

## 2016 Jodi Spiegel Enhancement of Customer Service Award Nomination Form

**Describe how and to what extent the nominees' individual contribution has benefited customers of the workforce development system. Clearly delineate the depth and breadth of the contribution.**

It is my pleasure to nominate **Ms. XYZ**, Operations Manager for **XYZ** program in **Somewhere USA** servicing over 4,000 Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients annually. It is the quote, *destiny is not a matter of chance, it is a matter of choice – it is not something to be waited for it is something to be achieved-by* William Jennings Brian that best describes the viewpoint and approach **Ms. XYZ** takes. To know and have worked with **Ms. XYZ** you will know that she is a teacher, advocator, over achiever and a results oriented individual. She meets people exactly where they are and is able to connect with people from all walks of life. When working with customers, she is able to motivate them into moving from a place of complacency or helplessness to dreaming and achieving. Our funders and colleagues all have the same level of confidence, respect and admiration for her. This is because every encounter you have with her, every promise made and every solution given comes from a place of excellence that you can rely on.

**Describe the circumstances and challenges faced by the nominee when making his/her contribution, including a description of the special skills or qualities that distinguish the nominee from others confronted by similar circumstances and challenges. This section shall clearly demonstrate what sets the nominee apart from others in similar positions/occupations.**

It is unclear whether her ability to connect with the most downtrodden in a manner that not only lifts them up but empowers them to become their own advocate and success story is because she too once experienced homelessness and needed public assistance. It was during her most vulnerable time that she first came to **XYZ** as a program participant. Due to her education, work experience and drive she was quickly identified as person of interest. After meeting with the Project Director she was offered a position as a Case Manager and it wasn't until months later it was discovered that she was homeless with 3 small children. A complete shock because her work ethic, contribution to the team and performance showed no signs of trouble at home. Again this speaks to the drive and ambition of **Ms. XYZ**. It was through her tenure as a Case Manager Team Lead that she was able to begin to point out and address the deficiencies within the program design that indirectly prevented customers from reaching their fullest potential. She redesigned qualitative and quantitative assessment tools, revamped the job readiness curriculum to include peer support and streamlined the process for meeting with customers resulting in a 2 minute wait time in the Resource room.

**Ms. XYZ** also served as the Interim Quality Assurance Manager-it was during this time that she was able to spend more time learning and reconciling the city's database of record used by Vendors **XYZWORKS**. She became the expert and guru of the data system and worked with staff and **XYZ** City Department of Social Services Case Workers. Her proactive style prevented customers from receiving benefits in error or conversely ensured sanctions were always justified and not in error. She is known throughout the

entire department of social services as the one to call if you need something fixed or prevented. A very noble accolade because TANF customers are some of the most vulnerable populations and any impact to their benefits could be severely damaging. The contributions made by **Ms. XYZ** efforts and her ability to flow information and provide training to her staff has contributed to **XYZ** and Baltimore city meeting its work participation goal- a key performance indicator of TANF programs.

**Describe how the accomplishments of the nominee have contributed to the overall growth and positive image of the workforce development profession. Include a description of the practical applicability of the nominee's contribution and how the nominee has shared his/her knowledge with other professionals and interested stakeholders.**

In January 2015 **Ms. XYZ** was chosen to be one of the participants in the inaugural class of NAWDP's Leadership academy in conjunction with Towson University. True to her commitment to advancing service delivery options and being at the forefront of change. **Ms. XYZ** completed a capstone project where she researched, vetted and analyzed various technological advancement platforms to be used companywide in response to the new Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) legislation. Recognizing that the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires continuous improvement and provides a mandate to improve the quality of services to provide job candidates the skills and credentials necessary to secure and advance in employment. She understands that more importantly it allows us to create systems that focus on satisfying the needs of businesses. **Ms. XYZ** sought out to create an awesome interactive experience with technology for both job seekers and businesses. She developed a strategy to guide the company in embracing technologies that help to identify qualified job candidates, help build career pathways, perform quality career planning, steer to in-demand industry, and address barriers to employment. Her goal is to continue to identify technological improvements to help facilitate services that lead businesses to identify successful talent. In order to do so one of the areas that provides the quickest return on our investment and has the potential to have the greatest impact on customer service delivery is awesome technological solutions. She understands that the competitive market in which we live demands that we move out aggressively on implementing new technology and WIOA gives us an opportunity to streamline the tracking of data points that lead to measurable outcomes only.

The capstone project submitted to executives of the company focused on innovation and technology advancements and laid out the following recommendations. 1) Decrease the amount of duplication that we have in all of our programs because of multiple systems; 2) Identify those essential elements that clients require us to put in the system and stick to just that. 3) Identify a product that will allow us the flexibility to customize and identify those data inputs that we think are valuable to businesses-those inputs that help us provide the best talent to businesses. 4) Engage a company that has the ability to adapt and customize its product to meet the needs of each project. With one system companywide across all projects we will be able to identify best practices to help us meet our obligations to track and triage job candidates, while also allowing us to be creative to meet the needs of our businesses. Our goal would be to have consistent data points across all of our projects so that our best practices are

consistent and our end product is consistent and reliable. For the purposes of reducing the amount of time staff has to devote to administrative tasks that don't contribute to the business and job candidates experience with the system.

Our organization agreed to implement some technological improvements but not all due to budgetary constraints. **Ms. XYZ** did not stop there-she continued to implement work arounds within her office to streamline services to both job seekers and businesses resulting in increased jobs to job seekers.

EXAMPLE