

News & Views online

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The monthly employee newsletter of the West Virginia Bureau of Employment Programs ♦ Available online at www.wvbep.org/bep/

RIA hosts national EXPO User's Conference

by Billie Miller

The EXPO User's Conference was held in Charleston, September 28-30. EXPO, or Exportable ES 202 Program, was developed and is maintained by the Utah Department of Workforce Services under the direction of the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The EXPO system is a series of computer programs and data files designed to efficiently process employment and wage data and to produce all ES202 program deliverables. Each year the program goes through two updates, when major and minor changes are made. Training is held in the spring and fall after the release of the changes so all states can learn to use the program at full potential.

People from 14 states, three Regional Offices and a representative from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics attended the event. Participating states included Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Montana,

Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Virginia, Utah, West Virginia and Wisconsin. The Chicago Regional Office, Dallas/Kansas City Regional Office, and the Philadelphia Regional Office were also represented. Training staff came from the Dallas/Kansas City Regional Office and the EXPO Development Office in Salt Lake City, Utah.



Dave VanWyk, trainer from Dallas/Kansas Regional Office



Leonard Kaniecki (left), Maryland Department of Labor and Chris Loftis, Virginia Employment Commission

One of the biggest advantages from the conference is the interaction between all levels of staff working together. Issues and agenda were discussed not only at the state level, but also at the Regional and National Office levels. Several state representatives offered 'wish lists' consisting of new ideas and changes they would like to see made to the program. Each topic on the wish lists was discussed to determine if it would benefit most of the people and justify making a change. This helped the developers establish some of the needs of the future versions of the program. In the end everyone left the conference with information and best practices to take home.

Flu Alert

As many of you may know, flu vaccine is in short supply this year. Health authorities are questioning if there will even be enough vaccine for all the high-risk cases. Because of this, *News & Views* has dedicated page two to information to help keep you from catching the flu. This information was taken from the Centers For Disease Control website.

For field offices and other offices frequented by the public, be sure to include disinfectants in your cleaning supply orders (available through Boise catalog). Another suggestion for all employees is to purchase your own bottle of hand sanitizer to use at work, when shopping or going to public places. Remember, money and shopping carts are high risk carriers of germs.

Please use extra vigilance this flu season. The season can start as early as October and last until May, so be aware and take special care. Help keep our workforce and our families safe. Remember, thousands of Americans each year die from the flu or flu-related illnesses.

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Coming next month. . .

Current Events
ES Business Service Unit Interviews
First Employee of the Month selections
New unit profiles

The most important thing that you can do to keep from getting sick is to wash your hands

By frequently washing your hands you wash away germs that you have picked up from other people, from contaminated surfaces, or from animals and animal waste.

What happens if you do not wash your hands frequently?

You pick up germs from other sources and then you infect yourself when you:

- ◆ Touch your eyes
- ◆ Or your nose
- ◆ Or your mouth.

One of the most common ways people catch colds is by rubbing their nose or their eyes after their hands have been contaminated with the cold virus. You can also spread germs directly to others or onto surfaces that other people touch. And before you know it, everybody around you is getting sick.

The important thing to remember is that, in addition to colds, some pretty serious diseases—like hepatitis A, meningitis, and infectious diarrhea—can easily be prevented if people make a habit of washing their hands.

When should you wash your hands?

You should wash your hands often. Probably more often than you do now because you can't see germs with the naked eye or smell them, so you do not really know where they are hiding. Wash your hands:

- ◆ Before, during, and after you prepare food
- ◆ Before you eat, and after you use the bathroom
- ◆ After handling animals or animal waste
- ◆ When your hands are dirty, and
- ◆ More frequently when someone in your home is sick.

What is the correct way to wash your hands?

- ◆ First wet your hands and apply liquid or clean bar soap. Place the bar soap on a rack and allow it to drain.
- ◆ Next rub your hands vigorously together and scrub all surfaces.
- ◆ Continue for 10 - 15 seconds or about the length of a little tune. It is the soap combined with the scrubbing action that helps dislodge and remove germs.
- ◆ Rinse well and dry your hands.

It is estimated that one out of three people do not wash their hands after using the restroom. So these tips are also important when you are out in public.

Washing your hands regularly can certainly save a lot on medical bills. Because it costs less than a penny, you could say that this penny's worth of prevention can save you a \$50 visit to the doctor.

Stopping the Spread of Germs at Work

Illnesses like the flu (influenza) and colds are caused by viruses that infect the nose, throat, and lungs. The flu and colds usually spread from person to person when an infected person coughs or sneezes. To help stop the spread of germs take care to:

- ◆ Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough
- ◆ Clean your hands often
- ◆ Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- ◆ Stay home when you are sick and **check with a health care provider**

Practice other good health habits.

- ◆ Cough or sneeze into a tissue and then throw it away.
- ◆ Cover your cough or sneeze if you do not have a tissue. Then, clean your hands, and do so every time you cough or sneeze.
- ◆ Clean your hands often. When available, wash your hands with soap and warm water—then rub your hands vigorously together and scrub all surfaces.

Wash for 15 to 20 seconds.

It is the soap combined with the scrubbing action that helps dislodge and remove germs. When soap and water are not available, alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers may be used. You can find them in most supermarkets and drugstores. If using a gel, rub the gel in your hands until they are dry. The gel doesn't need water to work; the alcohol in the gel kills germs that cause colds and the flu.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.

Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches their eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs can live for a long time (some can live for 2 hours or more) on surfaces like doorknobs, desks and tables.

Stay home when you are sick and check with a health care provider.

When you are sick or have flu symptoms, stay home, get plenty of rest, and check with a health care provider as needed. **Your employer may ask for a doctor's note for an absence, as the flu lasts for 7-10 days on average.** Remember, keeping your distance from others may protect them from getting sick. Common symptoms of the flu include: fever (usually high), headache, extreme tiredness, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle aches, and nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea, (much more common among children than adults).

Practice other good health habits.

Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food. Practicing healthy habits will help you stay healthy during flu season and all year long.

Journaling can help rid you of the blues

Writing can actually help boost your mood and give you a feeling of well-being. In the past, journaling and its impact on things such as pain management and stress relief has been studied. In a more recent study, 122 students were broken up into three groups and asked to respond in different ways to traumatic or stressful events. One group merely detailed the events, another group wrote out their feelings, but the third group wrote about their thoughts and emotions. The last group was to try to make sense out of what had happened and figure out what they had learned. In the study, it was the third group that benefited most. The journaling that tried to determine what the event meant to them emotionally and what they had learned seemed to allow group members to develop a deeper appreciation for life. While those who only wrote about their feelings seemed to go into deeper decline. This possibly indicates that writing only about your bad feelings only makes you feel worse. But when the focus is moved to how the experience has changed you, the events then take on a positive emotion. This study indicates that when you journal, you are discovering what it is that you need to heal yourself.

—adapted from energyforwomen.com

Why bad habits can hurt you

Being reckless can affect your health. Here are five bad habits to avoid—and the consequences that can occur if you continue:

- Don't wear your disposable contacts lenses for too long. The longer you wear them, the dirtier they get. Thirty percent of people who develop ulcers and infections because of their lenses think they are actually following the directions for their disposable lenses. But they're not. Read up on your directions for use again if it's been a while.
- Don't drive with under inflated tires. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that almost 30 percent of the cars on the road have at least one tire that is under inflated. And that department says that driving on under inflated tires can be just as deadly as not wearing a seat belt. Take your car to a garage to get an accurate reading, and make sure you use pounds per square inch inflation recommendations that are inside the driver's door of your car, and not the one listed on the tires. (Because vehicle weights vary.)
- Don't expose your eyes to bursts of light. The bursts of light that copiers produce can be damaging.
- Don't open beer bottles with your teeth. This can cut your gums and cheeks.
- Do wash your hands before you eat. Remember, 94 percent of dollar bills harbor some form of bacteria.

—adapted from *Men's Fitness*

How to create the illusion that you have more time

Do you always feel like you're running out of time? Do you feel like time is speeding up and worry that you won't have adequate time to complete the tasks you have set up for yourself to accomplish?

The truth is, you can't add more time to your day, but you can create the illusion that you have more time. Here are some suggestions to create an atmosphere that makes the time you do have feel more adequate:

Live in the present. Focusing on the moment at hand will make you feel better and stops the feeling that you are just going through the motions.

Get rid of clutter and commitments. When you simplify your life you will feel more in control of the things to which you do commit. Simplifying reduces your stress and stops the feeling that you are going in too many different directions.

Turn some things over to others. It's called delegation, and you have to learn how to do it. Feeling like you have to do everything yourself can make you feel overwhelmed.

Put systems into place. Becoming more systematic allows you to accomplish more with the time you have. If you have systems for dealing with your work, then you will have fewer crises with which to deal.

Quit biting off more things to chew. Quit adding items to your to-do list.

Stay focused on the big picture. This will help you keep the things that are important to you on the forefront.

Take some time to step back and reflect. This will help raise your awareness about how you are spending time, so that you can change it if you want or need to.

Stop worrying about what's around the corner in your life. If you're always focusing on what you have to accomplish next, the sensation that time is speeding up will be your reward. And then you stop using the time you do have and instead use it to worry about whether you will get your tasks accomplished.

—adapted from *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Overcoming Procrastination*, by Michelle Tullier

Don't think of it as failure. Think of it as time-released success.

—Robert Orben

This section is dedicated to the dedicated—to those who make a difference in the lives of our customers—both internal and external.

Big Gold Star Page



Huntington UC Claims office got a note from a satisfied customer recently that read, "Thank you for your assistance and understanding. Have a good day!"

Randy Bare, FAM Administrative Support, was elected to serve on the Veterans of Foreign Wars National Council of Administration at the 2004 West Virginia VFW State Convention. He will represent the veterans of Virginia and West Virginia for the next two years. He was also honored by the National Commander-in-Chief with an appointment to serve on the Budget and Finance Committee which met in Kansas City October 7-10 and approved a nearly 74 million dollar budget for 2004-2005. The members of the National Council of Administration are elected by the membership and serve as a Board of Directors for the Veterans of Foreign Wars.



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Deadline for *News&Views online* is the 1st day of the month.

WVIAWP News

by Mary Spellman

On September 23 and 24, the West Virginia Chapter of International Association of Workforce Professionals held its annual Fall Institute at the Days Inn in Flatwoods. Two days full of activities, presentations, and fun were enjoyed by all. Many people cleared their busy schedules to share with us some insight, updates, and current events. The diverse nature of our group was captured in presentations by Valerie Comer, Employment Service Division Acting Director ; Gerard "Tug" Everett, Unemployment Compensation Field Supervisor; Paul Cook, West Virginia Small Business Development Center Program Manager; and Dave Lieving, Governor's Workforce Investment Division Director.

Presentations by Comer and Everett highlighted the success of Job Service and Unemployment Compensation staff. Although other states have not yet been able to use the Mid-Atlantic Career Consortium (MACC) System, our Job Service rolled it out in January of this year. With the aid of some accommodating programmers, the Wagner-Peyser side of the MACC system has been successfully put into operation in all offices across the state.

Unemployment Compensation programs have again succeeded in producing above expected levels. Everett voiced his appreciation toward his staff and their continuing capability to produce work with very high accuracy rates. As staff sharing and cross-training occur, we are reminded that all are stretched thin. It is a testament to the ability, dedication and work ethic of staff that we can continue to exceed standards and deliver successful customer service. The appreciation reminds us all that we can, and do, give our best work for the citizens of West Virginia.

Lieving's discussion of GWID and how it interacts with agencies was enlightening. PowerPoint charts and graphs allowed us to see how and where we fit into the big picture and how the system is designed to work. Lieving's positive attitude and responsiveness exemplifies how open our system is to change, corrections, development and growth. With Lieving and our Senior Management at the wheel, we can see everyone's hard work coming to fruition. Every presenter had a positive, yet realistic, outlook for the future.

IAWP President Earl Sweet welcomed honored guests—members of the Maryland Chapter—Bob Pelletier, President of the Maryland IAWP Chapter and Sharon Mike, District Four Director. Pelletier, a Veterans Representative from Wheaton and Mike, an Unemployment Insurance Administrator from Cumberland, shared best practices and some stories about Employment Programs in Maryland and the Greater Washington, DC area. As with all government agencies, it is nice to be reminded that other states and regions are enduring budget cuts, staff shortages, and similar monetary shortcomings as we feel here in West Virginia.

Mike brought the chapter up to speed on current IAWP events and activities. The District IV Conference, scheduled for Novem-

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Public Service Recognition activities around BEP

FAM employees enjoy a round of Win, Lose or Draw (discovering a myriad of hidden talent) during their catered PSRW event, as IS&C/MIS BEP Support chows down on some pizza. Elkins employees also had a catered affair, while Welch



workers dined out at the Starlight Drive-In. Though the News&Views camera was late arriving, FAM coworkers reinctacted some of the cheerleading that had occurred earlier in the celebration. Employees at Greenbrier Valley UC all received flowers from their office manager. Logan UC had a pizza luncheon. Beckley UC had a breakfast get together at Shoney's



Restaurant for their Public Employee Recognition function. In Morgantown, the JS and UC offices celebrated together with a Bob Evans breakfast. Williamson UC and JS offices had a combined luncheon. Summersville offices met at Applebees after work so that they were not burdened by time constraints. Martinsburg UC went out for lunch at a Chinese buffet. UC

Administrative offices had pizza for lunch. Huntington JS employees were provided with meals from Texas Steakhouse. All told, most everyone had a great time during their recognition activities and this year's celebrations were a success.

Photos from top left to right: FAM Administration, IS&C/MIS BEP Support, Elkins JS and UC, Welch JS, FAM cheerleaders. Photos taken by News&Views staff.



To everyone that I have come to know over the past 16 years
 Thank you for your help and support. We have seen many changes over the years here in BEP. There were good times and tough times, happy and sad times, but I got through it all with the help of friends and coworker that I will never forget. I wish each of you the best and will think of you often. Thanks again.

Kenny Williams, UC Contribution Accounting

Cubicle etiquette

Is your current workspace a cubicle? Is a move into a cubicle in your near future? Life in a cube presents certain challenges. And if you're being moved out of an office into a cube farm, the change can be emotional, as well. Working in a cubicle does have some upsides, such as developing an open and connected staff and creating a feeling of camaraderie. However, studies show that most workers are not thrilled with the idea of working in a cube because of the lack of privacy and the increased noise. Here, then, is a set of ground rules that will help cube dwellers remain both productive and neighborly.

PRIVACY

Never enter someone's cubicle without permission. Behave as though cubicles have doors. Do not enter before you have eye contact "permission" from the occupant.

Try not to sneak up behind someone in a cube. Announce yourself at their doorway or lightly knock on the wall.

Post a sign or flag at your cube entrance to signal when you can be interrupted. Avoid making eye contact with people if you don't want to be interrupted.

Don't "prairie-dog" over the tops of cubes or peek in as you walk past each one.

Don't loiter outside someone's cube while you wait for him or her to finish a phone call. Come back at another time.

Never read someone's computer screen or comment on conversations you've overheard. Resist answering a question you overheard asked in the cube next to you!

Keep your hands off a cube dweller's desk. Just because there's no door doesn't mean you can help yourself to their paper clips.

PHONES

Try to pick up your phone after one or two rings. Set the ringer volume at a low level.

Limit the use of speakerphones. If you must use one, keep the volume as low as possible. Use a meeting room for conference calls.

Watch your volume when talking on the phone. A headset can help keep your voice low.

When you leave your cubicle, turn your phone ringer off and let it go to voicemail or forward your phone number to your new location.

Never leave your cell phone behind in your cube without first turning it off or to vibrate.

With personal or sensitive calls, be aware that your neighbors can hear your end of the conversation.

TALKING

Use your "library voice".

Don't talk through cube walls or congregate outside someone's cube. For impromptu meetings, go to a conference room or break room.

Calendar of events

American Diabetes Month. To raise awareness about the seriousness of diabetes and the importance of proper diabetes control and treatment to those diagnosed with the disease.

National AIDS Awareness Month. To raise awareness about the prevention of AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases.

Epilepsy Awareness Month. To increase awareness about epilepsy, the dramatic gains in treatment available, but also the seriousness of this chronic condition for which there is no cure.

National Alzheimer's Disease Month. To increase awareness of Alzheimer's disease and what the Alzheimer's Association is doing to advance research and help patients.

World Communications Week. November 1-7. To stress the importance of communication among all 6 billion people and the world's more than 3,000 languages by means of the international language Esperanto.

National Adoption Week. November 21-27. To commemorate the success of three kinds of adoptions—infant, special needs and intercountry—through a variety of special events.

General Election Day. November 2. Annually the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November.

Sadie Hawkins Day. November 6. Widely observed in the United States, usually the first Saturday in November. A day where girls are encouraged to take the initiative in inviting a man or boy of their choice for a date.

Veterans Day. Nov. 11. "At the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month" fighting ceased in World War I.

Eid-Al-Fitr: Celebrating the Fast. November 14. This feast/festival celebrates the completion of the Ramadan fast and usually lasts for several days.

The Great American Smokeout. November 15. A day observed annually to celebrate smoke-free environments.

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Don't bring clients to your cube to meet with them. Go to an office or conference room.

Don't yell across the "cube farm". Get up and move to the other person's location.

GENERAL NOISE

Use email or instant messaging to communicate silently with your coworkers.

Play radios at low volumes or use a headset.

Set your PC volume to a low level and turn off screensaver sound effects.

Set pagers and cell phones to vibrate.

Work out an arrangement with your neighbors to take lunch breaks at different times. This will give each of you some quiet time in your cube.

Eat quietly. Avoid gum-popping, humming, slurping and pen tapping.

SMELLS

A good rule of thumb is to never eat hot food at your desk. Food odors can bother your hungry or nauseous neighbors.

Perfume and cologne should be avoided in a cubicle arrangement. Your neighbors may have allergies.

Keep an air freshener handy.

Keep your shoes on.

—adapted from Jill Bremer, AICI, CIP
Bremer Communications

Editor's Note: I have seen myself in a few of these tips as have, I am sure, a few of you readers. Please take these suggestions to heart and learn to be a good neighbor.

FY 2005 OMNIBUS SPENDING BILL YIELDS OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS TO WORKFORCE SYSTEM FUNDING

Although Congress is officially in recess, their top aides are drafting the FY 2005 omnibus appropriations bill over the next month. The omnibus spending bill will determine funding levels for the nation's workforce system if Congress decides to approve the legislation when it returns to Washington the week of November 15. A lame-duck Congress may find it difficult to consider a contentious spending package after the November 2 election and decide instead to push final consideration into next year. Nonetheless, interest groups in Washington are vigilantly monitoring staff negotiations for fear their programs will be left out of the end-of-year appropriations measure if Congress decides to act.

In the omnibus spending package are nine unfinished FY 2005 appropriation bills, including the bill providing spending for Labor, HHS and Education programs. House and Senate Congressional aides must negotiate funding levels in the omnibus bill for Labor programs because of differences between House and Senate versions. The Labor spending bill passed the House in early September, but did not make it to the Senate floor after being approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee. The House and Senate bills differ in their spending for the Employment Service (ES) program by \$91 million and for unemployment insurance (UI) state administration by \$36 million. FY 2005 spending for WIA job training programs are largely the same, but the Senate spending bill would appropriate \$250 million and \$50 million for the Administration's Community College and Personal Re-employment Account (PRA) pilot initiatives, respectively.

Determination of funding levels included in the omnibus bill over the next month will be dependent on a number of factors. Ultimately, issue visibility throughout the recess could determine final funding levels. Decision-making on appropriation levels often are determined by those issues having the most vocal advocates, according to Representative Ralph Regula (R-OH), Chairman of the House Labor, HHS and Education Appropriations Subcommittee. NASWA learned Chairman Regula has received input from a number of states concerned with the \$91 million reduction of ES funding in the House bill and he may be inclined to restore the funding to its FY 2004 level in the omnibus bill.

A move by Chairman Regula to restore ES program funding to its FY 2004 level would seem to ease negotiations with the Senate, which provides the same level of funding in its bill. However, NASWA learned this week that there is a dispute between the Senate Appropriations Committee and the Administration over actual funding levels approved in the Senate bill. The Administration has said the Senate bill would actually spend approximately \$3 billion more than it is allowed under the budget caps established earlier in the year. This dispute is likely to make it more difficult to maintain the ES program appropriation level in the Senate bill and could further complicate efforts to convince Chairman Regula to increase his appropriation. This complication increases the importance placed on states raising visibility of the ES program and other workforce system appropriations.

—taken from the NASWA/CESER website

There is only one success—to be able to spend your life in your own way.

—Christopher Morley

Remember, a kick in the rear end is still a step forward.

—Anonymous

It is amazing how much people can get done if they do not worry about who gets the credit.

—Sandra Swinney

In Memoriam

Lost: A shining mountain light

On September 24, West Virginian's lost one of our shining lights of grace. Hovah Hall Underwood died that day, making all our lives a bit less bright. The former First Lady died in Charleston following a stroke.

Though small in stature, Mrs. Underwood lived large in ideals as a West Virginian. She was kind, friendly, compassionate, and concerned about the lives of West Virginia's children. She always had a ready smile and a lively attitude.

Mrs. Underwood will be greatly missed by her family, friends, acquaintances, and fellow West Virginians. She now lives our motto—Mountaineers are always free.

Molly Darlington McCormick, retired Charleston UC supervisor 1, died October 11 in South Charleston.

Mary Grace Richardson, mother of IS&C/MIS BEP Support's Ray Richardson and former BEP Commissioner Andy Richardson, died October 4 in Charleston.

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ber 18 and 19 at Rocky Gap Resort in Cumberland, is sure to be a hit. The beautiful setting rivals some of West Virginia's finest. Mike challenged our chapter to have ten attendees. Anyone interested is welcome to contact your local IAWP representative for further information, or Earl Sweet at the Morgantown WORKFORCE West Virginia Center.

A covered dish picnic was held at Bee Run Picnic Area on Thursday evening. Hamburgers, hotdogs and fixin's were provided and many of the dishes were exceptional.

Bert Price and Nancy Wolfe-Bilgard from Valley Healthcare System treated us to some Friday morning Team Building Exercises. It's amazing how quickly a team of interviewers, counselors, auditors and others can develop and implement a course of action when a tribe of natives, a pool of radioactive materials, and wild animals are threatening harm! These types of games help us to discuss and build upon ideas and decisions, much like we do on the job, but the casual atmosphere encourages those that are cautious about voicing opinions to participate for the betterment of the group. We hope that we all take these skills back with us.

The congenial attitude of WVIAPW members gives the opportunity to get to know one another outside of the busy workday, and allows all to benefit from shared experience, personal development and exploration. The association is open to all who work within the WORKFORCE system, including Workforce Investment Board members, associates, service providers, and private and public employment specialists. For membership information, please contact your local IAWP representative, or Earl Sweet, Kathy Skidmore, or Mary Spellman for applications and payroll deduction information pertaining to payment of dues.

"Hire Vets First" Campaign Launched

The President's National Hire Veterans Committee is pleased to announce that the www.HireVetsFirst.gov website is now available. The site provides information on the Hire Vets First initiative and directs businesses interested in hiring veterans to America's Service Locator (http://www.servicelocator.org/nearest_onestop.asp) or to 1-877-US2-JOBS to find their closest One-Stop Career Center for services. The site also refers veterans interested in employment opportunities to their nearest One-Stop Career Center via the same methods.

The President's National Hire Veterans Committee began promoting the National Hire Vets First Campaign through various mediums October 1. As a result, One-Stop Career Centers may experience an increase in calls from businesses interested in learning how they can access the veteran labor pool in your area.

New Web Site, Executivemoms.com Helps Mom's Return To Work

Women looking to rejoin the work force after spending time at home to raise a child may have a tough time finding a rewarding new job.

So-called "sequencing women" have several factors going against them — a tough job market, their résumé gap and dated concepts in their field. However, a survey by Corporate Project Resources Inc., a temporary staffing firm in Chicago, notes that 69 percent of companies are "likely" to hire sequencing women, and an additional 25 percent are "some-what likely."

New moms who know they want to return to the work force should stay "checked-in" with their field, recommends Marisa Thalberg, CEO of Executive Moms Inc., based in New York. The organization provides working moms with peer support, networking contacts and advice on careers, childcare and other topics.

Keep memberships in your field's professional organizations and maintain subscriptions to trade publications, Thalberg advises. No matter how busy you get, check in periodically with work colleagues and network contacts. This way, when you're ready to go back to work, you will be up to date on where your field is going.

To fulfill your roles as mom and working woman, find balance between the two. You'll need to make adjustments on both sides, Thalberg says, but what you choose to give up is a personal decision.

"Working mothers don't want to feel like they're shortchanging their kids," she says. If it's important for you to be involved with your child's class at school or be present at every pediatrician appointment, ask your boss if you can work a flexible schedule. If you want to work full time instead of part time, you may need to find childcare instead of relying on babysitters and relatives.

The important thing is to realize you can't always do it all — it's okay to order takeout for dinner every once in a while.

—Adapted from NetAssets: Intelligence for Workforce Development Professionals