

**TO: Program Planning & Development**

**DATE: 01/26/06**

**FROM: WIB Staff**

**For Action**

**For Information**

**For Discussion**

**SUBJECT: Frontline Workforce Development Update**

**PROPOSED MOTION(S): For Information Only.**

**DISCUSSION: As requested by the Chair, a draft letter of intent (Brief Proposal) is attached for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) Building Human Capital Grant.**

**The “Brief Proposal” addresses the following:**

- **Building Human Capital;**
- **Training;**
- **Turnover;**
- **Workplace Driven Curriculum;**
- **Success.**

**The Brief Proposal is the first step to apply for the grant. We are requesting \$125,000.00 as a planning grant to create curriculum, survey both employers and employees and study customer satisfaction. The Brief Proposal addresses the introduction of a work-based curriculum taught on employer premises by an educational entity. Figures regarding the amount of staff time provided by the educational entity and the employer are yet to be determined for the full submission to RWJF.**

**The second step is submitting the brief proposal to RWJF.**

**ATTACHMENT(S): RWJF Brief Proposal**

*Select Your Area  
of Interest*

Thank you for your interest in working with the Foundation. To streamline the review process for both applicants and staff, *all* applicants must initiate the process of applying for a grant by submitting a brief proposal using this application form. Once you have completed your brief proposal, you must first save it to your computer file directory and then submit it as an attachment by e-mail to [briefproposal@rwjf.org](mailto:briefproposal@rwjf.org). Grants are made throughout the year. There are no specific deadlines.

We have established an "Impact Framework" to focus the work of foundation teams on explicit funding strategies that we expect will make a measurable difference in the health and health care of all Americans. The following teams represent the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's programming areas. Please check the box below next to the team to which you will be submitting your proposal, and before sending your proposal, please carefully review the team's description of its strategy on [www.rwjf.org](http://www.rwjf.org):

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Addiction Prevention and Treatment | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Health            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Childhood Obesity                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Quality Health Care      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coverage                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Tobacco Use and Exposure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disparities                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Vulnerable Populations   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building Human Capital  | <input type="checkbox"/> None of the Above/Other  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nursing                            |   |

Note: For submissions to the Pioneer Portfolio, please refer to the [Pioneer Portfolio](#) section of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Web site.

*Required Information  
on Your Organization*

**PLEASE FILL OUT THE FOLLOWING FIELDS.**

Name of organization: Merced County Department of Workforce Investment  
Mailing address: 1880 W. Wardrobe Avenue, Merced, CA 95340  
This organization's tax status is:  501(c)(3)  Other

Name of project director or principal investigator: Alfredo Mendoza  
E-mail: [amendoza@co.merced.ca.us](mailto:amendoza@co.merced.ca.us)  
Phone: (209) 724-2044  
Fax: (209) 725-3592

Project title: Regional Healthcare Upgrade Training Initiative

Approximate project cost: \$125,000.00  
Proposed start date: 7/1/2006  
Estimated number of months required to complete project: 12

Have you discussed this idea with an RWJF staff member? (Discussion with a staff member is not a requirement, but we would like to know if you have mentioned this to someone at the Foundation.)

Yes  No

If yes, please provide his/her/their name(s):

*Project Summary*

What problem is your project trying to address?

Briefly describe the project. Your description should address the following questions, if applicable:

- What are the key project components or activities?
- What are the intended results or products?
- Who is the intended audience for this project? How will results be shared with this audience?
- If this is a research or evaluation project, what methodology will be used?
- How would you define success for this project?
- Do you anticipate other funding sources?

How does your project fit with the specific strategy of the team to which you are applying?

Please respond in the space below (maximum of 7500 characters—roughly three pages):

**BRIEF PROPOSAL**

Due to the credible work done by the Merced County Workforce Investment Board (WIB) Program Planning and Development Committee through collaboration with Workforce Development professionals, the WIB has been successful in working with Merced College and Golden Valley Health Centers to secure participation in a Regional Healthcare Upgrade Training Initiative. This brief proposal will address issues of training and turnover in the frontline healthcare Medical Assistant field, delineate a workplace driven curriculum, and define success.

The funding we are requesting through the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Building Human Capital Program will be used as a planning grant to introduce a Regional Healthcare Upgrade Training Initiative. With the new partnership between Merced Community College (local educational entity), Golden Valley Health Centers (local regional healthcare employer) and workforce development professionals (Workforce Investment Board), we will form a Work-based Learning Curriculum Development Team to provide oversight of the project.

**BUILDING HUMAN CAPITAL**

The planning grant will be used to reveal and address systems barriers to work-based learning and employee development of frontline workers in the local healthcare arena. The focus of this planning grant will be on addressing specific skill shortages in the front/back office Medical Assistant field to increase the retention and development of the workforce. The focus on medical assistants meets the criteria used by RWJF to address the low education and low-income status for the frontline workforce in the healthcare field. The Medical Assistant is a large fast-growing occupation, which plays a key role in the healthcare arena. Medical Assistants are currently not licensed, certified, or registered in California. The planning grant will assist in determining the feasibility of developing a

certification program, which can be used as a pilot certification program for the State of California.

### TRAINING

A recent (October 2005) Healthcare Forum sponsored by the Merced County Workforce Investment Board revealed that inconsistency of skills is the primary reason why healthcare organizations spend additional time re-training newly hired Medical Assistants. The goal of the Healthcare Forum was to find the commonalities that healthcare organizations have in terms of addressing the challenges of new hires. The amount of time and numbers of staff needed to address the skill shortages for new medical assistants are considerable drains of resources on local healthcare organizations. The planning grant will be used to determine the benefits and costs associated with Medical Assistant "re-training", with results being incorporated into the Merced College Medical Assistant educational curriculum. Additionally, the Healthcare Forum revealed a lack of critical clinical competency skills, including proper vitals attainment and administration of injections in pediatrics. The Healthcare Forum also found that among Administrative competencies, Medical Assistants lacked proper preparation on the medical-billing skills for state-sponsored programs as well as having an understanding of the holistic view of the healthcare field. Training will be provided by Merced College instructors on the healthcare employer premises, allowing for more employees to earn Merced College educational units. The employer will allow employees to remain on the clock while the upgrade of skill-sets is achieved. Once an approved workbased curriculum is achieved, the Merced County Workforce Investment Board will request the education be placed on the State of California Approved Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). Placing the approved curriculum on the ETPL will allow incumbent workers to access public funds for education.

### TURNOVER

Specific strategies to overcome turnover in the Medical Assistant field are in tune with RWJF's Building Capital vision to address the lack of upward mobility of frontline workers between employers and healthcare sectors. Turnover in the Medical Assistant field can also be associated with flight to more economically viable sections of the state. Merced and Stanislaus Counties lie in the heart of California's San Joaquin Valley, which according to a December 2005 report by the Congressional Research Service, is one of the "most economically depressed regions in the United States." Turnover will be addressed by the planning grant which will fulfill worker needs as well as employer needs. Workers' needs will be addressed by increasing job security by having a more flexible educational opportunity. The planning grant will focus on developing a curriculum which will increase skill sets in the Medical Assistant field thus increasing the advancement opportunities to current employees. By investing in employee education, the healthcare organization will take a proactive approach to retention. Other employer needs will be addressed by the planning grant such as improved quality of care and being

responsive to changes in technology in the medical assistant field.

### WORKPLACE DRIVEN CURRICULUM

The curriculum developed by the planning grant will be workplace driven and will be current and responsive to healthcare demands. The curriculum will initially be constructed by surveying current employer needs and matching these needs with medical assistant input. Medical Assistant surveys will be taken to capture additional information to narrow the gap between beginning and experienced Medical Assistants. Criteria for the evaluation of the workplace curriculum will be responsiveness, appropriateness, effectiveness, adequacy, efficiency and equity. The planning grant will be used to develop an assessment tool to measure performance and success of the workplace driven curriculum.

### SUCCESS DEFINED

The planning grant will measure success for the initiative by measuring the increased percent change in retention for employers and the increased number of promotions given to employees after the completion of the work-based learning. Success will also be measured in terms of productivity in the workplace through the use of supervisor surveys. One success measurement will be the reduction in wait times by patients at Golden Valley Health Centers. The planning grant will be used to study current wait times at the clinic. Higher skill attainment by employees will be measured and set as goals for the employee as well as the employer. A decrease in disciplinary actions taken by supervisors and increased employee attendance can be tracked using a business value assessment tool. One such tool is currently offered by the Workforce Strategies Initiative which measures rates of turnover, retention, diversity, efficiency and lost productive time in the healthcare organization. Other measures of success will include the development of a statewide certification program for Medical Assistants.

#### *Funding Policies*

Foundation funds may not be used for:

- Lobbying activities;
- Ongoing general operating expenses or existing deficits;
- Items for which third-party reimbursement is available;
- Endowments;
- Capital costs, including construction, renovation, or equipment;
- Basic biomedical research;
- Research on unapproved drug therapies or devices;
- International programs or institutions; and
- Grants to individuals as opposed to institutions/organizations.

*Submit your Proposal* Please submit your completed document to: [briefproposal@rwjf.org](mailto:briefproposal@rwjf.org)

After you submit your brief proposal, we will send you an e-mail acknowledgement. We carefully review every proposal. Within SIX WEEKS of receipt of your proposal, you will receive one of the following:

- A request for additional information;
- A request for a full application; or
- A letter informing you that your project will not be funded.

## BRIEF PROPOSAL BUDGET GUIDELINES

An important component of your brief proposal is the preparation of an initial budget. Please complete every field using your best judgment when projecting program expenses.

If you anticipate support (including in-kind) from an organization other than RWJF, please enter those amounts in the Non-RWJF Support column.

### Definitions:

- *Personnel*—salary and fringe costs.
- *Other Direct Costs*—office operations, communications/marketing, travel, meeting expenses, and project space.
- *Purchased Services*—consultant and/or contract costs.
- *Indirect Costs*—administrative expenses related to overall operations. The Foundation's approved rate for Indirect Costs is 9% of Personnel, Other Direct Costs and Purchased Services.

## BRIEF PROPOSAL LINE-ITEM BUDGET

Applicant  
Organization: Merced County Department of Workforce Investment  
Project Title: Regional Healthcare Upgrade Training Initiative

Start Date: 7/1/2006  
End Date: 6/30/2007

Budget Category	RWJF Support	Non-RWJF Support	Total
Personnel	\$64,678.00		
Other Direct Costs	\$35,000.00		
Purchased Services	\$15,000.00		
Indirect Costs	\$10,322.00		
<b>GRAND TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$125,000.00</b>		