

Testimony of Jennie Tesch

Senate Public Health & Welfare Committee, SB 372

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Hello, I am Jennie Tesch, I am an independent Contractor with the State Of Kansas/DCF. I work with individuals who are on cash assistance and have been found to be ready to work or ready to begin learning the skills needed to obtain and retain employment. I teach **Life Skills**, a program that teaches the basic skills necessary to navigate society; community resources, self-advocacy, self-esteem budgeting, goal setting and balancing family life and work, **Job Club**, a program that prepares the individual for the work place; interview technique, application skills, resume writing, and work ethics, **Job Seekers**, a program that allows the individual to apply what they have learned in the prior classes; the goal is to put in many applications, do their call backs and land a job. I also do **Specialized Job Placement**, This programs allows me to work one on one with the client, to determine what their specific job needs are and the minimum income to meet their basic needs. I will then follow them for 90 days to provide support during the transition and help with any barriers that may come up that could interfere with job retention.

I have a huge amount of respect for Lucy Ross. She is a good example of how well this program can work when someone takes advantage of all that is offered, does it with a positive and humble attitude, and puts 150% into trying to better their lives. Lucy has had some struggles along the way, she has faced homelessness, is a single mother of two beautiful girls, she has been without transportation, and has a limited support system. NONE of these things ever got Lucy down. Her attitude stayed positive at all times, she showed great motivation and a strong desire to change her life. Through Lucy's own willpower and the incredible programs offered by DCF, Lucy has done just this. She has changed her life!!! It has been my honor to have had the privilege of getting to know Lucy.

Our clients face a number of complex and sometime debilitating barriers. Transportation issues, lack of affordable/quality childcare, lack of education, life skills, and work skills. Lack of jobs offering a living wage. Mental and physical conditions, substance abuse issues, and many times the inability to navigate the very systems that were created to help them. I have worked with this population for 15 years and have seen many success stories. It is the combination of community based programs, the Career Navigators at DCF, providers like myself AND the clients that these successes are possible.