

**Testimony of Stephanie Smith, COO**  
**Goodwill Industries of Southern Arizona**  
**Subcommittee on Social Security and Family Policy**  
**April 25, 2002**

Goodwill (GW) is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit community based organization, serving individuals with barriers to employment. GW's mission is to provide employment, training, and support services to increase the employability, retention and earnings of individuals with barriers to employment. As a community leader, GW provides workforce development through innovative, quality programs designed to reduce poverty in our community. GW is dedicated to the ideal of strengthening our families and community through the Power of Work!

To implement this mission, GW is consistently striving to meet the changing workforce development needs of our community. Just four years ago our GW was serving approximately 100 individuals with disabilities per year. Since then, as a result of welfare reform, in addition to serving individuals with disabilities we expanded our mission to serve individuals with other barriers to employment. These barriers include welfare dependency, limited academics, little, if any, work experience, substance abuse, and lack of English proficiency. Often times, these individuals have childcare, transportation, housing, financial, and domestic abuse issues, which create additional barriers. During 2001, our GW served over 1,000 individuals – 80% of which were single mothers receiving TANF.

Our GW serves an area that is economically depressed – we are within 60 miles of the Mexican border, the per capita income in Tucson is 15% below the national average, and 39% of the residents in South Tucson, an area very near our main training facility, are living below the poverty level.

We knew, based on our experience and expertise, that in order to effectively assist individuals with these barriers, we needed to develop a variety of vocational training programs. Some of the programs needed to provide the industry specific job skills, or hard skills that are needed in our community. Other programs were specifically designed to address the life or soft skills that often prevent otherwise qualified individuals from successfully maintaining employment. Area employers have often indicated to GW that many entry-level employees lose their jobs because of a lack of work ethic and decision-making skills that prevent them from solving their childcare, transportation, and personal issues.

Some of these programs addressing the Soft and Life skills include:

**Everyday Business Etiquette** is a two-week long workshop providing Pre-Employment and Life Skills Training for welfare-to-work individuals. This program was specifically designed to provide individuals with little, if any, work experience with the skills needed to successfully interact in today's workplace and business community. This workshop covers topics such as listening skills, interpersonal skills, and how to be a team player.

**Career Preparation Services** is a comprehensive three-week workshop designed to provide low-income individuals, welfare-to-work individuals, and individuals with barriers to employment the skills needed to successfully obtain and maintain employment. The workshop includes training plus job placement assistance and job retention services for the first 90-days of employment. This workshop covers work ethics and dependability, adapting to change, interview techniques, and how to keep a job.

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Goodwill provides **Job Development and Placement** for low-income individuals, welfare-to-work individuals, and individuals with disabilities or other barriers to employment. Services are provided on an individualized, one-on-one basis that assists the individual to enter / re-enter the job market or seek career advancement and includes career planning, completion of job applications and resumes, work appropriate business attire, and interview techniques. This program also provides 90-days of job retention services allowing the individual to fully adjust to the new work environment.

Programs addressing industry specific skills include:

**Teleservice Training.** The Tucson area has become a hub for the Teleservice Industry with 40 companies employing 16,000 individuals. Teleservice employers told us that they are unable to hire all of the employees they need, due to a lack of qualified applicants. To address this issue, Goodwill provides **Teleservice Training** for low-income individuals, welfare-to-work individuals, Incumbent workers, and individuals with barriers to employment. Goodwill's training program provides seven weeks of classroom instruction that is specifically designed to provide individuals with the entry-level skills needed for employment in Tucson's dynamic Teleservice Industry earning \$8.00-\$9.00 per hour, with benefits. The program includes job placement assistance and job retention services for 90-days after placement. Goodwill's Teleservice Training provides keyboarding skills, general computer and windows 98 training, and telephone etiquette.

I want to highlight specifically, a program that Goodwill Industries implemented on a national basis. This program was designed to serve "hard to serve" Welfare to work individuals through individualized job placement assistance and intensive job retention services. By definition, "hard to serve" individuals are those with academic levels below 5<sup>th</sup> grade, substance abuse issues, or a demonstrated inability to maintain employment. As all of our programs, this program recognizes that the "one size fits all" approach to workforce development services is likely to fail. GW recognizes that employment issues vary in different communities.

Nationally, over the last 100 years, Goodwill Industries has helped nearly 6 million people earn a living and support their families. Goodwill is a unique community organization that utilizes a business model approach allowing us to be good stewards of the resources that are given to us, in order to provide effective workforce development programs. GW aims to reach 20 million people by the year 2020, helping them find and keep good jobs, and advance in their careers. We will accomplish this goal in the same way GW has worked for 100 years – ONE person, ONE family, ONE community at a time.

Capitalization money would allow Goodwills to use the resources and revenues from their retail operations to fund these and additional programs. Congress partnered with Goodwills in Florida and Louisiana by authorizing a capitalization demonstration project in the 1996 Welfare Reform Authorization bill. These projects were tremendously successful in meeting their targets in placing the hardest to serve. The capitalization strategy is a viable tool that Congress could use to allow business model non-profits to meet these needs in a broader and more immediate fashion.