

SoloWorks gets an upgrade

By Lydia Billington
Reporter

According to Shelly Fausett, the director of SoloWorks, the program can now offer help in training and placement assistance in digital literacy, customer service, medical billing and coding, medical transcription, English teaching, technical support sales, transcription, writing and editing, virtual assisting and more.

"We had only been able to help people with customer service before," said Fausett, "but that's not a good fit for everybody and we strive to take a goal-oriented approach that not only helps people get the job they need now, but also helps them with the job they want in five years ... we help them work out what that is too."

As SoloWorks is a job creation program that also trains candidates to become work-ready, there is a significant amount of career readiness curriculum, said Fausett. According to Fausett, SoloWorks' fields of study focus on maintaining a personal database in information that can be accessed to easily customize a resume or cover letter with prepared paragraphs highlighting desired skills and experiences.

"The elevator pitch, interview prep and job application and prep is built out in individualized wikis (personal information packet) that encompass a person's experiences," she said.

Fausett explained that the program has also made some academic partnerships in order to help deliver training resources; virtual assistant trainers, Hubspot, Saylor Academy,

CareerStep and more. CareerStep offers self-paced certification in Medical Billing and Coding and Medical Transcription. Homestake Mining Company made a \$35,000 social investment, which Fausett said it is putting toward giving people scholarships to enter these programs.

"We do scholarship interviews on a rolling basis," she said, "but we are also open to offering the support and help of SoloWorks as someone goes through the program themselves and we're willing to reimburse anybody who does self-pay who completes the program and secures remote work through CareerStep's placement process.

Fausett said that SoloWorks is also working with the New Mexico Department of Vocational Rehabilitation to better help people with

disabilities.

Since February, Fausett said that the whole program has been reorganized and that they have created five part time jobs, seven full time jobs and helped launch a business. She said that 13 people are currently doing certifications through the program; some for customer service clients, one for English teaching and three for medical billing and coding.

Fausett said that in order for Cibola County to recover economically, it was estimated that about 1,900 new economic base jobs would need to be created over the next ten years. An economic base job, she explained, is a job in which the services are paid for from sources outside the community; meaning that the jobs bring in new money from outside, literally grow-

ing the amount of money circulating in a community. She said that it was estimated that solo or remote work can account for 450 of those jobs over the next ten years, which she said happens to be the economic development strategy with the most jobs potential according to a group of people from the Cibola Communities Economic Development Foundation, the Council of Governments and the community that convened during the jobs council.

"We're here," she said. "We want to help and we want you to know that you're also helping your community by participating. I think that, like anything else, it's an iterative process. We are ready to grow and learn and adapt as any situations call for."