



OPTIMAL SOLUTIONS GROUP LLC

ENABLING DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING

WELCOME

February 2009

QUICK LINKS

As the new administration combats the economic crisis and the nation braces itself for bold policy changes that will affect health care, education, and energy, we are relieved that Optimal Solutions Group, LLC, enters the New Year in a position of organizational and fiscal stability, well-prepared to continue providing our clients with analysis that is rigorous, non-partisan, and data-driven.

Now more than ever, our research and technical assistance is timely. Optimal is establishing hospital inpatient and outpatient quality measures; and through the Medi-Medi expansion contract we are continuing to help fight fraud, waste, and abuse. We're also developing software applications to facilitate service obligations management and implementing tasks in a teacher incentive evaluation for the Department of Education.

We hope your programs and activities reach all the goals you set in 2009. Let us know if we may help!

Mark D. Turner, PhD, President and CEO
Tracye Turner, Vice President and COO

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Questions or Comments?
Contact us for more information:
301-306-1170 or
info@optimalsolutionsgroup.com

SPOTLIGHT

[Optimal Develops Service Obligation Tracking Software Application](#)

As the costs of attending college continue to rise and bank loans become scarce in the face of the credit

crunch, students will need to seek alternative means of paying for their college education. One such alternative is undertaking a service obligation that requires a certain number of years of work or service in return for paid tuition, books, and even stipends. President Obama discussed service obligations throughout his campaign as a viable alternative to college loans as well as a way to encourage college graduates with hefty college loans to enter into a public service career.

Through its work on the [National Center on Service Obligations](#), Optimal has developed a customizable tracking software application for service obligations associated with educational training programs. The application capabilities include the conversion of the service obligation into a loan, the ability to defer the service obligation for a specified period of time, and reporting on the Government Performance Results Act and Program Assessment Rating Tool.

Employment Options for Low-Skill Workers in the Baltimore Metropolitan Area

Against the backdrop of the most troubling and perplexing economic crisis in the US in generations, the importance of a regional workforce development strategy that matches the low-skill workforce in Baltimore with viable, living wage jobs could not be greater. In a new report, "[Employment Options for Low-Skill Workers in the Baltimore, Maryland, Metropolitan Area](#)," Optimal identifies sustainable, long-term career occupations for low-skill workers in the Baltimore metropolitan area and outlines strategies for training, recruiting, and retaining workers in these occupations.

The report recommends creating regionally focused, occupation-specific task forces that emphasize communication and collaboration between educational, government, nonprofit, and philanthropic institutions to train, place, and retain low-skill workers in viable job clusters.

OPTIMAL NEWS

Parilla Wins Award for Thesis

Joe Parilla, Research Analyst I in the Housing, Economic Development, and Transportation Research Center, co-authored a first-place term paper in the 2008 Minnesota Economics Association (MEA) Undergraduate Paper Competition. He presented the thesis, "[Did the Hiawatha Light Rail Line Increase Single-Family Residential Property Values?](#)" and accepted the award at the annual conference of the MEA economists last October.

Fashola to Present at NAESP Conference

[Toks Fashola, PhD](#), Senior Research Fellow at Optimal, will be speaking at the [88th Annual National Association of Elementary School Principals](#) on April 5, 2009 in New Orleans. She will present on her book *Educating African American Males: Voices from the Field*. Fashola will use theory, research, and practice to address psychological, sociological, and educational factors that contribute to the success of African American males.

New Contract Announcements

Optimal was awarded several projects in the last quarter that recognize our expertise in the Health Policy Research Center.

- [Medication Therapy Management Program Monitoring Support](#)
- Medicare Advantage Organizations
- [Neonatal Quality Interventions Study](#)
- [Measure & Instrument Development and Support](#)
- Reevaluation of Hospital Inpatient Quality Measures
- Reevaluation of Hospital Outpatient Quality Measures
- [Program Support Center IDIQ Task Order Contract from DHHS](#)

Baltimore Office Moves

Optimal will continue its long relationship with the Baltimore Emerging Technology Center as it moves from the Hopkins Eastern Campus location to its Canton office. The new office, a former canning factory, is closer to downtown Baltimore attractions and amenities, as well as the Thurgood Marshall Baltimore-Washington Airport. The new Baltimore contact information is:

2400 Boston Street
Suite 358
Baltimore, MD 21224
Phone: (410) 327-9053
Fax: (410) 327-9179

Optimal's headquarters remain in Hyattsville, MD, near the New Carrollton Metro Station. In addition, Optimal is opening a new office this spring at the [University of Maryland's M Square Research Park](#).

New Staff

Optimal has recently added many new staff members to the research and administrative departments, including:

[Marty Wasserman, MD, JD](#), Medical Director
[Karen Nielson, MBA, MPA](#), Senior Associate
Nancy Rudner, RN, MPH, PhD, Senior Research Associate
[Heidi Peck](#), RN, BSN, MAOM, CNAA-BC, Clinical Quality Improvement Specialist
[Eric Lu, MBA.](#), Project Coordinator
[Anita Okoh, MPH](#), Research Analyst II
[Ben Locke](#), Research Analyst II
[Danielle Ward, MPH](#), Research Analyst II
[Jumy Adkeye](#), Research Analyst I
[Al Marra, CPA](#), Controller
[Natalia Kalloo](#), Budget Analyst
[Ben Patterson](#), Analyst
[Shelvy Simmons](#), Senior IT Specialist
[Robert Jacoby](#), Communications Director
[Shavon Brown](#), Management Assistant

Green Matters Conservation of Energy - Helping the Environment

With the Maryland Energy Administration predicting energy shortages as early as 2011 in Maryland, small businesses to corporations, communities, and families alike are looking for opportunities to cut spending and reduce consumption.

A way to cut energy costs in your home is to eliminate "phantom" loads, which occur when electronics continue to consume energy when turned off. This contributes to about 75% of the electricity used in the appliances of an average home ([Energy Savers Booklet](#)).

One solution for the "phantom" load consumption problem is [GreenSwitch](#), a wireless, automated system that shuts off outlets connected to the electronics that contribute to your home's consumption of electricity. Your cost-saving efforts help the environment **and** save you money.