



Get help with employment barriers

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Do you have background issues or other barriers to employment?

If so, then why not consider participating in the Re-entry Partnership Initiative designed to assist individuals with background issues and/or significant barriers to employment.

Linda Cue, adult librarian at Alachua County Library Headquarters, said the Re-entry Partnership Initiative will consist of two programs — a conference with employability skills and entrepreneurship information and a job fair. Both programs are open to anyone, but are focused on assisting those with barriers to employment who are looking to obtain, improve or maintain employment or start a new business.

Cherie Kelly, manager of the Library Partnership Resource Center manager, said the conference, which will be held from 10 a.m.-noon April 10-13 at Library Partnership at 1130 NE 16th Ave., will feature trained facilitators to assist with such things as email accounts, resumes, interviewing skills, job searching tips, educational opportunities, starting a small business and other assistance.

Those interested in participating in the program are being encouraged to register right away to make sure a spot is available. It is mandatory that participants attend all sessions of the conference. To register, call 352-334-0161 or 352-334-3940.

The job fair will be held from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. April 24 at Alachua County Library Headquarters at 401 E. University Ave. and will include employers willing to hire eligible applicants with background issues and other barriers to employment. In addition, there will be representatives

from local agencies to assist with such things as housing, legal issues, education opportunities and more. Kelly said CareerSource North Central Florida is working to recruit employers for the job fair.

Nickie Kortus, public relations and marketing manager at the Library District, said resources at the job fair will include “Ask a Lawyer,” with attorneys on hand to help determine what participants can do to improve or resolve barriers to employment.

Kelly said the Library District and Partnership for Strong Families are equal partners in the Re-Entry Partnership Initiative, along with the Gainesville Housing Authority, the Florida Department of Corrections and CareerSource.

Kelly, who was the Cone Park Resource Center manager at the time, said she, along with then Cone Park librarians Cue and Nate Courtney, realized they were duplicating resources by helping the same population looking for help finding employment. Thus, they developed a Re-entry Partnership Initiative concept that was implemented last May at Library Headquarters and included field experts and trained instructors facilitating the employability skills entrepreneurship conference.

Last year, Cue said, more than 100 people participated in the conference and 369 participated in the job fair.

Kortus said the Re-entry Partnership Initiative, now in its second year, has been expanded to meet the needs of the community.

Kelly said there are opportunities for people and organizations to get involved, including employers and program sponsors, to help provide additional incentives and enhancements.

“A program is as strong as the community’s support,” Kelly said.

Cue said the Re-Entry Initiative provides an opportunity for eligible residents to get their lives back on track.

“It opens doors for people to overcome obstacles to get back into the workforce and become more economically grounded,” she said.

Re-entry initiative

What: Re-entry Partnership Initiative conference and job fair for residents with records, etc., looking to enter the workforce

When: Conference, 10 a.m.-noon April 10-13; job fair, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. April 24

Where: Conference, Library Partnership, 1130 NE 16th Ave.; job fair, Library Headquarters, 401 E. University Ave.

Information: Call 352-334-0161 or 352-334-3940