

SPEC SPOTLIGHT

January 2008

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SPEC Co-hosts Mayor's Disability Initiative

Sharing information and program planning were the focus as SPEC and the National Disability Institute co-hosted the second annual **Mayor's Leadership Academy on Asset Development for Persons with Disabilities and Their Families**. The representatives from 14 cities are actively involved in SPEC's disability initiative and the NDI's Real Economic Impact Tour. SPEC Director Julie Garcia opened the session by talking about SPEC's commitment to the disability initiative.

For each city represented at the academy, the local SPEC office worked with a city representative to develop city action plans. Territory Manager Bill Smits and the city of Boston prepared a plan that includes several action items. "We are excited about hosting a filing season kickoff event in February with the mayor highlighting the EITC coalition's efforts to serve individuals with disabilities through its new mobile tax preparation service," Smits said.

Senior Tax Consultant Christine Bertin and the city of Denver are partnering in Area 4., "Educating persons with disabilities regarding tax credits and the effect on their SSI benefits is a priority for Denver," Bertin said.

Senior Tax Consultant Yolanda Cantu from San Antonio is planning a meeting in February with Bank of America affinity groups, local and national disability organizations and with guest speaker Dr. Johnette Hartnett from NDI. A Super Saturday event is also scheduled for February with emphasis on the disability initiative.

During panel sessions members discussed asset building, mobile tax clinics, creating a workgroup within an existing coalition and how to market and reach people with disabilities.

This event was an opportunity for the partners to exchange ideas and best practices. According to SPEC Senior Analyst Richard Keeling, "Among other things we learned that what works well in one city may not work in another city since there are different issues like capacity and resources, but at the same time there are some commonalities that everyone could all identify with." ◀



The Academy included a National Partner Panel, L to R: Karen Flippo, Executive Director of National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities; Bradford Turner-Little, Assistant VP/Government Relations for Easter Seals; Eric Olsen, National Director of Workforce Development for Goodwill Industries and Sharon Shreet, Senior Operations Advisor to Associate Commissioner Employment Support Program for Social Security Administration.



During opening remarks, SPEC Director Julie Garcia shares the SPEC story and expresses her excitement about this year's disability initiatives.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Cities attending included:

- Albany, NY
- Baltimore, MD
- Boston, MA
- Charlotte, NC
- Denver, CO
- Hartford, CT
- Houston, TX
- Las Vegas, NV
- Manchester, NH
- Minneapolis, MN
- Orlando, FL
- San Antonio, TX
- Washington, DC
- Wilmington, DE

Source: SPEC HQ