

***Suited for Change***  
***Referral Partner Handbook***



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## Referral Partner Handbook 2010

### About Suited for Change

#### **Mission**

Suited for Change -- a private, nonprofit organization founded in 1992 -- provides professional clothing and on-going career education to low-income women to increase their employment and job retention potential and to contribute to their economic independence. Our services are available at no charge and by referral only to low-income women who have completed job training and job readiness programs in Washington, DC, suburban MD, and northern VA, and are seeking employment.

Today, Suited for Change (SFC) partners with referral partners in Washington, DC, suburban MD, and northern VA. SFC "suits" over 100 women each month and provides professional and life skills development seminars throughout the year.

#### **The Women's Alliance**

Suited for Change is a member of The Women's Alliance, a national organization of independent community-based members which provides professional attire, career skills training and related services to low-income women and their families.

#### **Professional Attire Collections**

Women from the community donate professional attire to Suited for Change. SFC also receives professional attire from retailers and manufacturers.

To successfully secure and maintain employment, women must present a professional and confident image at the interview and on the job. Thus, SFC asks its donors to consider their donations carefully, donating only those professional items that they would wear to an interview or on the job and that meet quality guidelines – nearly-new condition, current style and season, cleaned, pressed, and on-hangers.

## **Staff & Volunteers**

Suited for Change has a staff of two: Executive Director and part time Program Consultant. SFC is assisted by more than 200 volunteers who perform a variety of functions within the organization. Clients work one on one with trained Suited for Change volunteers on wardrobe selection and in our career education programs.

## **Client Services**

### **SFC's Clients**

Suited for Change serves low-income women who seek to enter or re-enter the job market. Suited for Change provides them with some of the tools they need to engineer their own success:

- Suiting - Professional attire & coaching
- Stepping Up - Career & life skills education programs.

By providing these tools, SFC helps clients overcome the following challenges:

- Transition from training to employment,
- Retaining employment,
- Advancement in the workplace,
- Establishing economic independence, and
- Building positive self-image.

### **Suiting**

Referral Partners are invited to refer women to Suited for Change for professional attire on two separate occasions:

- Interview Appointment, where each client receives **two\*** interview-appropriate suits and coordinating accessories
- Employment Appointment, where each client receives **three\*** additional professional outfits, giving her a week's wardrobe to begin her new career

\* Subject to availability

SFC's goal is that each client leaves the office with increased self-confidence as well as with appropriate professional attire. To that end, each client meets one-on-one with a trained volunteer. The volunteer "Personal Shopper" assists the client in selecting professional attire appropriate for her interview or employment setting.

To better meet the needs of all clients, Suited for Change carries The Women's Alliance Collection, a professional line of suits developed specifically for Suited for Change and our sister organizations. Women's Alliance Collection suits are washable and go up to size 8x.

In the event that our inventory does not allow us to “suit” a client based on clothing size limitations, we encourage the Referral Partner to refer the client at an alternative date.

### **Stepping Up Career and Life Skills Education**

Throughout the year, Suited for Change offers various workshops and events to provide clients with the skills they need to secure and maintain employment and to foster personal growth. Career education Includes:

**Starting Out**, a 4-part workshop series to help women acquire the professional and life skills necessary to secure and maintain employment and to foster personal growth. Two hour workshops provide education on interview techniques, professional attire, workplace etiquette, and professionalism.

**Junior League Power Hour** on personal growth topics including goal setting, stress management and conflict resolution. These sessions are held the first Tuesday of the month from 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM at Suited for Change. Giant food provides lunch for participants.

**Tool Box** includes workshop topics such as Healthy Lifestyles, Rights and Responsibilities in the Workplace and Business Casual Dress. The workshops offer women information that is not only pertinent to getting and keeping a job, but also to becoming a successful, well-rounded woman.

**Count Me In** assists women & men in becoming financially knowledgeable. The workshops are lead by the Young & Emerging Accountants of the Greater Washington Society of CPA’s and include topics from basic money management to credit repair.

The workshops are open to all current and former clients. To attend the workshops, clients must register in advance. All workshops are free of charge. Workshops can also be offered at referral agencies by request for a small fee.

### **Referral Agencies**

#### **SFC’s Partners**

Suited for Change partners with organizations that provide free job readiness training to low-income, disadvantaged and at-risk women in Washington, DC, suburban MD, and northern VA.

#### **Application Process**

Organizations that wish to refer clients to Suited for Change are invited to submit a Referral Partner Application which requires

- Designating a “Referral Agent,” often a Case Manager or job developer(s) who will be responsible for submitting referrals,
- Describing the programs/services offered by the organization.

Suited for Change reviews each application and notifies the organization of its decision within approximately two weeks.

If approved, completion of the Referral Partner Application serves as our agreement of the obligations and responsibilities of each party.

**Obligations**

The Referral Agent(s) must make referrals to Suited for Change in accordance with the Client Appointment Scheduling Guidelines.

The Referral Agent(s) shall assist in promoting SFC's Stepping Up Career and Life Skills Development workshops and other special events to low-income women in their job-readiness programs. SFC will provide posters, flyers, and/or email notification detailing the date, time, and location of the workshops and other special events.

**Termination**

SFC works hard to ensure that each partnership is strong and effective. Should SFC determine that a Referral Partner is not complying with its obligations, SFC reserves the right to terminate the partnership.

# Client Appointment Scheduling Guidelines

## Timing of Referrals

Suiting is available by referral only. Referral Agents are invited to refer women for professional attire on two separate occasions during the job search process.

Interview Appointment: A client is eligible for an Interview Appointment when she is ready to begin interviewing for professional employment. At the Interview Appointment, the client receives two interview-appropriate outfits. If the client is interviewing for a position in which professional attire is not required or in which uniforms are required, the client is eligible for an Interview Appointment, and the attire selected by the Personal Shopper may take this into consideration.

Employment Appointment: A client is eligible for an Employment Appointment when she has secured full-time, *professional* employment. She is eligible even if she was not referred for an Interview Appointment. At the Employment Appointment, the client receives three professional outfits.

## Referral Process

To refer a client for professional clothing:

- Complete and fax a Referral Form to Suited for Change at (202) 293-0353.
- The Program Coordinator will fax the form back to confirm all appointment dates and times. If you do not receive confirmation within 7 days, please call The Program Coordinator at 202-293-0351, Option 1.
- You must notify the client of the appointment time and review Appointment Guidelines and directions with the client.

Attire services are offered Monday through Friday, during business hours. In the event that a client needs to reschedule an appointment, this must be done through the Referral Agency. When necessary, we can occasionally accommodate requests for early morning and early evening appointments. We cannot, however, accommodate requests for weekend appointments.

## Referral Partner Application

Organizations are invited to apply to become Referral Partners if they:

- Provide free job training or job readiness training to low-income, at-risk or disadvantaged women; and
- Are located in Washington, DC, suburban Maryland or northern Virginia.

To apply to become a Referral Partner:

- Complete the Referral Partner Application form;
- Designate a Referral Agent(s) responsible for making referrals;
- Describe the programs/services offered by your organization, including the length of such programs/services; and
- Attach materials, e.g., brochures, newsletters, etc., describing the programs/services offered by your organization.

**Name of Organization** \_\_\_\_\_

**Referral Agent(s)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Title of Referral Agent(s)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**City** \_\_\_\_\_ **State** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone** \_\_\_\_\_ **Fax** \_\_\_\_\_

**Web Site** \_\_\_\_\_ **E-Mail** \_\_\_\_\_

**Executive Director** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone** \_\_\_\_\_ **E-mail** \_\_\_\_\_

**Type of Organization** (Circle One):

Government Agency      Non-Profit      For-Profit      Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Target Population(s)** (Circle ONE):

Addiction      Disabled      Domestic Violence      Homeless

Former Offenders      TANF Recipients      Youth      Welfare to Work

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you serve low-income women?  Yes  No

Do you provide professional/job readiness training or other supportive services to move women from unemployment to employment?  Yes  No

Are your services provided free of charge to women receiving them?  Yes  No

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**Estimated number of clients who will be referred to Suited for Change for professional clothing each month: \_\_\_\_\_**

**On a separate sheet of paper please describe:**

- The mission of your organization;
- The job training or job readiness programs/services offered by your organization;
- The length of the job training or job readiness programs/services offered by your organization;
- The types of jobs in which you place your clients;

**In addition, you may forward materials, e.g., brochures, newsletters, etc., describing the programs/services offered by your organization to our offices.**

**I have read the Referral Partner Handbook. If my Referral Partner Application is approved, I agree to abide by the terms and conditions set forth therein.**

Executive Director's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Please fax the Referral Partner Application, including all attachments, to  
Fax: (202) 293-0353**