
TO: Workforce Investment Board

DATE: 11/10/05

FROM: Youth Council

For Action

For Information

For Discussion

SUBJECT: Youth Opportunity Program Quarterly Report – October 2005

PROPOSED MOTION(S): Information Only

DISCUSSION: Youth Opportunity Program Report, Jul-Aug-Sept 2005, is attached.

ATTACHMENT(S):

Youth Opportunity Program Qtrly Rpt, October 2005

To: Dave Davis: Special Projects Manager, Department of Workforce Investment

From: Rebecca Lincoln: Career Educator, Merced County Office of Education

Re: Merced County Youth Council Quarterly Report - YOP

Date: October 2005 (Jul-Aug-Sept)

A. Overall status of the program:

The program continues to exceed performance measures. This quarter, 98% (293/286) of the basic skills, work readiness, and/or occupational skills goals were attained. One hundred and ninety-seven (197) participants were exited; 184 of exited YOP participants attained a diploma resulting in a 93% credential rate. New enrollments are underway.

B. Past quarter highlights:

- 1) **The YOP summer employment:** Approximately 343 participants completed six weeks of paid work experience and the ROP Working Professional course during the summer. Mentors met with site supervisors to develop training plans for the participants who worked up to 29 hours a week; and attended the Working Professional course for an additional three hours per week. The course this year focused on "Volunteerism" and emphasized the importance of volunteering in our communities. Participants were asked to volunteer three unpaid hours to the non-profit of their choice. The participants earned a certificate, as well as logging hours toward earning their community service cords at graduation. The YOP mentors provided a celebration and recognition luncheon at Yosemite Lake for participants and employers during the final week of the program.
- 2) **Career Industry Days:** These ROP sponsored events provide youth with detailed information and exploration of specific career pathways. Career Industry Days include tours of local businesses, guest speaker presentations, and hands-on activities related to various careers within a pathway. Career Industry Days are held from 8:30 am to 2:00 pm at the Merced County Fair Grounds in the Exhibit Building. The YOP mentors are encouraged to invite those students whose career goals or technical training is aligned with these pathways.

The following is the list and dates for the upcoming **Career Industry Days:**

- a) Careers in Business, Marketing and Computer Information Systems, October 27, 2005
 - b) Careers in Arts and Communications, on Thursday, November 17th, 2005
 - c) Careers in Education held on Thursday, January 26, 2006
 - d) Careers in Agriculture (World Ag. Expo in Tulare), February 15, 2006
 - e) Careers in Health held on Tuesday, February 28, 2006.
- 3) **The REAL GAME CALIFORNIA:** Cyndie Bray, Blanca Rodriguez, Becky Lincoln (EMPOWER Staff) and Brad Eagleton, (YOP Mentor); attended training in Stockton at the San Joaquin County Office of Education for the *Real Game California* pilot curriculum on September 15th, 2005. A team of Career and Workforce Development experts and educators from California created the *Real Game California* prototype as a way to address the financial literacy and career planning needs of California youth. All activities, learning objectives and performance indicators have been aligned with California Academic Content Standards;

- 4) SCANS; National Career Development Guidelines and ASCA National Standards for School Counseling Programs.

Merced County Office of Education was selected as a pilot site to provide the Real Game California to approximately 30 WIA youth program participants. This includes both the in-school youth program (current enrollment 350+ students) and the out-of-school youth program (current enrollment 300+ participants). The Merced team will introduce the pilot curriculum to our participants and provide feedback and completed student, parent and teacher evaluations to the State steering committee by January 31, 2006.

- 5) **TEEN SCENE:** YOP and EMPOWER participants from throughout the county were invited and attended the Second Annual Children's Summit 'TEEN SCENE' event held at Merced College on September 24th. This year's Teens Educated and Energized Now (TEEN) Scene's theme was "*about providing access for our youth today*". The agenda included several break out sessions on topics of interests for youth, which included; career assessment; healthy relationships; health 101 to name a few. A session was presented on the EMPOWER program by staff and a session was given on Career Technical Education Opportunities by personnel from Merced Office of Education ROP, Career and Alternative Education Department.

Youth also had an opportunity to visit a Resource Fair that provided information from partnering agencies throughout the county. The highlights of the program included a fashion show, where several YOP and EMPOWER participants modeled clothes from local merchants. A Free Style Hip Hop Dance and Rap Competition provided an arena for Merced County youth to show off their talents. An evening meal was provided and the event ended again with a dance. EMPOWER Staff assisted with the planning and volunteered on the day of the event.

5) Community Service: Coat Drive

Last year, the Merced County Office of Education EMPOWER/YOP Programs sponsored a coat drive as a community service opportunity for the participants of these two programs. Because we strongly encourage our participants to become involved in community service, we thought this would be an excellent way for them to give back to the communities that they live in. When choosing a school, we try to choose a school that is "most in need" and where our efforts will truly benefit. Last year, we chose to sponsor Bellevue Elementary in Atwater. Although, the coat drive was successful, we had minimal support from the participants, with staff doing almost all of the work.

This year, we chose to sponsor Planada Elementary School. The YOP mentors and EMPOWER advisors are working hard with their participants to involve them in the coat drive. The participants will do the work, by finding people to sponsor a child or by fundraising. They will also be involved in the purchasing and distribution of the coats; so that they can visually see who is benefiting from their efforts. We plan to distribute the coats on November 17th, at Planada School.

The YOP and EMPOWER Programs intend to make this an available community service activity every year. With each passing year, we hope to have the full support of the community and active participation of all the participants.

6) YOP Success Story:



Gerardo Chavez came to the Atwater High School Career Center in 2004 looking for assistance in getting a job. At the time, the YOP program was full and he was placed on a waiting list. A few months later, Gerardo visited the Career Center again, space was available, and he was enrolled into the YOP program. That summer, Gerardo was placed at Foot Action for his training worksite; Gerardo was very excited about working there. Gerardo developed strong customer service skills, and at the end of the summer, he was offered a part-time

position at the store. He happily accepted and worked there during his senior year at Atwater High School

In the summer of 2005, Gerardo again participated in the summer employment component and the ROP Working professional class. He requested to be placed at *Kragens* in Atwater as his training worksite. Jason, the store supervisor, was very impressed with Gerardo's strong work ethic. Gerardo worked hard and behaved in a professional manner. He was always marked as excellent in all of his evaluations at his job site. Again, at the end of the summer, he was offered a job.

Today, Gerardo is working at both stores and attending Merced College. His goal is to major in criminology and become a police officer. Gerardo appreciated the Youth Opportunity Program and is thankful for the opportunity to work, which opened the door for two jobs.

C. Past quarter deficiencies: none

D. Past quarter recruiting/marketing efforts:

Recruiting efforts for YOP were limited in the 1st quarter. The YOP program has exceeded its enrollment obligations for the contract year and the program has met its contract 2005-06 enrollment obligations for 353 WIA eligible youth. Due to carry-over funding, an additional 45 YOP participants are expected to be enrolled this quarter to bring total YOP active enrollments to 411 participants.

E. Number of hard exits: 197

Number of soft exits: 0

F. Next quarter challenges: Common Measures Policy

G. Technical assistance needed: Available trainings on WIA Common Measures Policy