



## Mission Statement

**Empathetic • Resourceful • Empowering • Effective**

*“We’re letting you go.”* For mature professionals, those words can cripple a career. Age discrimination is wrong and illegal, but that’s what they face. Despite the skills and sound judgment they can bring to employers and countless economic and personal contributions to our community, assistance that meets their unique needs is largely unavailable. We are the North Bay’s only no-fee program designed specifically to address their challenges. We provide highly effective job search training, networking assistance and strong peer support – a proven combination that more quickly enables these motivated and productive people to hear two *other* words: *“You’re hired.”*

## Case Statement

### I. The Need

The impact of the economic collapse on employment still lingers in the Bay Area, even in Marin County. Competitive pressures are causing *“belt tightening”* at companies of all sizes. And those most vulnerable are older professionals for no other reason their salary and position with their company. The *U.S. Department of Labor* defines *“Long Term Unemployment”* as six and half months. But according to the *Government Accountability Office*, job-seeking professionals over 40 are facing nearly *15 months* of unemployment on average, with 44% exceeding a year and a half. At 50 to 55, unemployment of two years or more is becoming the norm.

Despite the unique difficulties older professionals face – particularly age discrimination – focused assistance is scarce in the North Bay. Both the state and the county agencies provide only very basic services. Funding for the only component to assist job-seeking 40+ professionals, the Marin *Chapter* of the state’s *“Experience Unlimited”* program, was abruptly eliminated in January, 2014.

As a result, older professionals were left to fend for themselves in an inherently hostile employment environment. Battered by all this, their confidence plummets, severely jeopardizing their ability to win over employers. A loss of self-esteem undermines their very will to even pursue openings. Beyond the individuals, entire families are thrown into insecurity.

### II. The Peer Group Support Model

As genuinely caring as public agency workers may be, there’s an inherent distance between them and those seeking assistance. It’s a very real obstacle for those trying to overcome the problems they face. There is a simple reason why peer support groups are effective alternative. In a word, it’s trust.

When people are viewed as true peers, trust is almost immediate and unconditional. The commonality of experiences transforms strangers into something akin to family. The relationship is one of equality. The group’s a safe place, with safe people. Feelings of being isolated and stigmatized dissolve, enabling productive communication. Practical advice based on first-hand experiences is comfortably shared. Mutual support comes naturally, restoring confidence. Today’s student is tomorrow’s mentor and this month’s employee is often next month’s job connection.

All of this is possible with a relatively small budget. Secure meeting space, provide refreshments, get the word out and --with a motivated internal team facilitating things -- you're good to go. No other model is more effective for those needing help while at the same time being as cost-effective.

### III. Universe of Beneficiaries

Our *direct* beneficiaries are highly experienced, age 40+ professionals in a broad range of fields, traumatized by the loss of their job. This is unfamiliar territory to them. They're desperate for job-search guidance and updated skills to compete in today's economy. We get them up to speed as quickly as possible, restore their confidence and equip them with new tools needed in their job search. Last year alone, 69 from our group secured new positions – restoring a hefty economic stimulus to their communities in the process.

Beyond the individuals, beneficiaries are endless. Employers are quickly rewarded by the productivity of the extremely motivated mature worker they've hired. Other local businesses gain as well from the greater spending of skilled, higher earning professionals. By speeding up their re-employment, recipients of public assistance are more quickly transformed into taxpaying contributors to their community – and generally at a higher rate than others pay benefiting everyone in Marin.

Finally, mature people are -- by nature -- doers not spectators. They believe in volunteering their time, energy and resources to their community. So their re-employment empowers them to make countless in-kind contributions to the community, benefitting others in a myriad of ways.

### IV. Marin Professionals Defined

*Marin Professionals* is a peer support, job search training and networking organization serving 40+ year-old business professionals in Marin and the North Bay. It began in 1992 as a *Chapter* of the states' *Experience Unlimited* program. Then in January 2014, severe state budget cuts caused *Marin Professionals* to lose state funding, despite decades of proven effectiveness.

Recognizing the need to continue the program, participants in *Marin Professionals* reconstituted it as an all-volunteer-run organization. The group relocated from the *Employment Development Department* to the *Renaissance Entrepreneur Center* in San Rafael for the next 19 months. Since the loss of state funding, the group has functioned as the only volunteer-run, no fee program designed specifically to meet the unique re-employment needs of older professionals in Marin and the North Bay.

In January 2015, *Marin Professionals* gained 501(c)3 status with *MarinLink* as its *Fiscal Sponsor*, enabling us to seek much needed charitable funding to sustain our program. This will also enable us to aggressively address on-going age discrimination while advocating for the enormous value mature workers bring to employers. In August 2015, when the *Renaissance Center* could no longer afford to host the organization, the group relocated again, now headquartered on an interim basis with *MarinLink* at *Northgate Mall*.

### V. Marin Professionals Program

*Marin Professionals* provides a coordinated program with four core elements: *Personal Skills Training*, *Marketing Materials Preparation*, *Peer Support* and *Networking Assistance*. This combination has proven to be a potent formula in meeting the individual re-employment needs of literally hundreds of our participants.

➤ **PERSONAL SKILLS TRAINING:**

*5-Day Job Search Workshop* is a free series of tutorials held bi-monthly and required for all new participants. It covers current resume styles, marketing, networking, interview techniques, updates

knowledge of the job market and re-packages skills and experiences to attract recruiters and hiring managers.

- **Skills Workshops** are small group sessions providing intensified personal attention in such areas as interviewing, networking interaction and public speaking.
- **Guest Employment Experts** speak during the *Weekly Monday Meeting*, providing advice on employment topics, tips on the hiring practices, and insider information on industries and companies.

➤ **MARKETING MATERIALS PREPARATION:**

- **Marketing Materials Workshops** are small group sessions providing personal attention in strengthening resumes, preparing *LinkedIn* profiles, crafting approach letters and creating personal bios.
- **New Media Tutorials** are sessions to help participants enhance their online presence, as well as use it efficiently to conduct their job search and better market themselves to employers.

➤ **PEER SUPPORT:**

- **Weekly Monday Meeting** enables participants to exchange information with the entire group attending. Job leads, hiring successes and upcoming interviews are announced, as well as requests for specific company contacts. Information on industry conferences, special seminars and other relevant events are also shared.
- **Success Teams** meet weekly, each including participants who completed a *5-Day Job Search Workshop* together. The *Teams* provide more personalized support as they monitor each other's progress, offer feedback and help to refine the techniques gained in the *Workshop*.

➤ **NETWORKING ASSISTANCE:**

- **Internal Networking** takes place during the *Weekly Monday Meeting* as new and older participants get acquainted. Since those attending each meeting vary, participants constantly expand their network, each a potential source of a job lead or a introduction.
- **External Networking Opportunities** are announced during the *Weekly Monday Meeting*, as well as being posted on the *Marin Professionals* web site, including *Linked Local Marin* mixers, *Chamber of Commerce* events and business group and employer gatherings.
- **MP LinkedIn Group** expands participant's network to include all current and past *Marin Professionals* participants, totaling over 600 in Marin and nearby communities. Alumni can inform participants of openings with their employer. Job seeking participants can request information or introductions from anyone in the *Marin Professionals Group*.

## VI. Participants Profile

- **Size of Population:** *Marin Professionals* currently works with over 50 active participants. Typically about 30 will attend our *Weekly Monday Meeting* depending on their availability. In addition, we maintain weekly communication with another 40+ participants. Finally, we continue contact with over 600 current and past participants through *Marin Professionals LinkedIn Group*. A survey conducted in April 2015 of active participants yielded the following profile:

• **Demographics:**

- Gender: 57% Female 43% Male
- Marital Status: 43% Married 57% Single
- Avg. Household: 1.9 Persons
- Age Range: 35 to 71 Years
- Avg. Age: 57.4

• **Residences:**

- Southern Marin: 28%
- Central Marin: 35%
- Western Marin: 8%
- Northern Marin: 25%
- Napa/Sonoma: 8%

- **Education:**
  - Bachelors Degree: 60%
  - Masters Degree: 29%
  - PhD: 5%
  - JD: 2%
  
- **Employment Data:**
  - Average Employment Duration Without Significant Gaps: 20.6 Years
  - Average Duration of Current Unemployment: 13.5 Months
  - Currently Unemployed for 15 to 24 Months: 44%
  
- **Occupations:**

○ 26% Communications	○ 5% Engineering/Manufact.
○ 16% Adm./Management	○ 5% Sales
○ 14% Education/Research	○ 4% Financial
○ 9% Health/Wellness	○ 3% Construction/Real Estate
○ 8% IT	○ 3% Energy/Environment
○ 6% Event/Hospitality	
○ 5% Govt./Legal	

## VII. Key Accomplishments

Since reconstituting *Marin Professionals* as an all volunteer-run program, among our many accomplishments, we consider four of them to be most emblematic:

### 1) 2014: 56 Job Search Workshop Graduates

#### 2015: 33 More Graduates – 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter

Last year, 56 participants graduated from our *5-Day Job Search Workshop* sessions. The number enrolling for each session this year has greatly exceeded those enrolling in 2014, demonstrating the continuing need for our program. In the first quarter of this year, 20 new participants completed this training. Another 13 participants “graduated” during the second quarter, with the next session scheduled for September at *Northgate*. *Marin Professionals* has successfully continued the core elements of the program for the past 20 months.

### 2) 2014: 69 Participants Re-Employed

#### 2015: 27 More Re-employed – 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter

During 2014, an average of five participants per month secured new jobs. By year’s end, a total of 69 were re-employed, mostly full time in their chosen profession. In a survey of working alumni, 58% credited networking techniques developed in our program, while 86% reported that skills learned in workshops played a major role in securing their job. The program helped another 12 participants return to work during the first quarter and 15 more in the second quarter.

### 3) Increased Awareness of Age Discrimination in Employment

*Marin Professionals* has proved to be a powerful voice against age discrimination in employment. We have twice obtained front page coverage in the *Marin Independent Journal* on the problems facing mature workers and our participants in particular. Awareness of this issue has been raised with local officials, including **State Assembly Member Marc Levine**, and we continue to urge support for efforts to eliminate this wrongful and imprudent practice.

4) **Tax Dollars Saved, Economic Stimulus Provided**

*Marin Professionals'* effectiveness in helping so many participants to return to work has saved Marin residents millions in additional costs for unemployment and social services. Our working alumni have injected a significant spending back into the local economy. All accomplished at no expense to taxpayers, the County, or participants. Our program's financial performance has been exemplary, sustained entirely on donated time, space and small amounts of money. Dollar for dollar, few organizations have the fiscal efficiency-to-outcomes demonstrated by *Marin Professionals*.

### VIII. Near-Term Goals

1) **Within six months, reduce the average duration of Participants' unemployment by half.**

A *Marin Professionals* survey conducted in April 2015 revealed that participants have been without work for an average of 13.7 months. Our goal is to reduce the average duration of unemployment for our participants to six months or less.

2) **Within three months, meet with key recruiters and large employers in Marin to convince them to identify Marin Professionals as a recruitment resource.**

Certain employers in Marin and the vicinity are more likely to need the kinds of skills our participants could provide. Our goal is to contact the most relevant recruiters and employers with the objective of having them identify *Marin Professionals* as a recruitment resource.

3) **Reduce the wait-time by half for new participants seeking to complete the 5-Day Job Search Workshop by restoring monthly scheduling.**

Beginning in January 2015, we could only offer the *5-Day Job Search Workshop* every other month due to limited meeting space availability, forcing new participants to wait twice as long before becoming fully prepared to pursue new employment. Our goal is to resume our monthly workshop schedule as soon as possible this year by securing dedicated space at low cost location as soon as financially feasible.

### IX. Longer Term Plans

1) **Establish Marin Professionals as a paid outplacement service utilized by large local employers.**

*Marin Professional* is already an "outplacement service" on a small scale for individuals as opposed to companies. The support, updating of job search skills and materials, access to job leads and networking opportunities we provide mirrors what companies pay outplacement services for their laid off employees. With adequate staffing, dedicated workspace and additional of office supplies and equipment, *Marin Professionals* could meet the outplacement requirements of local companies -- and likely do so for less than competing services -- supplementing funding for our program.

2) **Advocate for mature workers by raising awareness of wrongful, imprudent age discrimination.**

While mature workers are looking forward, too many employers are stuck in the past with views about age that are absurdly out of date and baseless. *Marin Professionals* intends to aggressively challenge such views through local media coverage and contacts with elected officials. Once on a sound long term footing, we will expand and intensify our efforts.

3) **Restore five-day access to job-search office workspace for participants.**

The loss of state-funded dedicated workspace at the *Marin Employment Connection* in January 2014 deprived participants of access to a fully equipped office workspace for conducting their job search five days a week. Having this available is vital to financially-stressed participants who cannot afford such

resources on their own. As soon as financially feasible, *Marin Professionals* will re-establish such a dedicated workspace.

**4) Hire a half-time Program Coordinator to operate the day-to-day program functions.**

Given the fluid nature of the volunteers operating the program, having a paid staff *Program Coordinator* to handle the routine operations will ensure continuity in the program for all participants. We estimate that a staff *Coordinator* is needed for 20 hours per week to manage basic operations. Policy decisions, program content and quality oversight should and will remain the responsibility of volunteering members of *Marin Professionals Coordinating Team*.

## X. Summary

***“All of this is possible with a relatively small budget. Secure meeting space, provide refreshments, get the word out and --with a motivated internal team facilitating things -- you’re good to go.”*** The trouble is *Marin Professionals* meeting and workshop space is neither fully available nor secure. And without this, nothing will be possible.

Our need for outside funding is urgent, particularly to secure the program’s most basic need: A home. There is no realistic hope that state funding could be restored in the foreseeable future. The *Renaissance Center*, our gracious host for 19 months, couldn’t afford to provide us with free rent indefinitely. And our participants come to us already financially stressed to the breaking point, so there is no way they could become a sufficient source of revenue.

The good news is – as illustrated by our operating budge below -- all of this is possible to overcome with relatively modest amounts of charitable support from donors within the North Bay’s business and service organizations community. So, we’re reaching out to you as a possible supporter on behalf of all our current participants, as well as the many more who may someday need the support and assistance that only *Marin Professionals* is specifically designed to provide.

Thank you for your consideration, we look forward to working with you to ensure that for many years to come *Marin Professionals* will be good to go.

❖ ***Marin Professionals Coordinating Team***

c/o ***MarinLink***

5800 Northgate Mall – Suite 250

San Rafael, CA 94903

(415) 472-0211

**[marinprofessionals@gmail](mailto:marinprofessionals@gmail.com)**



## XI. Operating Budget: 2015 Fiscal Year

<b>Annual Revenue:</b>	<b>\$28,371</b>
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<b>Foundations &amp; Corporations</b>	<b>\$15,000</b>
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<b>County of Marin (Board of Supervisors)</b>	<b>\$1,000</b>
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<b>Donations from members</b>	<b>\$910</b>
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<b>Donations from alumni</b>	<b>\$1,350</b>
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<b>Other / Fundraising Events:</b>	<b>\$800</b>
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**Subtotal Donations**      **\$19,060**

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<b>Donations from meetings / workshops</b>	<b>\$513</b>
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<b>Special Workshops</b>	<b>\$578</b>
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**In-Kind donations from Ren Center**      **\$8,220**

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**Total Monetary and non-monetary Revenue:**      **\$28,371**

<b>Annual Expenses:</b>	<b>\$20,044</b>
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**Operational Room Rental**      **\$18,221**

**Website**      **\$200**

**Misc. expenses**      **\$300**

**8% fee of yearly donations to MarinLink**      **\$1,525**

<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$20,044</b>
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