. If the group expands, consider dividing the groups.

- As the group expands, you may need to create career subgroups based on specialized fields.
- Follow up! Contact absentees and send reminders of upcoming events to group members (e.g. e-mail, call, post notices on church bulletin, word-of-mouth)

Resources

- Crossroads Career Network offers careers resources and posts for prayer requests <http://www.crossroadscareer.org/>
- The Career Network Ministry <http://mbccareers.org/>

Stories

NPR Article on Hope Community

Church <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=102511972>