

# Key Informant Interviews with Bookville Residents

Key informant interview: John Jones, CEO, Bookville Economic Development Corporation

- What are the problems facing our community regarding employment?  
Lack of skills, preparedness, ability to complete job applications, dressed appropriately  
Need of career services, technology skills to fill out job application  
Ability to do a database search and access internet  
Unfilled manufacturer jobs

- What has happened that makes you believe this is a problem?  
As CEO, businesses are telling me these are a problem. labor issue

- Who does this problem affect?  
Entire community. If we can't hire, companies won't grow.

- How does it affect them? [Encourage them to be specific.]  
Companies have chosen to expand elsewhere; not choosing to bring new lines of product here. 'If I can't get people to make what we need here now, why bring more?'

- What causes this problem?  
Not Bookville-specific: google National Association of Manufacturers to research nation-wide skills gap problem.  
Today, one person is doing the job three people did in 1978.  
Education: many kids in schools are part of family that is collecting long-term government unemployment.  
Work ethic: community approach.  
When employer needs labor, only one of ten is a decent applicant

- Who should I talk with to get a different view of this?  
Partnership with NE Workforce development in Bookville: Ruby Dee, John Ashcroft,  
Mary Jones

- How can library be an asset to you?  
Erica Mailer - Career Services, Bookville University  
Employment Agencies: Advanced Services, Essential Personnel, Associated Staffing

## Other thoughts:

- Round table discussion with NE Workforce development to identify constituency to reach out to different than what they cover.
- Lincoln libraries- recently underwent strategic planning and looking at a different model to offer a Barnes & Noble/coffee shop feel at the library: offering different services, hours, meeting rooms for entrepreneurs--office space. He would be happy to be in touch in case you (Library Director Smith) would like to speak with someone there.

## Key Informant Interviews — Economic Development

Key informant interview: Ruby Dee, Nebraska Workforce Development

- What are the problems facing our community?

lack of skilled workers in manufacturing  
low unemployment, lack of labor supply

- What has happened that makes you believe this is a problem?

Employers of every size voice it. Manufacturing, Bookville General Hospital.

Bookville General Hospital: because of safety regulations, need high school diploma, even housekeepers for safety with chemicals.

- Tell me more about that.

Bookville General Hospital: applications must be literate and able to do simple math computations, for example, to mix chemicals for cleaning. Lack of basic skills - not even 7th grade math ability

- Who does this problem affect?

Long-time residents of Bookville have stopped applying for jobs out of discouragement/frustration. Haven't kept up; generations w/o computer skills. All ages.

Affects community. Companies research labor pool statistics including HS grads, college grads, people who didn't complete 6th grade, also highly skilled/capable people leaving because nothing is going on.

- How does it affect them? [Encourage them to be specific.]

Schools affected. Cultural changes that happen in community: ex. Meatpackers/Burger Queen bought up a company, hired workers at a certain (low) skill and education level, then closed/packed up company and left. Unemployed and dependents still here and in school system, do not necessarily share appreciation of value of education. On contrary, open something with skilled labor force--brings husband and wife, family, has different impact.

- Who should I talk with to get a different view of this?

Haley Smerdly (just married and changed name, but couldn't remember) - administrator at Bookville Public Schools, is/was on Chamber Board

- How can library be asset?

computers, after-hours access, overflow access

## Key informant interview:

Bronwyn German, Branch Manager, Jobs, Inc.

- What are the problems facing our community?

Lack of computer knowledge

Applicants discouraged - ask for paper, but staffing agencies going paperless; not up-to-date with progressive technology

- What has happened that makes you believe this is a problem?

Extremes in caliber of applicants - motivated with great work history vs. collecting social security benefits, 5 jobs in 2 years, lack of motivation; applicants - sense of entitlement - 'I deserve to have a job. Why haven't you found me a job?'

- Who does this problem affect?

Older generation doesn't know how to use technology, closed off and not open to learning new things, poor job stability - multi-generational, chain reaction

- How does it affect them? [Encourage them to be specific.]

We look for longevity - can't place someone with 5 jobs in 2 years, criminal record. Staffing agencies do coaching to improve job stability

- Who should I talk with to get a different view of

this? Nebraska Workforce Development Office

Res. Care Center - inside NE Wkforce Dvlpmt Office

- How can Library be an asset to you?

Classes for general computer knowledge, or more advanced classes for clerical candidates, and  
Communicate class info to Job, Inc. - email when classes are available

## Key Informant Interviews — Health

Interview- Bookville HS School Board Member

Areas of need

1. Economic Development - Need to be able to attract more businesses to Bookville
2. Improve current strength of Reading and Writing in the school system- Bookville Public School system is 70% proficient in those areas. State average is 66%. Recommend improving our strength
3. Upgrade Bookville Public elementary schools

North Midland District Community Health Improvement Plan

2013 Community Health Improvement Plan Priority Goals

1. Obesity
  - Increase Activity
  - Improve diets
2. Reduce cancer
  - Increase number of people who participate in prevention and screening activities
  - Increase duration and quality of life for survivors of cancer
  - Improve needed resources for cancer prevention and health
3. Mental Health
  - Improve screening for all ages
  - Increase access through integrated care
  - Resource network/data base
  - Provide Mental Health First Aid
  - Improve education, awareness and promotion of mental health
4. Substance Abuse
  - Improve community based public awareness/education activities
  - Increase evidence based substance abuse prevention
  - Increase substance abuse screening

## 5. Access to Health Care

Increase Community Partnerships

Increase Preventative Services

Technology Enhancement to improve care

Recruit resources and reliable health information

## **Key Informant Interviews — Higher Education**

**Interviewed:** Dr. Rod Dangerfield, Professor of History, Bookville College

### **What are the problems facing our community:**

From his experience with his own kids and freshmen he sees at the college, he believes the high school has taken a nose dive. The emphasis has been focused on the bottom half and having everyone graduate (possibly tied to funding??). The top half have been left out. He feels the schools are not willing/able to deal with the students at the high end. He would like to see more honors classes/early college courses, etc.

He also thinks that the immigrants and transient workers do not get integrated into the community very well.

He also thinks that hunger is an issue. We are the 3<sup>rd</sup> poorest congressional district in the country. He thinks the recession has finally hit Nebraska. The new healthcare system has also factored into this. There are also those with less permanent work.

### **Other thoughts:**

Latch-key kids. Is there a place for them to go after school? Is "The Teens' Place" still in operation? Could kids get bused to the library for activities?

**Interviewed:** Mary Winterhalter, President of Bookville College

### **What are the problems facing our community:**

She believes the economic environment is not robust enough. There is a significant percentage of the population probably living on the margins. She thinks this is caused by the fact that there are not enough jobs that pay a sustainable income. She's seen this at the college level. There are many kids who would do well at college and are unable to go because the resources just aren't there. There are many kids who are Pell Grant eligible.

**Other thoughts:**

She believes that partnerships are important (more specifically with the college and the community).

She thinks that the library can have a huge impact on those kids that don't have many resources. She's seen it first hand: when she was a child and also through her daughter who works at a large library in Illinois.



## Key Informant Interviews — Education

Brad Pit —Superintendent Bookville Public Schools

1. High quality, developmentally-appropriate pre-school learning experiences for all three and four year olds.
2. High quality, on-going, promotion of literacy/education attainment
3. High quality, high-interest, programming for high-ability learners.

Scott Curling— Superintendent Bookville Public Schools

1. Extended school year: Mr. Curling would like to see a community-wide extended year calendar which incorporates learning activities throughout the summer months. Some activities would be provided in cooperation with partners such as the Bookville Museum, Bookville Public Library, Bookville Community College, and Bookville College. He also mentioned some sort of community-wide, single-focus-point access to existing summer learning activities.
2. Preschool and early literacy programs. He would like to see early enrichment programs from birth through ages 2 or 3 available.
3. Currently there are no preschool programs available. He would like to change that.

Father Brown —Superintendent St. Andrew Parochial Schools

1. Hispanic Outreach: Father would like to see programs that seek to bridge the language barrier with Hispanic students and families. Also programs that help the schools to understand the educational cultural of Hispanic families and how that can be accommodated within the United States school systems. All this with a goal of better serving this population.
2. Availability of Industrial Arts/ Vocational programs for students to learn career skills if they are not going to attend post high school education: He felt Bookville Public School was doing a good job with this via the Pathways program but sees the need in other schools without access.