

PRIVATE INDUSTRY TRAINING DEPARTMENT FOLLOW-UP MONITORING REPORT

Date: December 19, 2001

Contractor: ARBOR, Inc. (19-21 Year Round Youth Program)

Date (s) Monitored: December 19, 2001

Monitors: David C. Davis, Gary Derr

Authority: Workforce Investment Act (WIA), Section 117

Purpose: To ensure programmatic compliance with the current ARBOR, Inc. Year-Round contract.

Please note that the outcome of this monitoring review is based on an examination of only a sample of ARBOR, Inc.'s contract, and is, therefore, only an indicator of total compliance.

PREFACE: This review is conducted on behalf of the Workforce Investment Board of Merced County . An initial monitoring review of ARBOR, Inc. was conducted by the Private Industry Training Department (PITD) on June 27, 2001. The replies to that review were received from ARBOR, Inc. on September 27, 2001. This review evaluated the corrective actions taken by ARBOR, Inc. in response to the original monitoring report.

MONITORING PROCESS: A monitoring checklist developed from the Workforce Investment Act, the ARBOR, Inc. Youth Contract, and the ARBOR, Inc. reply with corrective actions to the PITD June 27, 2001 Monitoring Report, was utilized in the performance of this review.

ENTRANCE CONFERENCE: An entrance conference was held December 19, 2001 with Ms. Cynthia Reponde, Director, ARBOR, Inc., Merced. The scope and purpose of the review were discussed.

PROGRAM GENERAL REQUIREMENTS:

The corrective actions taken by ARBOR, Inc. in the 3 months since their reply to the monitoring visit are generally effective and still in place. The following had originally been identified as not being in compliance. All are now in contract compliance. The compliance refers not only to the specific write-up, but to the total program elements.

1. Participant diaries did not annotate supportive services received by the participant, (Now in compliance).
2. Several I-9 forms were not signed by the ARBOR staff member. (Now in compliance).
3. Several files did not contain documentation on Selective Service registration. (Now in compliance).

4. Fourteen WIA application forms were completed incorrectly with respect to low-income eligibility. (Now in compliance).
5. Several ISS forms were not completed. (Now in compliance).
6. Supportive services are not annotated in the participant diary. ARBOR does not have a written supportive services policy. (Now in compliance).

The following areas were also documented as being non-compliant. Although the corrective actions indicated in the ARBOR, Inc. reply were adequate, more attention is required to actually meet contract compliance.

1. One-Stop Staffing. The contract requires ARBOR to provide a staff member at the One-Stop from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. Additionally, the One-Stop is to be notified when scheduled times could not be met.

Arbor's answer did not agree with this finding. They felt that a full-time presence in the One-Stop was not cost effective. They also stated that the number of referrals that had come from the One-Stop was extremely low and did not warrant a full-time presence at the One-Stop.

PITD agreed with ARBOR and reduced the time ARBOR was required to be at the One-Stop to Mondays and Wednesdays, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

In November, in preparation for the upcoming reduction of the ARBOR program, ARBOR laid off 4 employees. One of the employees laid off was the individual who represented ARBOR at the One-Stop. He was not replaced until ARBOR was notified that they had not been at the One-Stop for two weeks and had not called in. Since that time ARBOR, has been in compliance with the contract.

2. Adult Mentoring: ARBOR's Work Statement Narrative details their mentoring program to include: mentor training, supervision of mentors, and assignment of a mentor to each participant (with monthly meetings between mentor and participant). No evidence of a mentor program could be found.

The ARBOR answer was that they were working on the concept of developing and training adult mentors to provide one-on-one mentoring to participants. They admit that they have not yet developed the type of mentoring program envisioned in the Work Statement. The mentoring provided was thru work experience supervisors, ARBOR staff and peer mentoring.

During this visit, the ARBOR local Director's Client Roster was accessed. It was noted that clients had a mentor assigned. Four clients were called who had mentors assigned. None of the clients knew they had a mentor, three recognized the mentor assigned as their work experience supervisor, and one had no idea of who his mentor was. Two of the assigned mentors were then contacted. Neither knew they were assigned as mentors, and had received no training.

An inspection of the files for ARBOR's newest clients revealed new paperwork concerning the assignment and training of mentors. That paperwork was incomplete, but it appears that ARBOR is beginning to make the mentoring program a reality and not just a paperwork program.

3. Work Statement Narrative: During the original monitor review it was noted that ARBOR personnel were apparently unfamiliar with the Work Statement Narrative. They stated that they did not receive a copy of the work statement and were unaware of program requirements. Several program elements were not being provided to clients by ARBOR

ARBOR's answer was that Mr. Charles Jameson, Senior Operations Manager, conducted an overview in February, 2001 of the contract and work statement with all ARBOR staff hired at that time. All these staff and those hired since have been given a copy of the Work Statement.

During the original visit, very few clients had been placed in jobs. This has now changed. The Work Statement states that within 30 days of employment, the Career Advancement Plan (CAP), in conjunction with the youth and employer, will develop the CAP that will outline the youth's career goals, assess strengths and weaknesses on the job to date, and skills that need to be acquired, assess the gaps that need to be filled for the youth to move into the career of choice, identify the resources needed for support while the youth begins additional career related activities, and develop an action plan for success. Simultaneously, a Work Success assessment will be made. This assessment will be made by the youth, the employer, and the staff. Goals will be set for the next 60 days. The assessment will be used to revise the Career Advancement Plan.

The files of six (6) of the most recent hires were examined. No evidence of a Career Advancement Plan, nor a Work Success assessment could be found. The Senior Career Advisor and the recent Los Banos Career Advisor were interviewed concerning the CAP and the Work Success assessment. Neither individual had any knowledge of either tool and had not read about them in the Work Statement Narrative. Next, the Director, ARBOR, Inc., Merced was asked about the Career Advancement Plan and the Work Success assessment. She stated that ARBOR, Inc. did not do those. She further stated that she had told ARBOR, Inc. headquarters in Media, Pennsylvania to remove those requirements from the Work Statement Narrative.

Amendment #1 is now being worked for this contract. The amendment does not relieve ARBOR, Inc. from any contract requirements other than reducing the barriers to employment required for eligibility from two to one. The Career Advancement Plan and the Work Success assessment will continue to be contractual requirements.

Once again, personnel are unfamiliar with the Work Statement Narrative. Key elements of the program, the Career Advancement Plan and the Work Success assessment are not being done.

4. ARBOR was originally written up for not meeting their target enrollment of 175 young adults by June 30, 2001. In the new amendment, the total enrollments have been changed to read 175 young adults by June 30, 2002. As of December 19, 2001, 86 clients have been enrolled by ARBOR. The last client enrolled was entered into the system on October 30, 2001. No new enrollees have occurred in November or December. With 6 months left in this contract, ARBOR must enroll 89 clients, or almost 15 per month to meet their enrollment goals. It is doubtful that ARBOR will meet their target enrollment.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION:

Overall, the majority of the shortfalls/errors noted in this review have primarily stemmed from ARBOR's non-compliance with their Work Statement Narrative. This was also the same finding in the original monitoring visit.

SUMMARY (Findings):

1. ARBOR is not in compliance with certain critical elements of its Work Statement Narrative; the mentoring program, the Career Advancement Plan, and the Work Success assessment.
2. ARBOR program target enrollment is in jeopardy. The program has been in operation for 14 months and has enrolled 86 clients. To meet target enrollment, an additional 89 clients must be enrolled in the last 6 months of the contract.