



## **“WITHOUT WORK”**

**A White Paper by the International Association of Jewish Vocational Services**

*IAJVS: 70 Years of Getting People Back to Work*

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*Without work... .withoutfood... .without shelter... .without security... .without identity... .without hope....*

Created during the depths of the Great Depression, the Jewish Vocational Service network (known today as IAJVS) has been a vital force in building and rebuilding America's strength through employment of its citizens. As we face the world's greatest economic challenge since the 1930s, the IAJVS capacity to rebuild our industries, businesses, and services through its network of workforce development resources is urgently needed once again.

The International Association of Jewish Vocational Services (IAJVS) is uniquely qualified to address the workforce needs of businesses and industry by significantly expediting the return to work of thousands in our labor force that will be affected due to the current economic crisis. The IAJVS network serves more than 425,000 workers annually and collectively works with over 40,000 employers throughout North America. Services include employment assistance, skills training, rehabilitation programs, mental health and health services. The combined budget of the 28 member organizations is over \$400 million dollars.

### **The Current Fiscal Crisis and Unemployment:**

In recent months, the current economic crisis in the United States has resulted in the collapse of major insurance companies, the effective end of major US investment banks, sustained significant losses by the country's financial markets and the possible bankrupting of the US automotive industry. Resulting from the new economic reality is the threat of massive unemployment not witnessed in this country since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

On November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2008, the United States Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that employment fell by 240,000 in October, and the national unemployment rate rose from 6.1 to 6.5 percent. Employment has fallen by 1.2 million in the first 10 months of 2008; over half of the decrease has occurred in the past 3 months. The highest rates of unemployment occur in major cities across the country, and low income workers are disproportionately impacted. Skilled workers who are unemployed are now accepting low wage jobs typically sought by disadvantaged populations such as welfare recipients and ex-offenders who therefore face even greater barriers to employment.

The Bureau further reports that, "the unemployment rate rose by 0.4 percentage point to 6.5 percent in October, and the number of unemployed persons increased by 603,000 to 10.1 million. Over the past 12 months, the number of unemployed persons has increased by 2.8 million, and the unemployment rate has risen by 1.7 percentage points."

In addition to rising unemployment across the board, the construction and real estate industries are likely to experience disproportionate employment declines as our nation's economy slows. Significant job losses in the financial sector are also more than likely. Since its employment peak in December 2006, the U.S. financial industry has lost approximately 175,000 jobs.

Companies are unveiling mass layoffs almost on a daily basis. On November 18, 2008, Reuter's reported that Citigroup plans to cut 52,000 jobs by early next year, "in a dramatic move to restore the bank to health as it combats mounting debt losses and sagging economies worldwide." The cuts affect 15 percent of Citigroup's workforce, and are in addition to 23,000 jobs eliminated between January and September.

The problem of 6.5 percent (and rising) unemployment rates within the general population is further exacerbated by the incidence of nearly 20 percent of Veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan who cannot find employment, according to a 2008 study by the Veterans Administration.

### **Implications of Being "Without Work":**

Being "*without work*" means being unable to earn money to meet one's financial obligations. Automobiles may be repossessed, bank accounts may be frozen and personal property may be seized and sold. Failure to make mortgage payments or to pay rent may lead to homelessness through foreclosure or eviction.

Those "*without work*" lose their self respect as well as their income. Unemployed Americans also have great susceptibility to malnutrition, illness, mental stress, depression and loss of self-esteem. Dr. M. Harvey Brenner, professor of Public Health at the University of North Texas Health Science Center, has shown that increasing unemployment raises the crime rate, the suicide rate, and negatively impacts on the health and mental health of the unemployed. When unemployment benefits expire, those without work often access welfare programs such as cash assistance and food stamps and accumulate debt through predatory lenders and relatives. The families of those "*without work*" also suffer and these family stressors may lead to family discord and possibly divorce.

To compound the problems, the longer a person is unemployed the harder it becomes to find a job. The long term unemployed may find that employers are unwilling to take a chance on someone who has been out of the work force for a long period of time. Finally, those "*without work*" have less capacity to consume and thus contribute to the already failing economy.

### **The Need for an Effective National Strategy:**

IAJVS and its affiliated agencies offer an effective national strategy to provide opportunities for unemployed Americans to obtain decent and productive employment that will provide for their overall security and their human dignity.

The IAJVS strategy combines the resources and expertise of its affiliates to address the current unemployment crisis and includes the following components:

- √ A highly professional workforce development national network comprised of affiliates with an excellent track record of job development and direct placement into employment at the community level.
- √ A national system relating to thousands of large corporations, mid-sized companies and community-based small businesses.
- √ A national resource offering a vast array of services including employment services, occupational skills training, rehabilitation programs, and health and mental health services
- √ A national network comprised of affiliates in every region of the U.S. with the immediate capacity to implement economic development efforts and workforce development initiatives
- √ A national workforce development system with decades of experience in helping the poor, the disabled, dislocated workers, immigrants and refugees, veterans and ex-offenders to obtain meaningful employment
- √ An international capacity through Canadian and Israeli affiliates to similarly implement these initiatives in Canada and Israel

### **IAJVS: A Resource to Effectively Address the Current Unemployment Crisis**

During the 1930s, Jewish Vocational Services around the country were established to help immigrants find employment during the Great Depression. The Jewish Occupational Council was formed in 1939 to assist these new agencies in guidance, planning, and sharing their best practices so that services in every community could be enhanced.

Today, seventy years later, under its current name of International Association of Jewish Vocational Services, the network of twenty eight non-sectarian affiliate agencies around the globe continue to carry out the original mission of helping all Americans to find dignity through work. The IAJVS network is guided by a common mission set forth by the medieval Jewish philosopher Moses Maimonides: *the highest degree of righteousness lies in helping people to become self-sufficient.*

- The International Association of Jewish Vocational Services (IAJVS), a not-for-profit membership association, links 28 social service agencies in the United States, Canada and Israel that provide a wide range of educational, vocational, and rehabilitation services. Through our member agencies, individuals “*without work*” gain access to a vast array of services such as employment services, skills training, rehabilitation programs, mental health and health services.
- Each year, the IAJVS family of agencies—with a combined budget of over \$400 million—serves more than 425,000 individuals from across the social strata, including persons with disabilities, dislocated workers, welfare recipients, refugees and the elderly. Since its founding in 1939, the IAJVS

network has assisted over 16 million Americans who were “*without work*”.

- Today, under the IAJVS umbrella, JVS agencies collectively have working relationships with more than 40,000 employers across North America and Israel. IAJVS affiliated agencies are nationally recognized and respected for their quality and comprehensive services in communities throughout the country.

Through its extensive network of partnerships with community-based organizations, governmental entities, other social services providers, and the for-profit sector throughout the United States, IAJVS is in a unique position to provide cost-effective employment services to tens of thousands of Americans who are “*without work*”.

## 2008 IAJVS NETWORK

Jewish Family and Career Services

Atlanta, GA

[www.jfcs-atlanta.org](http://www.jfcs-atlanta.org)

Jewish Community Services

Baltimore, Maryland

[www.jcsbaltimore.org](http://www.jcsbaltimore.org)

Jewish Vocational Service

Boston, MA

[www.jvs-boston.org](http://www.jvs-boston.org)

Jewish Vocational Service

Chicago, IL

[www.jvschicago.org](http://www.jvschicago.org)

Jewish Vocational Service

Cincinnati, OH

[www.jvscinti.org](http://www.jvscinti.org)

Jewish Family Service Association of

Cleveland

Beachwood, OH

[www.jfsa-cleveland.org](http://www.jfsa-cleveland.org)

Jewish Family Services

Columbus, OH

[www.jfscolumbus.org](http://www.jfscolumbus.org)

Jewish Family Service

Dallas, TX

[www.jfsdallas.org](http://www.jfsdallas.org)

SHALOM Denver /

Jewish Family Service of Colorado

Denver, CO

[www.jewishfamilyservice.org](http://www.jewishfamilyservice.org)

Jewish Vocational Service

Southfield, MI

[www.jvsdet.org](http://www.jvsdet.org)

Jewish Vocational Service

Los Angeles, CA

[www.jvsla.org](http://www.jvsla.org)

Jewish Family & Vocational Service

Louisville, KY

[www.jfvs.com](http://www.jfvs.com)

Jewish Vocational Service

East Orange, NJ

[www.jvsnj.org](http://www.jvsnj.org)

Jewish Family & Vocational Service of

Middlesex County

Edison, NJ

[www.jfvs.org](http://www.jfvs.org)

Jewish Vocational Service Division /

Jewish Family & Children’s Service of

Minneapolis

Minnetonka, MN

[www.jvsmn.org](http://www.jvsmn.org)

Agence Ometz  
Montréal, Quebec  
[www.ometz.ca](http://www.ometz.ca)

FEGS Health and Human Services  
System  
New York, NY  
[www.fegs.org](http://www.fegs.org)

Jewish Vocational Service  
San Francisco, CA  
[www.jvs.org](http://www.jvs.org)

MERS/MO Goodwill Industries  
St.Louis, MO  
[www.mersgoodwill.org](http://www.mersgoodwill.org)

Jewish Vocational Service  
Toronto, Ontario  
Canada  
[www.jvstoronto.org](http://www.jvstoronto.org)

Jewish Social Service Agency of  
Metro Washington  
Rockville, MD  
[www.jssa.org](http://www.jssa.org)

JEVS Human Services Philadelphia  
Philadelphia, PA  
[www.jevs.org](http://www.jevs.org)

Jewish Family & Children's Service  
Pittsburgh, PA  
[www.jfcspgh.org](http://www.jfcspgh.org)

Israel Elwyn  
Jerusalem  
ISRAEL  
[www.israeelwyn.org.il](http://www.israeelwyn.org.il)

JDC-ESHEL  
Jerusalem  
ISRAEL  
[www.jdc.org.il](http://www.jdc.org.il)

JDC-TEVET Employment Initiative  
Jerusalem  
ISRAEL  
[www.jdc.org.il](http://www.jdc.org.il)

Keren Rehabilitation Workshops  
Tel Aviv  
ISRAEL  
[www.keren.org.il](http://www.keren.org.il)