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## How to Make Training Programs Work for You

Federally financed training programs hold out glimmers of hope for the jobless, as do other training programs in the market. However, you need to make smart choices to make them work for you. Otherwise, attending such programs will just mean loss of your valuable time, and add nothing more to your situation than the excuse of "let me finish the training, and everything would be okay." It might fool some, including yourself, but it's not going to change anything for the positive. To make training programs work for you, you need to choose them with care.

According to the labor department, there were 241,000 laid-off workers pursuing federally financed **job training** in 2009, compared to only 124,000 in 2008. This statistics can be interpreted to indicate that more jobless people were interested in acquiring new skills before going back to work. Or, it can also indicate that the numbers of jobless, who lack employment options visible in the near future, have gone up and some of them have decided to put their time to better use than while it away. Whatever be the reason for the increase in applicants for training programs, the programs are there as another option for the jobless to do something about their situations.

However, the problem with training programs is that most of them were created in bygone times to face economic challenges that were widely different from those that we face today under the present recession. Though the governments, both federal and that of the states, have thankfully woken up to the fact and trying to restructure training programs, it still remains that many training programs do exist which will only propel you towards another dead end and will do nothing to solve your situation. For example, most existent job training programs are financed through the federal Workforce Investment Act, 1998, passed at a time when acquiring primary skills with a computer were sufficient for you to get a job. Such programs are hopelessly obsolete against new realities, and enrolling in any such existent program with obsolete outlooks is definitely not going to work for you.

To choose the proper training program that will have a better chance to work for you, you need to do the following:

1. Find where the jobs are: Research the job market and list the sectors that have the highest potential for job growth. Some of these sectors would like be energy, healthcare etc. You should take into account both local as well as federal trends with greater stress on trends within your local job market. If you can find sectors that show growth potentials on both your local as well as the federal job market, training in such sectors should be viable.



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2. List your own experience, competencies, and strengths next. Among the sectors you have shortlisted as potential bread-winners, any that is more aligned with your own core competencies will work out better for you.
  3. List your choices according to priority: You need to do it yourself according to your vision and situation. For a person ready to relocate, training in sectors that are aligned with core competencies as well as in nationwide growth would be first choice. However, for a person tied down to a particular locality due to responsibilities and other concerns should go for training in fields that have a greater potential in the local job market and aligned with his or her core competencies. Going for programs that are not aligned with your core competencies usually offer poorer results than those up your alley.
  4. If you cannot find any training program that is aligned with your core competencies then the choice is difficult and one that needs to be made intelligently. There are two basic options here. One is to go for the program that shows the greatest possibility of job growth. And the other is to go for those sectors which show a promise but attract few. In many cases, going for training in job sectors that attract few takers increases your probability of recruitment, and the real equation is to find that training program which increases your probability of being recruited, than just training in any sector with high job growth and a glut of highly qualified candidates.

This is the only approach that truly yields results in job-oriented training programs. In fact, as recent surveys show, training programs related directly with skilled worker shortages in local industries work better for most candidates than those with a broader perspective.