

Jobs available for seniors

KINGMAN – Mohave County recently received federal grant funding to make part-time, training jobs available to income-eligible people age 55 and older.

The Title V program assists income-eligible seniors in finding part-time jobs within non-profit agencies, said Lynne Steiger, the county's program representative for WIA (Workforce Investment Act) and Title V/SCSEP (American Older Workers Act/Senior Community Service Employment Program). And now, with the economy at a low point and jobs being scarce, Mohave County has received enough grant funding to fill

Steiger has already placed several seniors who have been on the program waiting list into part-time positions.

"But we still have some open positions," she said. "And I am specifically allotting those positions to our Senior Nutrition Centers. We knew during the budgeting process that senior programs funding was tight and we may have to back fill some of the staffing. I made a commitment to target our Title V positions to help staff the Senior Centers. We have open positions for van drivers and kitchen aides throughout the county. Those positions are in Bullhead City, Lake Havasu City, Golden Shores and Kingman.

"The Senior Nutrition Centers have been good partners with us," Steiger said. "We have placed our people with them in the past and a certain number of those individuals have graduated to unsubsidized employment. I am committed to making sure those centers have the people they need to

more than twice as many Title V positions as in prior years.

"During the last three years, we received funding for 15 Title V positions in Mohave County," she said. "This year, however, we are being awarded funding for 34 positions. The federal grant money flows through the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) to SCSEP and on to Mohave County and other regions in the state. The state told us we did such an incredible job over the past few years running the Title V program, partnering with other programs and leveraging our money that we were being awarded the large amount of funding this year."

continue their good services to seniors, while, at the same time, helping seniors learn new skills and return to the workplace."

Two women who work for Mohave County testified on their personal Title V program success stories.

"I came into the position I currently have through Title V a little over a year ago," said Alex Ball, an office clerk in the Community Services Department. "I was part-time as a Title V employee only very briefly before becoming a full-time, unsubsidized employee – which is the goal of the Title V program."

During July and August of this year, four Title V participants "graduated into full-time, unsubsidized employment," Steiger said. "Once someone moves on to regular employment with more hours, better pay and benefits, the Title V position that person vacated becomes open again and ready to serve another senior" who wants to return to the workplace.

“I read about the program in the *Mohave Valley Daily News*,” Ball said. “I went to the One-Stop Career Center in Bullhead City and, in a couple of days, I met with Lynne. That was the first ray of light after a long, dark year. I had been unemployed for almost a year and was having a real hard time. The way they treated me at the One-Stop and the fact that Lynne actually had something to offer that was helpful and hopeful was a really big deal to me.”

Cynthia Michaels is a Title V employee who has worked as a Title V representative in the Kingman One-Stop Career Center since June of 2009.

“I came into the program right at the age where I became eligible,” she said. “I was definitely income eligible because I had no job, no form of transportation and no place to live. I came to the program after seeing an article in the Kingman newspaper. Right away I spoke with Bill Hargrove who put me in touch with Title V Representative Carol Metheny. I gave her some information over the phone and she scheduled an in-person interview. It saved my life.

“I am now doing the same job as Carol Metheny, the lady who interviewed me,” Michaels said. “I meet with potential participants for the program and help determine their eligibility. I go over the requirements with them and also work with host agencies in trying to get people placed in jobs. I have a profound respect for the people who come in and who I work with. A lot of the older workers have very much to offer – much more than society realizes. There is a lot of wisdom there to tap into and, as a result, help our community become better.”

Michaels’ personal achievements have been dramatic.

“I’ve been able to cultivate case-management skills,” she said. “I’m doing work that I never knew anything about before. My life has achieved a balance because of the program. With my participation in the program, I was able to purchase a car and afford a place to live. And I’m learning all kinds of skills that I will be able to take with me wherever I go.”

Regaining self confidence is a primary goal of the Title V program, Steiger said. “Even those people who think they are not qualified and have no skills can benefit. We want those people. The program will help them gain new skills and rehabilitate skills they may have forgotten they had.

“I have one veteran (in the program) who had not worked for over 10 years,” she said. “He didn’t think he could even get a dishwashing job. Today he is working as a dishwasher and he loves it. He is very smart. He passed all the basic education assessments we gave him, including the college COMPASS (Computer-adaptive Placement, Assessment, and Support System) test. He is awaiting a Pell Grant to begin his college work toward an Associate of Arts degree in psychology.”

The program can send participants to Mohave Community College training, she said. Support Services can help with basic needs. “This is how Cynthia was able to get into a residence and get eye glasses and some clothing. She is also receiving psychology training, which is beneficial for the type of work she is doing.”

“I know some people say anyone can get a job who wants a job,” Ball said. “That just isn’t true. There were no jobs available in my skills and I was turned down for everything from fast food on. Thank goodness for Mohave County’s Title V program.”

“It has been life transforming,” Michaels said.

The Title V program is facilitated through the Mohave County One-Stop Career Centers. Individuals who are interested in more information on Title V opportunities can call or drop by any of the three centers which are located in Bullhead City, Kingman and Lake Havasu City. If they would like to personally speak to Carol Metheny, Cynthia Michaels or Lynne Steiger, they can call the Kingman office at (928) 753-0723.

“Or, individuals can just go to the local Senior Nutrition Center and the center can call us,” Steiger said. “We could then contact the person and discuss his or her request and eligibility.”

Anyone who gets into the program will not regret it, Michaels and Ball agreed.

“It’s a good step,” Ball said. “You will get recent job experience; you may learn some things; and you will become much more marketable in the job world.”