

My name is Janelle Edwards. I am 67 years old and single. I have recently moved back to Washington, NC from Statesville, in the Central Piedmont of NC. I do draw some Social Security but certainly not enough to live off of. Having no other source of income in place; I will need to work full-time, indefinitely, in order to supplement my income. A large majority of the people, like me, that were raised in the fifties fell between the cracks. We graduated from high school and went on to college and somewhere between the first and last year of college we married and settled down to raise a family. For the next 15 or 20 years we were housewives. When the last child started to school, a lot of women began to look for something to do. They entered the workforce, for the first time. It was now somewhere in the mid seventies and computers were beginning to pop up in businesses everywhere. The women who went back to work at this time were fortunate to acquire the computer training that businesses were providing. Then there were those of us that chose to work in the school system. It was in the mid seventies that Governor Hunt put in place the Teacher Assistant program. I worked for the next 13 years as a Teacher Assistant. In the early 1990's I took what money I had in State Retirement after 13 years and relocated to Statesville, NC to be with my extended family. At this time, financial advice was not as available as it is now. Today, there is a financial advisor on every corner. Businesses have financial planning experts speak to their employees about 401K's and they offer all kinds of investment possibilities. Long term planning for

Workers today are prevalent. A lot of the mistakes made by previous generations can be avoided today.

After relocating to Statesville, NC in the early 1990's, I was fortunate to work in jobs that taught me to navigate in a computer and receive some "on the job" training. My job experience and interest was Customer Service, Receptionist, "People Oriented" positions that did not require a lot of specialized programs. The last years in Statesville I was a Realtor/Broker (2003-2007). I used Computers often but only when needed for Real Estate at the time.

It was not until I moved back home to Washington, NC in 2007 to be near children and grandchildren, that I realized how much the business world had advanced and how the gap had widen even more for some us from the fifties generation. A lot of people, like me, who have reached retirement age and drawing Social Security, realize that they will have to continue to work to make ends meet. The process of looking for a job as an older individual is not an easy task especially since some of us did not grow up in the computer age.

When I left Washington in the early 90's, I knew most of the business people in the community so I felt like networking would be an easy way for me to find work upon returning to the area. Much to my surprise, the business

people that I knew had retired or were getting ready to retire. Networking was not as easy now as I thought it would be. I also found that most jobs advertised for Receptionist, General Office, Customer Service described the qualifications that I have always possessed until the last couple of sentences which read: "Must have experience in Excel, PowerPoint and some other programs that I had never heard of in Accounting and other specialized areas. Sometimes they would even mention a business degree.

I was fast becoming very discouraged but then I became encouraged when I heard about Job Link, a government agency that helps older people gain the skills needed to compete in today's workforce. I went to Job Link immediately after hearing about this wonderful agency. The gentleman and ladies that I talked with told me that I probably would not qualify at that time because I had received some income from recent Real Estate Sales. I was told to come back after the first of the year and they would evaluate my situation again then. I returned the end of Feb. or the 1st of March, after taxes were done. I was told once again that I just had too much income from the previous year to qualify for the program. I could not understand why I did not fit somewhere in the Job Link program. By now, I was beginning to become a little concerned about my financial situation. When I moved back, I had saved enough income from some previous Real Estate sales to make the transition for about 4 or 5 months. The income I had saved would have taken me through training with Job

Link. Since Job Link placements pay minimum wage until hire, I would need the saved income.

After moving back to Washington, I had worked as a substitute in the school system and helped with the after school program to help stretch the income I had saved until Job Link could start me on a program. I went back to Job Link several more times and got no where. It was almost June when I met someone in the community that was familiar with the Job Link program. The person told me the very first day I should have been directed to another part of the program that I would have fitted in. I should have already received any training that I needed plus a job. This person gave me the name of the director of Job Link. I went immediately and talked with him. He was very surprised that I had not been directed to him months ago. He apologized and wanted to put me in touch with someone that could re-evaluate me and steer me in the right direction. The only problem was I had run out of money and had to do something quickly by then. I received a call from several people from Job Link and I did make another appointment. In the meantime, I visited all the local Temporary Agencies. One of the agencies, Executive Personnel, called and immediately offered me a job at Morris Insurance Company, where I am today. I broke the appointment with Job Link explaining that I had been placed with Executive Personnel and I needed to work immediately. It was just too late for me to deal with Job Link anymore.

It is my experience that the local privately owned Temporary Agencies do more to help today's workforce, young and old, as any of the government agencies. What happened to me at Job Link was inexcusable. The people that worked there had been there long enough to know that I did not fit into their part of the program. I realized, in hindsight, that the people that I dealt with were not as organized and professional as I would expect from a Government Agency that our tax dollars fund.

Job Link was not the only government agency that I felt had hired people who were not as professional and helpful as they should be. I went to the local Employment Security Commission several times. I would sign in and wait to be called only to have someone ask me what I wanted to do. After telling the very non chaulaunt rep my interests, they would pull papers off the computer, hand them to me and tell me to check these out for myself and remember that I could go on line and look up the jobs next time. My only problem with that is that I did not have a job so I had not ordered any internet service for my home computer. I was reminded that I could go to my local Library which I did several times. Whatever happen to the Employment Security Comm. calling me when they get a job that matches my profile???! The last time I was in the

Employment Security Office here in Washington and was waiting to be called, I listened and watched the workers as

they conjoined with each other as we, the clients, all sat anxiously waiting to be called. There was an air of confidence among the workers that they had their jobs and their State Benefits, they did not seem to be in any hurry to help us nor did they display any concern whether we found good jobs or not. The main priority was to get us in and out as fast as possible.

I could not help but wonder what this environment would be like if everyone that worked there was working on a commission basis.

What if their pay depended on the success of the clients they help??!! I wonder how quickly I would have been adequately helped if the people that kept telling me to come back at Job Link, had received their pay only after **my** success?!

The one question that I have for someone, anyone that cares about today's workforce whether young or old, is **WHERE ARE ALL THE SUPERVISORS??** I can remember when a well trained, dedicated, job oriented supervisor who had climbed the ranks himself, was constantly monitoring the workforce. They were always nearby to see to it that workers were doing their jobs to the best of their ability. The disappearance of the supervisor

has made people accountable only to themselves and that produces lax-a-dazzle, unconcerned workers. Also, people should be more thoroughly screened before receiving a job that deals with the public. There seems to be a lot of people in public work today that do not have the personality to deal with this type of work.

I found as an older person, looking for work - with limited skills and needing to supplement social security, an unfriendly, disinterested person can be very discouraging.