SAC Salutes...SOS Temporary Staffing

SOS Temporary Staffing is comprised of 5 full-time staff, approximately 150 temporary employees, and provides temporary clerical and light labor employees to the University of Missouri – Columbia campus, Health Care Services, UM System, and MU Extension. In 2006 SOS placed 430 temporary employees in over 1300 assignments to approximately 350 departments. This represented almost 86,000 hours of service. The department began as Stenographic Services in the early 1970’s. At that time “temp steno” was provided to departments experiencing clerical staff shortages and also a “typing pool” where anything from tests to dissertations/thesis or letters would be typed in-house. In the early 1990’s the name was changed to Secretarial and Office Support Services and then to SOS Temporary Staffing in 1997 when light labor and service/maintenance placement services were added. Over the years, with the evolution of computers, the in-house typing service has become practically obsolete. However, the need for temporary employees to cover short and long term assignments has continued to grow.

While many people have seen advertisements for companies offering temporary services, in-house staffing services are not commonplace in the public sector. SOS is one of a handful throughout the nation. Brenda Jones, Manager of the department, has been contacted by several educational institutions and state government human resource departments for information and consultation on how to start and run such a service.

The benefits of having such a service are huge. SOS is totally self supporting and contributes to the University by keeping the dollars spent by departmental budgets within the institution. On top of providing temporary assistance, SOS provides advice, encouragement, and solutions to departments recruiting for vacant positions through their temp-to-perm program. Their temps arrive to work having been through a comprehensive orientation, having received training on the University phone system, and arrive to their assigned work location with an email account and a parking permit already in place. There are no contracts or restrictions that prevent departments from hiring SOS temps into benefit-eligible positions.

When asked what the greatest thing about working at SOS is, Brenda states, “We have the privilege of assisting other departments in meeting their goals and deadlines. In addition we experience the satisfaction that comes with making a perfect “win-win” match between a temporary employee who needs a job and a department that needs an employee. It’s a great feeling when I run into a colleague on campus who tells me, "I started with SOS" or "I have referred several people to you because it’s such a great service.”

Like many departments on campus, SOS fills a need within the University and System. The services they provide are efficient and productive ways to help during times of peak workloads or filling in during staff shortages. Their motto is “At SOS, our top priority is your success.”

For more information about SOS Temporary Staffing, please see their website.

http://web.missouri.edu/~umchrswww/sos/sos.html