

Program Summary: Miami Dade College

The Walmart Brighter Futures Project Back-to-Work Center was established in December 2009 at Miami Dade College's Wolfson Campus. The center is housed in the Learning Resources area of the college, with an extraordinary exposure to a monthly traffic of proximately 17,500. The program is open to MDC students as well as potential students in the Miami-Dade County community living at or below 150% of the U.S. Federal Poverty Guidelines.

Clients must complete a one-on-one interview with our Client Support Specialist (Back-to-Work Center staff member) to make an assessment of needs, experience and abilities, educational wants, and financial situation. Clients may also complete a career interest assessment in the center's computer lab. These assessment results are discussed with the client and hone in on possible career options and possibilities, thus shaping an individualized training plan. Clients are encouraged to apply for federal financial aid; those who do not have a high school diploma are urged to register for GED training. Many are directed to English classes. Others may need access to in-house training in resume writing and interviewing skills, and still others may simply need access to the computer lab to search for a job.

Jose Sagredo, a Miami Dade College student, needed income to continue his schooling but his part-time jobs were leading nowhere. Jose was accepted in the Walmart Brighter Futures 2.0 Project and started his training plan. A few months later, he sent us a letter thanking the program for helping him. He wrote about his experience with our staff at his intake:

I was referred by a friend and I went there. I got into a rather nice conversation, which included my goals, her advisement, and the best of wishes. I took the course to get a Security Officer D-License, and I did pretty well (98 and 97 in my exams). As soon as I got my temporary license, I didn't have to call nor apply to any company; I received a call from ORNA Security, and it was pretty much a perfect job for me. I did have time to study, work, and do anything else I wanted. I could work mostly the hours I wanted. My income for the last check I received was around 250 percent the amount of my last two checks from the grocery job I was doing before.... A few weeks ago I got my AA degree and I am ready to get to the next level.

Zaymar Vargas wrote to us:

My special thanks to your team for the wonderful job you did on the Walmart Brighter Futures Project. I was delighted with the whole process welcoming, trainings, interaction with other students/professionals, and especially I appreciated your guidance through the re-employment process when I needed it most. The extra time and effort you put in were certainly worthwhile. It is a joy for me to work with such dedicated and talented Miami Dade College staff at the Back-to-Work Center. During my experience with your project, I was able to improve my professional skills and at the same time I was continuously looking for a job. I went from part-time jobs to full-time at an excellent rate.

C. Martorella also expressed her gratitude to the staff at Walmart Brighter Futures 2.0 Project at Miami Dade College:

Thanks to this agency I was able to find a full-time job which I am very satisfied with. Walmart Brighter Futures 2.0 Project is a wonderful place that felt like home. The Program Coordinator is a real asset to this agency. She was always positive, pleasant, and knowledgeable about career trends. She constantly tried to connect me with jobs that related to my degree, skills, and

experience. She wanted me to reach my goals. She focused on helping me find a job that would provide me job satisfaction.

The Resource Center at Walmart Brighter Futures 2.0 Project also offered me the tools to polish my computer and customer service skills, as well as a place where I was able to learn new computer programs and many more learning resources.