

Challenge is proud to be a leader in excellence at the local, state and national level. Challenge is often cited as a "Best Practice" in its programs and services. Below is a sampling of some of the accolades Challenge has received this past year.

Challenge Cited as Best Practice in Nationwide
One-Stop Workforce System at
U.S. Senate Workforce Investment Act Hearings
June 18, 2003 Washington, D.C.

Testimony by Steve H. Perdue, Board President of American Congress of Community Supports and Employment Services (ACCESS)

"Challenge Industries, Inc. located in Ithaca, New York (Tompkins County) provides an excellent example of a community-based provider being included as an integral component in a successful One-Stop system. Challenge is a vocational rehabilitation agency, serving over 500 job seekers in per year comprised of individuals with disabilities and job seekers transitioning from public assistance.

Although many areas in New York state report continued failure to widen participation in the local One-Stop infrastructure, Tompkins Workforce New York One-Stop system has achieved success, in part, by its inclusion of community-based providers. Where other One-Stops have been unable to achieve the overall goals set forth in WIA, Challenge's involvement in Tompkins Workforce New York One-Stop has helped to eliminate duplication of services.

Some unique features, which have resulted from the inclusion of community-based providers in the Tompkins Workforce New York One-Stop system, include:

Co-location of agencies serving job seekers with barriers, resulting in more effective networking and supports for job seekers (including, but not limited to, housing, transportation, child-care, financial planning, etc.)

Active participation in One-Stop planning including marketing the "system," rather than approaching the business community as several distinct agencies. Greater support systems and individualized training opportunities for job seekers (have been able to tap into WIA funds, when VR is unable to financially assist) Shared staffing in the One-Stop Center which includes direct staff from community based agencies who specialize in serving individuals with disabilities Increased participation with AOSOS which has improved the reportable outcomes representing successful job placements of individuals with disabilities. Disability expertise in the One-Stop system (accessibility, accommodations, workplace disclosure, social security advisement, tax credits and other work incentives)."