

To: **Alfredo Mendoza:** Staff Services Analyst, Department of Workforce Investment
From: **Rebecca Lincoln:** Career Educator, Merced County Office of Education
Re: **Merced County Youth Council Quarterly Report-** Empower Program
Date: **4th Quarter PY 08/09** (April, May and June 09)

A. Overall status of the program:

The EMPOWER program enrolled 53 new participants this quarter; this brings the total active to one-hundred and seventy-five (175) active EMPOWER participants. The EMPOWER advisors continue to track the number of participants enrolled in structured program activities to ensure that the majority of youth are receiving intensive services (as opposed to case management services). The status on all WIA-Client action reports for goals, activities, exits and follow-ups (phase II) remain up to date.

B. Past Quarter Highlights:

- 1) **EMPOWER Workshops:** The EMPOWER Workshops were provided to youth in the month of May this quarter. The following is an accounting of workshops offered and number attended:
 - a) **EMPOWER Orientation:** Conducted on Friday May 8th, with an average of 35-40 attendees per session;
 - b) **EMPOWER Workshop I: ‘Gettin’ Ready for the Job’** conducted on Friday, May 15th with an average of thirty-eight youth in attendance;
 - c) **EMPOWER Workshop II: ‘The Real Game California’** was conducted on May 18th and 19th with average of attendance of twenty-eight (28) participants in attendance per session;
 - d) **EMPOWER Workshop III: ‘Gettin’ a Job’** was conducted on May 20th, 21st and 22nd with an average attendance of twenty-five (25) participants per session.

- 2) **Bldg K-Computer Lab** is available to EMPOWER participants at the Merced County Office of Education Campus in Bldg K to work on résumés, portfolios, and conduct job search. *PLATO* is educational software designed to increase math and reading skills, it is also available for the participants use in the computer lab. Sign-in sheets are used to track the number of participants using the computer lab daily.

3) **ROP Marketing Working Professional Curriculum** revisions and updates were approved by a local advisory committee meeting on April 23, 2009. The EMPOWER staff invited H.R. representatives from several business in Merced to gain input and recommendations on interviewing questions, résumés and portfolios that can best assist our EMPOWER participants in both individual and panel job interviews. The recommendations were valuable and incorporated into our EMPOWER employability workshops.

4) **EMPOWER Success Story:**

Tiffany Solis enrolled into the Empower program when she was at a crossroads in her life. She was pregnant and unsure of what path she needed to follow. Through the assessments and career search, Tiffany decided she wanted to enroll into the Merced College Medical Assistant Program. After the birth of her baby girl, Tiffany began the long road to reach her goal as a Medical Assistant. Tiffany had barriers to overcome, but were temporary; she stayed focused in order to complete her Medical Assistant course in 2008. Tiffany loved the externship site where she was placed, but due to budget cuts they were unable to hire her. Tiffany then came to her EMPOWER advisor for the opportunity to do work experience. She was placed at Merced Faculty Associate's Urgent Care facility; she was a quick study and soon was transferred to the new MFA Cancer Center and was hired full time in March 2009. Tiffany loves her job at the Cancer Center and hopes to enjoy a long career there.

5) **EMPOWER Success Story**



Melissa Mojica enrolled into the EMPOWER program on March 7, 2008. Melissa was a single mom looking for job opportunities and eager to start a career. Melissa came into the program with some clerical experience, but needed help finding a job. In the Empower program she updated her resume, practiced her interview skills, and then she was referred to MCOE Nutrition Office for a temporary clerk position. This temporary position helped to build her job skills and she gained additional work experience. On

June 2009, she was placed at MCOE Business Office, she learned to disperse mail to the appropriate departments, processed employee mileage and reimbursements, and was familiarized with different accounts systems and budgets. Melissa is a highly motivated individual, a self starter, as well as both dedicated and professional. She has great customer service skills and is bilingual in English and Spanish. When she completed her 192 hours of work experience, she was hired with Merced County Office of Education as a full-time Account Tech.

C. Past Quarter Deficiencies: none

D. Past Quarter recruiting and marketing efforts:

Recruiting efforts for EMPOWER are limited. The contract specified that as participants exit, new participants will be enrolled in the following quarter after exits, upon availability of funds.

E. Next quarter challenges: none

F. Technical assistance needed:

G. Number of clients receiving social services and examples of services received.

Numerous referrals were made to agencies to assist with food, clothing, housing and transportation.