

Notes from *Weathering the Storm: Facilitated Roundtable Discussions Addressing the Current Economic Crisis*

**2009 NAPE & Women Work! Professional Development Institute
Arlington, Virginia
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Discussion Question #1

In what ways has the recession impacted your program?

- a. Impact on programs/institutions
 - For one participant, the community college in which she was housed said she should not pursue additional funding after the state cut her program. This loss of institutional support was hurtful and she took it to mean "We have no faith in you."
 - In one state, the position administering the displaced homemaker funds was dissolved, meaning that they had no one to advocate to when the displaced homemaker funds were cut completely.
 - It has created a need to understand and be able to compete for money coming from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).
 - Funding is down and salaries are down with it.
 - Inability to place clients into employment, and therefore not able to meet placement goals..
 - Corporate sponsors are going out of business.
 - Clients that can't afford services are offered services on a sliding scale.
 - Existing reserves or "rainy day funds" are gone.
 - Fewer resources has meant more competition between organizations for those scarce resources.
 - Staff reductions have meant heavier workloads for current staff.
 - Grant matching funds can be more difficult to obtain.
- b. Impact on students:
 - Seeing more highly educated women applying to programs (people with advanced degrees coming back to get skills)
 - There has been an increase in stress of students.
 - People are afraid not to take whatever job that comes along.
 - Barriers to employment for clients are increasing, such as increase in mental disease, increased drug use, and increased homelessness.
 - As states cannot afford to keep prisoners, many are being released and are entering programs needing services.
 - There are larger class sizes in secondary schools and community colleges.
- c. Some positive impacts:
 - Enrollment increasing at community colleges. This high enrollment helps maintain funding for the colleges.
 - City councils or other government agencies better appreciate the importance of some organizations and are trying to support them.

Discussion Question #2

What strategies have you developed to cope with or offset impacts?

- a. Looking more and more to grants for funding
- b. Seeking short-term solutions until situation stabilizes
- c. Broadening the scope of populations served or of services offered in order to get more funds

- d. Partnering not only in name because it looks good but also because organizations really need to share one another's resources
- e. Staff relocation or reduction
- f. Gearing up to compete for stimulus money
- g. Diversifying funding sources
- h. Decreasing dependence on narrow state funding streams by approaching foundations, corporations, etc.
- i. Strategic planning
- j. Increasing visibility of programs
- k. Offering services not only for employment but to meet the holistic needs of clients
- l. Closing programs or reducing scope of services offered
- m. Educating funders on what it takes clients to get and maintain employment
- n. Consolidating or merging organizations
- o. Offering financial management classes for customers and staff
- p. Getting other partners to do lobbying you can't do
- q. Utilizing education credits wherever you can
- r. Offering unpaid internships
- s. Cutting expenses where possible
- t. Reducing charges for service

Discussion Question #3

How can WW! and/or NAPE help?

- a. Build funding alert system
- b. Offer best-practices and programs
- c. List links to corporate partners
- d. Develop more national employment partnerships
- e. Provide information about federal stimulus funds
- f. Provide directory of contact information for other members and resources
- g. Develop public relations kit to foster partnerships
- h. Provide pass-through money for joint projects
- i. Develop public policy agenda that makes the case for emphasizing women's need to get preference for high-wage, high-skill jobs

If you have questions about these notes, please contact A.J. Barks, Communications and Membership Manager for Women Work!, at abarks@womenwork.org.