

**TO: Executive Committee**

**DATE: 2/05/07**

**FROM: WIB Staff**

**For Action**

**For Information**

**For Discussion**

**SUBJECT: High Concentration of Youth Grant**

**PROPOSED MOTION(S): Approve the application for High Concentration of Youth Grant Funding**

**DISCUSSION: On October 16, 2006, the Merced County Local Workforce Investment Area submitted an application to the California Workforce Investment Board for High Concentration of Eligible Youth funding. The application was for \$18,500 in additional WIA funding, and was to be matched by \$6,200 in non-WIA funds from Merced County Office of Education/Regional Occupational Program (MCOE/ROP).**

**In January 2007, the Employment Development Department contacted the Department of Workforce Investment (WI) to inquire about the feasibility of a larger non-WIA match. In late January 2007, WI was informed that \$55,000 was now available for the Merced County LWIA. MCOE/ROP will provide \$18,333 in matching funds.**

**The program will serve both in-school and out-of-school youth. Ten disabled younger youth and 20 out-of-school youth will be enrolled. The contract will run from December 1, 2006 through December 31, 2007.**

**ATTACHMENT(S):  
Application**

The Merced County Workforce Investment Area, in concurrence with the Merced County Office of Education (MCOE), the sole WIA Youth Contractor for Merced County, is submitting this plan for services in response to the Employment Development Department Directive Number WIAD06-8 dated September 29, 2006. The directive authorizes \$55,000. in additional WIA funding for the period December 1, 2006 through December 31, 2007 based on Merced County's high concentration of eligible youth.

**Requested Amount:**

The Merced County Workforce Investment Area is requesting \$55,000. Of that amount, 89% is budgeted for direct participant services, including student wages, supportive services, and instructional supplies. This proposal leverages existing funding for staff salaries and operating costs allowing the additional funding to be maximized for student services.

**Matching Funds:**

The Merced County Office of Education commits **\$18,333.** in non-WIA funds to support this proposed plan for services. (See proposed budget narrative.)

**Priority Area of Focus:**

The plan is written to serve 30 additional youth ages 14-21. Enrollments for in-school youth, ages 14-18, will be targeted to students with disabilities. Enrollments for out-of-school youth, ages 17-21, will be open to those who meet WIA enrollment criteria. The following performance measures will be achieved:

WIA Performance Measure	2005/2006 Negotiated Performance Rates for Merced County
Younger Youth Skill Attainment Rate	84.7%
Younger Youth Diploma or Equivalent Rate	66.0%
Younger Youth Retention Rate	63.8%
Older Youth Entered Employment Rate	63.8%
Older Youth Retention Rate	73.0%
Older Youth Earnings Change	\$3,384.
Older Youth Credential Rate	38%

**Projected Increase in the number of WIA eligible youth to be served:**

The Merced County Office of Education (MCOE) is submitting this plan to serve an additional 30 youth in the WIA funded Youth Opportunity (YOP) or EMPOWER programs. The YOP is the sole WIA in-school youth program in Merced County and has operated continuously since October 2000. More than 2,400 youth have been served and the WIA performance measures have been met or exceeded in every quarter since the program's inception. The EMPOWER program is the sole WIA out-of-school youth program in Merced County. The EMPOWER model was implemented in February 2004. Performance measures were exceeded in every indicator for the 2005-2006 program year.

The YOP and EMPOWER provide comprehensive, long-term services that address the four major themes of the Workforce Investment Act: 1) improving education achievement, 2) preparation for and success in employment, 3) supportive services, and 4) services intended to develop the potential of youth as citizens and leaders. These services are accessible to all Merced County communities.

The YOP is contracted to serve 300 youth during the 2006-2007 fiscal year. In addition, as of October 1, 2006 an additional 229 youth are being provided follow-up services. The EMPOWER program is contracted to serve 220 youth during the 2006-2007 fiscal year. In addition, as of October 1, 2006 an additional 126 youth are being provided follow-up services.

There is a documented unmet need for additional WIA youth services in Merced County. The County ranks as the 5<sup>th</sup> highest among the LWIAs in its concentration of economically disadvantaged youth. Additionally, unemployment is consistently high in the County (8.2% in August 2005, compared to the State average of 5.1%) and the poverty rate is similarly high at 21.7% (compared to 14.2% Statewide). The County's per capita income is only \$14,257. (equivalent to only 63% of the Statewide per capita income). Merced County suffers from numerous problems associated with poverty and is ranked as the fourth poorest County in the State. These socio-economic challenges affect the youth of Merced County in countless ways, most notably in academic achievement. Only 63% of County residents over the age of 25 have a high school diploma (compared to the State average of 76%).

It is important to note that the Merced County Youth Opportunity Program has a documented high school graduation rate greater than 90% for all students exited from the program. This represents a 6-year proven record of effectiveness. Clearly, the YOP is working to reduce the achievement gap and thus expand opportunities for low-income youth. The EMPOWER program also has proven effective, exceeding all performance measures for out-of-school youth for the 2005-2006 program year. Additional funding will allow the same proven-effective services to be provided to more Merced County youth.

The 520 youth currently served in the YOP and EMPOWER program represent only 5% of the more than 9,575 Merced County youth who are eligible for and would benefit from services based on 2000 Census data. This proposal will allow an increase in the number of youth served in Merced County.

**Services to be provided as described in the WIA, section 129 (c) (2):**

The YOP will provide an opportunity for eligible in-school youth, ages 14-18 with identified disabilities, to receive a full array of services and supports that are most likely to result in increased skill attainment, high school completion or achievement of the GED, and retention as defined by the WIA. The EMPOWER program will provide an opportunity for eligible out-of-school youth, ages 17-21, to receive a full array of services and supports that are most likely to result in employment, retention, earnings change, and the attainment of a credential.

Program and partner staff will make available all the program components and program elements described in the following section. All of the program components and elements are fully established and operational throughout Merced County.

Program activities for each participant will vary depending on the needs of each participant as described in the Individual Service Strategy (ISS) or Individualized Education Program (IEP).

**Program Design Components**

**Outreach and Recruitment**

Outreach and recruitment will target in-school youth, ages 14-18, with disabilities. Enrollments for WIA eligible out-of-school youth will also occur. The YOP and EMPOWER programs have a six-year history of effective outreach and recruitment.

**Orientation**

Program staff will provide youth with a comprehensive orientation to the program. Participants will be made fully aware of the opportunities, responsibilities, and expectations of the program. Orientation will provide information on the full array of services available through the program and through community organizations including the local Workforce Investment

Board, the One-Stop Worknet Employment Resource Centers, and the One-Stop Partners.

Information will be provided about how to access these services, and referrals will be made to appropriate services.

### **Intake and WIA Eligibility Determination (Initial Assessment)**

An initial appraisal interview will be used to determine whether WIA services are the most suitable for the individual student. The appraisal interview will be based on a review of the existing student record, motivation of student to participate, and a personal interview with the student. Other family members or related responsible adults will be included in the appraisal interview as appropriate.

Intake will consist of completing WIA eligibility assessment of each individual in accordance with the rules and regulations for youth eligibility as outlined in the Workforce Investment Act. Program staff will be responsible for intake and eligibility determination.

### **Information, Referral, and Resource**

Youth determined to be ineligible for WIA services and/or not appropriate for program services will be referred to other community services. Those in need of employment services or training will be referred to the nearest One-Stop Center.

### **Enrollment**

Enrollment will be available for in-school youth between the ages of 14 and 18 who have identified disabilities and meet the WIA low-income eligibility requirements. Enrollment will also be available for out-of-school youth between the ages of 17-21 who meet WIA eligibility requirements. MCOE will enroll and serve 30 youth between December 1, 2006 and December

31, 2007. This number is in addition to the youth MCOE is contracted to serve through WIA youth formula funding during the 2006-2007 fiscal year.

### **Objective Assessment and ISS**

An objective assessment of the academic and skill levels of each participant will be conducted by program staff to determine the needs of each participant. This assessment will include a review of:

1. Basic skills
2. Occupational skills
3. Prior work experience
4. Employability
5. Interests
6. Aptitudes (including interests and aptitudes for non-traditional jobs)
7. Supportive services, family and financial situation/needs
8. Development needs of each participant

For students with disabilities, the state and nationally mandated IEP will be used. In the event that a recent assessment including the above components has been completed, that assessment will be used.

Emphasis will be placed on assessment of supportive services, family and financial situations and needs, and the developmental needs of each student. A personal assessment form will be completed by each student, after which the assigned mentor/advisor will review the assessment with the student in a one-on-one interview. If any type of intervention is needed, the mentor/advisor will make the necessary connections between the student and the agency providing services. The mentor/advisor will also closely monitor the situation to assure that the student is safe and that his/her basic needs are being met.

Based on the results of the objective assessment, a formal training/needs strategy will be mutually developed between the mentor/advisor and the student. The ISS for each student shall include:

1. Identification of the employment goals and a course of action that the participant should take. This will include appropriate achievement objectives, and/or appropriate supportive service needs.
2. Preparation of the participant for post-secondary educational opportunities.
3. Provision of strong linkages between academic and occupational learning.
4. Provision of preparation for unsubsidized employment opportunities.
5. Provision of effective connections to the job market, and to local and regional employers.
6. Provision of connection with positive community youth programs (i.e., recreational activities, community service, cultural activities, and other youth development activities).

Ongoing, general assessment of participants' needs and progress will continue for the duration of enrollment in the program. Any progress changes in the ISS/IEP (activities, goals, etc.) will be reported in the ISS/IEP or diary.

### **Connection with Youth Development Activities**

The program design for YOP and EMPOWER are reflective of the Search Institute's Developmental Assets Model for youth development. The external asset of support is provided by the mentor/advisor and by the caring program climate. The external asset of empowerment is reflected in the choices related to participation, goal setting, and occupational exploration. The external asset of boundaries and expectations is provided by the program structure, culture, and high expectations. During the orientation session, youth are informed of the program structure, performance measures, and expectations. The external asset of constructive use of time is addressed by the program structure, ongoing availability of program activities, and the availability of a youth computer lab and resource center that is centrally located in Merced.

## **Case Management**

Each participant will be assigned a mentor/advisor from our existing program staff. The mentor/advisor will work with the participant to complete the eligibility process, develop the ISS or review the IEP, and coordinate referrals to services necessary to accomplish the established goals. The mentor/advisor will be responsible to monitor participant progress at least monthly and provide documentation through appropriate diary narratives.

## **PROGRAM ELEMENTS**

### **Drop-out Prevention Activities (Tutoring, study skills training, and instruction)**

MCOE will provide dropout prevention activities. The assigned mentor/advisor will monitor student progress and will assist each participant to achieve his or her potential and gain the skills available through this program. Because of the warm, ongoing relationship this adult will be expected to develop with the participant, problems will be identified early and the necessary steps for intervention will be put in place. Intervention may include referral to tutoring, school-based interventions, supportive services, and the PLATO lab. PLATO labs are available at the YOP main office in Merced, Valley Community School, Merced Adult School, Merced Worknet Employment Resource Center, Los Banos Worknet Employment Resource Center, Dos Palos Community Center, Livingston Worknet Employment Resource Center, Livingston High School Career Center, and Atwater High School Career Center.

## **Alternative Secondary School Services**

Valley Community School, Merced Adult School, Dos Palos Continuation, San Luis Continuation, Merced Continuation (Yosemite), Independent Study, and all other alternative schools in Merced County will be available to the participants if necessary.

## **Paid and Unpaid Work Experience**

An integral component of the YOP and EMPOWER programs is paid and unpaid work experience. Students will be provided opportunities to perform meaningful work in a well-supervised context that enables trainees to learn marketable skills and good work habits through the Regional Occupational Program Community Classroom, high school work experience, and community service projects. The mentor/advisor will ensure that the work experience opportunities provided support the goals of the students' ISS/IEP. Every student who is placed in paid or unpaid work experience will have a training plan developed by the mentor/advisor, the job supervisor, and the student. This training plan must be aligned to the skills required for employment, as determined in the ROP course outline and approved by the advisory committee for that particular occupation. The students will be visited on site. Time cards will be picked up every two weeks and students will attend related classroom instruction at least once each week.

## **Occupational Skills Training**

Every participant will have an opportunity to be enrolled in a career-technical program, either through the Regional Occupational Program, vocational programs offered at the high schools, or through on-the-job training. As a component of the employment program, students will be enrolled in ROP and will be taught both job-specific and employability skills. The mentor/advisor will monitor each participant's progress and will be responsible for assuring that the participant is enrolled and progressing satisfactorily in an occupational skills training

program, which, in addition to job-specific skills, includes the following: 1) Employment Preparation; 2) Resumes; 3) Job Applications; 4) Interview Techniques; 5) Dress/Appearance Standards; 6) Employer Expectations; 7) Job Leads; and 8) Labor Market Information.

Occupational training will be provided in a demand occupation that corresponds with the employment career goals indicated in the ISS/IEP. A labor market study is conducted for each training program offered. Certificates of skill competence will be provided to all students who complete the occupational program.

In addition to occupational skills training, basic skills and employability skills will be developed. Throughout the program, systematic and extensive attention will be directed toward improving basic education skills, including reading, math, writing, analytical, computer, and communication skills, toward the attainment of a high school diploma to prepare for college and/or the workforce. Participants will complete an employment portfolio and participate in mock interviews. The Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) Competencies, which were created in 1991, will be incorporated into all aspects of occupational skills training.

### **Leadership Development Opportunities**

Opportunities for leadership development will be made available to every student, either through formal vocational student organizations, through informal activities organized by the participants and supervised by the mentors/advisors, or through participation in the YOP and EMPOWER Focus Groups. For in-school youth, every participant will be encouraged to join a vocational student organization aligned to his/her career interest area. Vocational student organizations currently offered through ROP include Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), Future Farmers of America (FFA), Future Homemakers of America/Home Economics

Related Careers (FHA/HERO), Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA), and SkillsUSA. As members of these organizations, youth will develop positive relationships within a peer group with a set of positive values and a philosophy of life that can compete with the negative values encountered elsewhere. They will also be given opportunities to play a public leadership role influencing policy that affects the community and to participate in community service projects that improve the quality of life in the community. These programs have a successful history in Merced County. They actively engage students and provide opportunities for social, as well as skill-building, activities. The Focus Groups provide an opportunity for students to voice their opinions, make recommendations, and influence policy for the YOP and EMPOWER programs.

### **Supportive Services**

Supportive services necessary for each participant to achieve successful outcomes in the program will be identified during the development of the ISS/IEP. The mentor/advisor will refer the participant to community services and/or provide direct services, as funding allows, through the program. In addition to the supportive services identified in the ISS/IEP, the mentor/advisor will make every effort to identify other supportive service needs that may arise as the participant progresses through the program.

### **Adult Mentoring**

Each participant will be assigned to a mentor/advisor who will assist the participant to complete his/her education and other program activities. The mentor/advisor will provide ongoing support and encourage accountability toward individual goals for each participant. Mentor/advisor services will be documented by monthly diary entries.

## **Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling**

All participants will complete an academic skills assessment as well as a vocational assessment to determine learning styles, vocational interests, aptitudes, and temperaments. The mentor/advisor will work with the student to analyze and interpret the results of the academic and vocational assessments, and establish activities and opportunities for career awareness and exploration in occupational areas consistent with the assessment results.

## **Follow-up Services**

Follow up services will be provided to participants for up to 12 months after program exit. Participants who are exited will be contacted at least quarterly and will be notified and encouraged to attend program activities, visit the Youth Opportunity Zone for assistance with job search activities, and access the computer and PLATO labs for further skills development. Supportive services will be made available as appropriate.

## **Summer Employment Opportunities**

Employment opportunities will be offered to participants year round and will not be limited to the summer months. Participants will be enrolled into paid work experience based on the goals established in the ISS/IEP.

## **Financial Literacy Skills Training**

The Merced County YOP and EMPOWER programs piloted the Real Game California curriculum during the 2005-2006 school year and continue to offer this curriculum to program participants. The curriculum provides financial literacy training, including personal budgeting and contingency budgeting, through a series of hands-on interactive sessions.

## **PROGRAM OUTCOMES AND RELATED TIMELINES:**

### **Work Statement**

#### **The Contractor MCOE will:**

1. Recruit, enroll, and provide services between December 1, 2006 and December 31, 2007 for 30 WIA eligible youth. Enrollments for in school youth, ages 14-18, will be targeted to students with disabilities. Enrollments for out-of-school youth, ages 17-21, will be open to out-of-school youth who meet WIA enrollment criteria. All youth enrolled under this contract will be co-enrolled in eligible for services in either the YOP or EMPOWER program.
2. Be responsible for administrative and fiscal oversight of the program.
3. Provide services including the ten (10) WIA required comprehensive elements and the program design components outlined in this narrative.
4. Provide outreach and recruitment to enroll 30 new participants.
5. Determine eligibility for Workforce Investment Act (WIA) services for 14-21 year old youth and complete required WIA enrollment paperwork for 30 youth.
6. Provide each participant with a comprehensive orientation to the program.
7. Provide objective assessment as described in the plan narrative. Complete an Individual Service Strategy (ISS) for each participant. An IEP may be substituted for the ISS.
8. Provide case management services for each participant, including appropriate contact at least once each month, with appropriate diary entry.
9. Provide paid and unpaid work experience.
10. Be responsible for payroll of participants and distribute participant paychecks.
11. Comply with laws and regulations pertaining to Workers' Compensation, federal and state labor laws, and Child Labor Laws for minor participants.
12. Ensure that all work site supervisors receive a program orientation before any participants are placed under their supervision.
13. Provide each participant an orientation to the worksite and/or training program prior to placement.
14. Ensure that each participant is provided the safety equipment necessary to perform work under the contract.

15. Provide supportive services when needed and as practical. Refer participants to appropriate community services.
16. Carry out all program activities in accordance with the Work Statement and Budget/Budget Narrative in this plan.
17. Attain the final Local Youth Performance Measures established for 14-18 year olds by the State. The performance indicators that must be attained by the contractor are:
 

Youth skill attainment rate	84.7%
Youth diploma or equivalent rate	66.0%
Younger Youth Retention rate	63.8%
18. Attain the final Local Youth Performance Measures established for 19-21year olds by the State. The performance indicators that must be attained by the contractor are:
 

Entered Employment	63.8 %
Earnings Increase	\$3,384.
Retention	73.0%
Credential	38.0%
19. Provide follow-up services to all participants up to 12 months after program exit.
20. Provide a Customer Satisfaction Evaluation to measure the level of customer satisfaction with program services.

**MERCED COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION  
HIGH CONCENTRATE BUDGET NARRATIVE 06/07  
12/1/06 - 12/31/07**

**ADMINISTRATION**

A. Salaries: Staff

B. Fringe: Staff

C. Other-Indirect Costs 5% \$ 2,619

**TOTAL ADMIN COSTS** \$ 2,619

**PROGRAM**

A. Salaries: Staff

subtotal salaries -

B. Fringe: Staff

subtotal benefits \$ -

**PROGRAM COSTS**

A. Instructional Supplies 769

B. Program staff mileage 500  
9 staff members for site visits

C. Program staff training 2700  
est \$300 x 9 staff

**Total program costs** \$ 3,969

**PARTICIPANT**

A. Participant Wages

est 30 students X 192 hrs X \$7.50 per hr \$ 43,200

Workers Comp (3.384%) \$ 1,462

B. Supportive Services \$ 3,750

estimated \$125 per 30 students

Total Participant Cost \$ 48,412

**TOTAL PROGRAM/PARTICIPANT COSTS** \$ 48,412

**TOTAL MCOE/ROP BUDGET** \$ 55,000

**Match of non-WIA funds:** 18% of the program administrator's salary and benefits. Funded through Average Daily Attendance (ADA) \$ 18,333.00

**PROJECT BUDGET PLAN - SINGLE FUND SOURCE AND CASH MATCH**

<b>Applicant Name:</b>		Merced County Office of Education		
<b>Special Project Title:</b>		High Concentration		
<b>Term:</b>		December 1, 2006 through December 31, 2007		
<b>I. Budget Detail</b>		<b>Planned Budget</b>		
		<b>WIA 15 Percent</b>	<b>Non-WIA Cash Match</b>	<b>Total</b>
A. Staff Salaries		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
B. Number of full-time equivalents:	\$ -			
C. Staff Benefits		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
D. Staff Benefit Rate (percent):	\$ -			
E1. Staff Travel		\$ 500	\$ -	\$ 500
E.2 Staff training est \$300 x 9 staff		\$ 2,700		\$ 2,700
F. Operating Expenses (communications, facilities, utilities, maintenance, consumable supplies, etc.)		\$ 769	\$ -	\$ 769
G. Equipment (Not Permitted)				
H. Contractual Service		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
I. Indirect Costs		\$ 2,619	\$ -	\$ 2,619
J. Indirect Cost Rate (Percent):	5%			
Name of Cognizant Agency:		Merced County Office of Education		
K. Other (describe): Participant wages, workers comp, and participant supportive services		\$ 48,412	\$ -	\$ 48,412
L. Match: 18% of the program administrator's salary/benefits. Funded through Average Daily Attendance (ADA)			\$ 18,333	\$ 18,333
M. Total Funding		\$ 55,000	\$ 18,333	\$ 73,333

<b>II. Quarterly Expenditure Plan</b>			
A. 12/2006	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
B. 03/2007	\$13,750.00	\$4,583.00	\$ 18,333
C. 06/2007	\$27,500.00	\$9,166.00	\$ 36,666
D. 09/2007	\$41,250.00	\$13,749.00	\$ 54,999
E. 12/2007	\$55,000.00	\$18,333.00	\$ 73,333