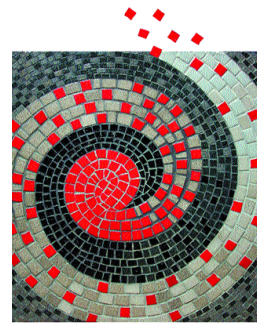


Pay Compensation for Professional Development



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“If you have one person who is a high achiever, and that person goes on vacation, are others prepared or able to ‘carry the ball’?”

ALLOCATE FUNDS FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Community Agencies Corporation of New Jersey/Clinton Hill Weed and Seed Partnership (CAC of NJ/ Weed and Seed Partnership) promotes professional development as a way to expand the abilities of all youth workers in their organization. By providing staff support and training, they believe they increase the opportunities for all youth workers to develop better professional skills and to be more effective in their work with youth.

Staff are required to attend thirty hours of training per year. In-house training, outside training, and college classes count toward this requirement. Since the organization places such a high value on professional development, 5–10% of the budget is allocated to assist with the costs of training and capacity building. Through this budget item, the organization pays 20% of the cost of outside training as an education incentive. They also offer a graduated pay incentive each year for staff who have completed the training, which represents 3–5% of the budget and is contingent on years of service and performance evaluations. As staff see the increase in their paychecks for the training they have completed, they become more enthusiastic about their participation in the programs and more committed to staying with the organization.

Along with the education incentives, the organization asks each staff member to write up a professional development plan. Staff are asked to identify how they are going to implement the skills they have acquired through the training, and what other types of training they need to assist them in their work with youth. Through the development of this plan, staff begin to recognize the value and importance of their work.

PEER-TO-PEER EVALUATION

In addition to supervisors' evaluations of staff performance, this organization believes that peer-to-peer evaluations are an effective means of improving job performance. Peer-to-peer evaluations, which are more informal than evaluations conducted by supervisors, are done in such a way as to suggest that a certain task could be improved by working together as a team. As a result, the assessment of one's job performance seems less threatening and is accepted more readily than an evaluation from a supervisor. Likewise, it creates a cooperative work environment that fosters supportive relationships among the staff.

***Community Agencies Corporation of New Jersey/Clinton Hill Weed and Seed Partnership** serves 1500 youth through a variety of recreation and prevention programs. They employ 20 full-time and 10 part-time contractual staff. Eighty percent of their staff are African-American and 20% are Hispanic/Latino.*

