

# ***WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT***

## ***Transition Report***

***Submitted to:***

***The Workforce Investment Board  
of  
Merced County***

***June 2000***

# Transition Report

## Introduction

Merced County is currently moving from an agriculture based economy into one of increased business growth and new-age technology. With the coming of UC, Merced, the area will experience tremendous change and with that change, opportunities will abound. In order to meet this challenge and move into the 21st Century, Merced County must ready its workforce by developing a strong system which encompasses available resources, partners with other agencies, and promotes close relationships with area employers.

Faced with an overabundance of unskilled workers, a high unemployment rate, and a large welfare population, the Workforce system in Merced County must develop working strategies to address all of these issues.

The immediate goal of the Interim WIB was to develop strategies and recommendations for the transition process from the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) into the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). The major challenge was to create and begin the implementation process for a Workforce system which addresses the needs of the community, provides fully integrated and accessible services for the job seeker while continuously developing a strong, working partnership with other agencies and area employers.

## History

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 is designed to improve the quality of the workforce, both nationwide and locally. Under the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), scheduled to end on June 30, 2000, the focus was on "at risk" populations such as welfare recipients and workers who had been laid off due to plant closures.

With the advent of recent changes in the laws, such as welfare reform, etc., an entirely different concept was born. Based on the premise that in a global economy, competition in the marketplace is no longer limited by city, state, or even oceanic boundaries; the main focus must go to the development of a strong, effective system which addresses the needs of all. This includes unskilled and skilled workers, the unemployed and the underemployed, youth, the disabled, veterans, migrant farm workers, etc.. The system must be designed to fill the needs of employers by providing them with an educated, skilled workforce that is familiar with new ideas and technology, able to adapt to change, problem solve and work effectively with others.

The first step in bringing the system into existence was taken when the Chief Elected Official appointed the Private Industry Council to act as the Interim WIB until the regular Board was selected through the application process. On February 23, 1999, the Merced County Board of Supervisors appointed the Private Industry Council as the Interim WIB with the authority to act as agents to transition the County of Merced into a Workforce Investment Area under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). The Board further delegated

the Interim WIB to develop the five-year strategic plan as well as any other issues relating to WIA transition.

During the interval, prior to transition, the Interim WIB worked with the Private Industry Training Department and the Chief Elected Official to formulate a relationship with other key partners by developing Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) for the operation of the Merced County One-Stop System.

## **Vision**

The Merced County Interim Workforce Investment Board has developed a transition plan which envisions a system that is responsive to the needs of both the job seekers and the employers of this community. Under this plan, resources will be utilized to the maximum extent by integrating services, providing a trained and professional staff, implementing modern technology, and most importantly, having a WIB membership composed of strong, visionary community leaders.

The Workforce Development System will encompass the full utilization of all available resources, strong relationships with both public and private sector employers, full knowledge of local educational and training facilities and a thorough understanding of the local economy and the regional labor market. All of these tools, blended together, will create a better educated, highly skilled workforce that is capable, prepared and responsive to the employer's needs. A comprehensive and well developed Workforce system provides job opportunities for all, keeps pace with an emerging economy and meets the ever-changing demands of the employer while improving the community as a whole.

## **One-Stop Philosophy**

The One-Stop System is the catalyst for the Workforce Investment System. It is the "hub" from which all activity emanates. Merced's Employment Resource Center (ERC) originated in 1995 as the future One-Stop Center for Merced County. In the beginning, the main focus was assisting Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) participants in becoming employed, whether through training or a self-directed job search.

Since that time, it has evolved into a One-Stop Center which serves the general public, regardless of income, employment status, or barriers. Services are readily available to every job seeker who enters the door, picks up a phone, or sits down at a keyboard. Well trained, professional staff, ensure that every customer receives a brief orientation about center services and that they are provided information which addresses their needs.

Working in conjunction with the local partners, the One-Stop Center strives to ensure that every customer receives the information or assistance they were seeking. Individuals, who walk through the door, in search of a job or a training opportunity, have come to the right place and every effort is made to link them to appropriate services. All of the partners will be either, located in, or have a direct link to the One-Stop. One-Stop partner

staff will be cross-trained to provide necessary information regarding available services which will help to avoid duplications or redundancies.

The intent of the One-Stop concept is that customer satisfaction is the number one priority, and with that satisfaction, comes success.

### **Goals and Objective**

Beginning with these concepts, the Interim Board formulated a five-year plan of action which identifies the following objectives:

- Improve the economic performance of Merced County to exceed the average of the San Joaquin Valley
- Improve the education and job skills of the local workforce, including youth, to exceed the average of the San Joaquin Valley
- Align and coordinate strategic plans and goals with that of education, economic development organizations and other community workforce development organizations

## **Actions Taken by Interim WIB**

The following actions, relating to WIA transition were taken by the interim WIB. The Workforce Investment Board is being asked to review these actions and ratify those deemed appropriate.

### **1. January 7, 1999:**

#### **Board Designation**

The Private Industry Council (PIC), through PITD, requested that the Board of Supervisors designate the PIC and PITD as the planning entity to transition Merced County into the Workforce Investment Act . They also recommended that the Board appoint the current PIC to act as an interim Workforce Investment Board (WIB).

A recommendation was made that the PIC Chair, Vice Chair and PITD Director meet with the County Administrator and Board of Supervisors. The purpose of the meeting was to begin initial dialog with the Board about basic provisions of the WIA, specifically as to how it pertains to the BoS, in terms of their responsibility in requesting that Merced County be designated as a Workforce Investment Area and to appoint the Local Workforce Investment Board.

The Board of Supervisors subsequently approved this recommendation.

### **2. June 3,1999:**

#### **Request for designation of Merced County as Workforce Investment Area**

The Interim WIB recommended to the Board of Supervisors that they request the Governor to designate Merced County as a Workforce Investment Area. Section 116 of the Act sets out the instructions to the Governor for the designation of Local Workforce Investment areas within the state. The Governor is required to consult with both the State Workforce Investment Board as well as the Chief Elected Officials in making the designation. Approving the recommendation will allow the County of Merced to move quickly, once the Governor establishes procedures for designation.

The Board of Supervisors subsequently approved this recommendation.

**3. August 5, 1999:**

**Designation of the Merced Workforce Investment Area One-Stop Operator**

The interim WIB recommended to the Merced County Board of Supervisors that they request the Governor to designate PITD as the One-Stop Operator in Merced County. PITD, as the provider of Title 1 services in the Merced Workforce Investment Area and the operator of the local One-Stop may be so designated:

Section 121(e) of the Workforce Investment Act states in part “If a one-stop delivery system has been established in a local area prior to the date of enactment of this Act, the local board, the chief elected official, and the Governor involved, may agree to certify an entity carrying out activities through the system as a one-stop operator for purposes of subsection(d).” Subsection (d) outlines designation and certification of one-stop operators.

The Board of Supervisors subsequently approved this recommendation.

**4. August 5, 1999:**

**Establishing membership on the Youth Council**

The Interim WIB voted to have three members of that group appointed to membership on the Youth Council.

“Each local board, in cooperation with the Chief elected official for the local workforce area, must appoint a Youth Council as a subgroup of the local board. Those members of the Youth Council who are not members of the local board do not have voting rights on the full board, but they may vote as members of the Youth Council.” (Excerpt from the Guide to the Workforce Investment Act 1998-- Youth Councils, pp 18-19).

In addition to other mandatory agency representatives and community residents, members of the Local Board with a special interests or expertise in youth policy must be included in the Youth Council membership.

The Interim WIB identified needed representation and began a recruitment process.

**5. October 07, 1999:**

**Approval of the One-Stop MOUs**

The Interim WIB approved the MOUs negotiated between the Interim WIB and the mandatory One-Stop Partners. The WIB Chair was also authorized to sign the MOUs on behalf of the Interim WIB.

The Board of Supervisors subsequently approved this recommendation.

**6. December 15, 1999:**

**Approval of the WIA Five-Year Plan**

Instructions and planning guidance for the Five-year Strategic Plan required by Workforce Investment Act was received by the Private Industry Training Department in January 2000. The plan was due to the State by March 1, 2000. It was developed and approved by the Interim WIB, then ratified by the Board of Supervisors, prior to submission to the state.

**7. January 26, 2000:**

**Designation of Targeted Population under the Workforce Investment Act**

Under the Workforce Investment Act (effective July 1, 2000), there are two funding sources for adult services:

- 1) Adult
- 2) Dislocated Worker

The Workforce Investment Act authorizes core services which are available to all adults with no eligibility requirement. Intensive services are provided for unemployed individuals who are not able to find jobs through core services alone. In some cases, where qualified customers receive intensive services and are not able to find a job, they may receive training services that are directly linked to job opportunities in the local area.

In the Adult program, the law specifies that if Adult funds are limited in a service area, recipients of public assistance and low-income clients will be given priority for intensive and training services. Under the Act, the local board is given the opportunity to further prioritize services to specific population within the low-income category.

The interim WIB selected the following target groups for designation:

- 1) Designate “Older Worker” as the target group for priority intensive and training services under the low-income category (Note: Under the JTPA, the only population with specific set aside funding under Title IIA is the “Older Worker”).

2) Re-evaluate “Targeted Population” after the local WIA program has been in operation for a period of time sufficient to generate statistical information pertaining to the Act. If necessary, adjust priority for services at that time.

**8. January 26, 2000:**

**Merced County Workforce Investment Board establishes \$8.88 as the “Self-Sufficiency Wage.”**

The Workforce Investment Act considers the fact that employed adults and dislocated workers may require intensive training services to obtain or retain employment that allows them to be self-sufficient. The self-sufficiency wage for the local area was obtained by using the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile of the average hourly wage of persons with high school diplomas (or less) and multiplying the resulting amount by the cost of living factor for Merced County.

**9. March 28,2000:**

**Memorandum of Understanding forming a partnership between Merced County Human Services Agency, the Merced County Private Industry Training Department, Merced College, the Northern California Carpenters Regional Council, and the Northern California Construction and Training, Inc. for implementation of the Building Trades Pre-Apprenticeship Orientation Program.**

The Partnership believes a construction trades program is critical due to Merced County’s high unemployment rate and the expected building boom in the near future. Merced County will require many skilled workers to fill local needs. In order to meet labor market demands and be prepared for the future, Merced County needs such a training program. The Pre-apprentice Building Trades Program is a twelve- (12) week course, designed to prepare participants for various types of skilled trades in today’s construction industry. The program will include both hands on and classroom training;

**10. Exception to using Individual Training Accounts (ITAs)**

The Preamble to the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) interim rules and regulations, page 18673, Subpart D (Individual Training Accounts), paragraph 2 (Exceptions to ITAs) states that:

Exceptions to ITAs may be used under certain limited circumstances... as described in Section 663.4380 of the WIA interim rules and Regulations:

(a) Contracts for services may be used instead of ITAs only when the following exception applies:



*When the Local Board determines that there are an insufficient number of eligible providers in the local area to accomplish the purpose of a system of ITAs. The Local Plan must describe the process to be used in selecting the providers under a contract for services. This process must include a public comment period for interested providers of at least 30 days.*

The Interim WIB voted to exempt the following programs from the ITA requirement:

1. The Construction/Building Trades Pre-Apprenticeship Program with the Carpenter Union, Local 25.
2. The RN and LVN Program with Merced College.

**11. March 28, 2000:**

**JTPA Close-Out Plan**

The Interim WIB approved the JTPA Closeout Plan and the Interim WIB authorized the Chair to sign the plan.

JTPA Directive D99-9 dated February 28, 2000 provided closeout guidance and instructions for SDAs to develop a closeout plan for Job Training Partnership Act.

**12. March 28, 2000:**

**Interim Decision Authority**

The Interim WIB authorized WIA Transition Committee to take any action required on behalf of the Interim WIB, during the transition period, and until the new WIB is appointed. This authority will remain in place until the newly appointed WIB holds its first meeting and then elects to rescind the authority.

**13. May 30, 2000:**

**Local Provider application for the State Eligibility Training Providers List (ETPL)**

For providers of training services to access WIA funds for training, they must apply to their Local Board (WIB) and ask to be placed on the State Eligible Training Providers List by completing the ETPL application and returning it to the local WIB.

The local Board reviewed and approved all applications and forwarded them to the State for review and placement on the State list.

## **Highlights of the Five-Year Plan**

### **Local Vision and Goals**

Merced County's Workforce Investment System will keep pace with new growth, the emerging economy, and the ever-changing needs of employers by creating a better educated, highly skilled workforce, that's capable, prepared, and thoroughly knowledgeable. Specific goals will be set by the Merced County Workforce Investment Board (WIB) to meet the needs of both job seekers and employers.

- Universal referrals through electronic connections with all One-Stop partners
- Local and regional information sharing through video conferencing
- Strategic Marketing of the One-Stop System for both employers and job seekers
- Creation of new affiliate sites
- Expansion of current sites
- Electronic case management system
- Continuous improvement through staff training and cross-training with partners
- Electronic linkages to all Workforce programs and services
- Complete, up-to-date information on provider's performance
- Focus groups and meetings to prevent duplicated services
- Customer focused, customer driven satisfaction standards
- Employer data base system with electronic linkages to available jobs and all necessary labor-market information
- An encoded customer card which contains all their pertinent information

In order to meet these goals and realize our future vision, a step-by-step action plan will be put into place to meet each individual objective.

### **WIB Economic and Workforce Development Goals :**

- 1) Improve the economic performance of Merced County to exceed the average of the San Joaquin Valley.
- 2) Improve the education and job skills of the local workforce, including youth, to exceed the average of the San Joaquin Valley.
- 3) Align and coordinate strategic plans and goals with that of education, economic development organizations and other community workforce development organizations.

### **Information and Services**

- full access to all core services through electronic linkages
- information on available jobs
- resumes
- post on-line applications for employment
- check out day-care providers
- transportation information
- research new career opportunities, either locally or nationally
- link to all partner programs and investigate services, from migrant education to apprentice projects
- check the performance history and the successful employment ratios for specific training and/or schools.
- “hot” markets in other areas for those considering relocation
- check out available housing, schools, programs etc., in any region of the country.
- skills labs, GED preparation, informational seminars on self-improvement
- workshops covering all aspects of job search, resumes, interviewing skills, employer expectations, etc.
- access to the Internet.

Merced County’s One-Stop System is a work in progress, but full services are readily available to every job seeker who enters the door, picks up a phone, or sits down at a keyboard. Well trained, professional staff will ensure that every customer receives a brief orientation about center services and is linked to every needed service.

### **Wagner-Peyser Act /Unemployment Insurance**

- EDD Representatives are co-located in the Merced County One-Stop sites providing WagerPeyser services.
- PITD staff is also co-located in the Merced EDD office. Job listings are shared through CalJobs and America’s Job Bank.
- access to the UI call centers through a designated phone in the lobbies of the centers.

### **Enhanced Youth Programs**

- core services will be readily available to area youth.
- electronic access to community resources
- ensure successful linkages and expanded opportunities with educational facilities, apprenticeship programs, leadership programs and other training opportunities.
- target out-of-school youth.
- supportive services, comprehensive guidance and counseling for career choices

- educational choices and employment opportunities through procurement contracts.
- Paid and non-paid work experiences, occupational-skills training, and follow-up services will also be available to all eligible youth.

## **Market Analysis of Local Area**

### **Key trends during the next five years:**

- Completion of the Federal prison at the former Castle Air Force Base
- University of California at Merced
- Expected growth in non-farm industry in Merced County is a projection of 8,300 jobs (17.5 % increase) from 1995 – 2002
- Specific areas of growth are construction and manufacturing, with the greatest growth in durable goods
- Transportation, communication and public utilities will continue growing at a steady pace with the greatest growth in communication and utilities.
- Retail trade will show a marked growth rate with the greatest increase in general merchandise and eating/drinking places
- Services will continue to grow at a rapid pace
- Biggest increase in health services
- Government will have the largest growth

## **Employer Needs**

### ***Soft skills that employees bring to the job:***

- showing up to work,
- work ethic, and a
- positive attitude.

### ***Job skills***

- basic reading and
- math, problem solving,
- interpersonal skills,
- business conversation, and
- skills and experience unique to the particular occupation.

## **Job-seekers Needs**

- a desire to make a livable wage;
- more concise information on looking for jobs
- better access to services for job-search assistance

- help in resolving child care and/or transportation issues

### **Workers Needs**

- livable wage
- benefits
- training for advancement

### **Streamlining Services:**

Employment, training and education programs will be integrated and coordinated with partners in the local One-Stop System to ensure that all customer needs are met without duplication of services.

- **Empowering Individuals:**

All customers, served in the local One-Stop, will be provided information, counseling and guidance to allow them to make the best possible decisions regarding their career plans and direction.

### **Strong Role for Local Board and Private Sector**

The local board has strong representation from the “movers and shakers” of the private sector, i.e. business owners, chief executive officers and other high-level management. In collaboration with the Chief Elected Official, through their representation on the local board, the board establishes local performance levels, oversees strategic planning and is responsible for the success of the local system.

### **One-Stop Services**

- Customers will receive accurate information on the One-Stop and partner services, whether they enter the system through a program partner or as a “walk-in” at the One-Stop Center.
- Customers will have easy and rapid access to all center and system partner programs; this includes no prolonged waiting time for the initial services, between service steps, particularly when multiple services are provided for partners in sequence or simultaneously.
- Customers will be linked with all needed, wanted, appropriate services within the system, no matter where they enter the system.
- Customers will never need to give repetitive information to any system partner (program). If additional information is needed, it will be added to the existing information, which was previously collected.
- All customers, no matter their initial point of contact, will be offered appropriate services to meet their needs.

- Customers will be given an opportunity to provide feedback on programs and services throughout the process to ensure continuous improvement of the entire One-Stop System.

### **Core Services**

- Eligibility determination
- outreach, intake and orientation
- Initial assessment
- Job search and placement assistance
- Employment statistics
- Performance and program cost of local service providers
- Availability of support services
- Unemployment Insurance claims
- Follow-up services

### **Intensive Services, When:**

- Unemployed and are unable to obtain employment through core services;
- Determined to be in need of intensive services in order to obtain or retain employment to ensure self-sufficiency.
- Employed, but determined to be in need of intensive services to obtain or retain employment to ensure-self-sufficiency.

### **Intensive Service Include:**

- Comprehensive and specialized assessments
- Development of Individual Employment Plan (IEP)
- Group counseling
- Individual counseling and career planning
- Case management
- Short-term prevocational services

### **Criteria When Funds are Limited**

The local Workforce Investment Board (WIB) will establish /set criteria for determining whether employment leads to self-sufficiency. This self-sufficiency wage will be used to determine eligibility (adult and/or dislocated workers) for intensive and training services. Priority will be given to those who are “below “ the established self-sufficiency wage.

### **Employer Services**

- The California Job Opening Browse System (Cal Jobs) is an electronic job listing and referral system developed to make customer self-service possible.
- Cal Jobs is a computer link between employers and job seekers and is the primary matching tool for EDD Job Services.

- Internet based, CalJobs is available at all One-Stop Centers and affiliate sites.
- Marketing initiatives utilized to promote the One-Stop system will include employers
- One-Stop System Job Developers will also ensure delivery to employers

### **Re-employment Services /Worker Profiling**

- Profiling workshops are normally conducted every other week
- Claimants receive information regarding access to training, other employment resources and support services.

### **Veterans Services**

- First priority for job referrals as a 24-hour hold /freeze is placed on all new jobs
- Federal and State laws mandate that EDD provide priority services to veterans
- Vet-funded staff provide a full range of employment resources which include case management
- Job service management monitors veteran staff to ensure that legislative requirements are met.

### **Rapid Response**

- Assistance is available to dislocated workers and employers through Rapid Response teams via the local One-Stop System.
- Consumer Credit Counseling is available, depending on circumstances ,
- assessment,
- mental health services and
- financial planning assistance
- One-on-one counseling
- retraining or extensive job search
- Labor Market Information Guide

### **Youth Programs/ Activities**

The Youth Council has identified the following youth activities/programs as appropriate services that could be incorporated into a youth development model:

- **Hire-A-Youth (HAY)** a contracted program between the Merced WIB and State Employment Development Department (local). Targets older youth, 18-21 years of age, who have graduated from high school or are in the process of completing work for a GED.
- **JCG (Jobs for California Graduates)** pre-employment work maturity training for in-school, at-risk youth



- **Work, Achievement, Values and Education ( WAVE):** comprehensive, year round, in-house program that targets out-of-school youth ages 16-21 years. These youth are not only economically disadvantaged, but usually experience multiple barriers to employment. Intensive follow-up and case management of these youth. Vocational training is also available, either through a classroom structure or work-based model. Work-based activity is supported in both the private and public sector. Private sector employers are offered incentives for their participation in training youth, by partially or fully subsidizing the youth's wages.
- **Merced County Office of Education(MCOE):** ROP skills training and other educational/vocational opportunities for all eligible youth.
- **The Recovery Assistance for Teens (RAFT) Program:** A Merced County specially focused drug and alcohol intervention staff from the RAFT(County Mental Health Department
- **County Health Department:** There are several nutritional, well baby, pregnancy prevention, parenting, and tobacco & alcohol information programs available for youth. These programs provide information as well as personal presentations, when requested.
- **Good Will Stores:** Goodwill has been a retail-training site for youth services for many years. This also allows them to shop at a discount for interview and work clothing.
- **WIC:** Conduct presentations on good nutrition for children and provide classes on childcare.
- **LAMP:** In conjunction with the County Health Department, Lamp conducts presentations on AIDS and responsible sexual behavior for youth.
- **The Woman's Place:** Conducts presentations to youth, takes referrals, and offers valuable training on domestic violence intervention.
- **California Conservation Corps:** Provide educational programs and have hired up to ten (10) youth annually for the past several years.
- **Merced Adult School:** Provides an instructor for the computer-assisted lab (Plato) located at the One-Stop. Merced Adult School has committed to giving high school completion credits for several courses in Plato (science, history, social studies) and accepts referrals for GED testing based upon successfully passing the Plato pre-test. They also offer free cashier training as part of a vocational training course in retail sales.

- **Boys/Girls Club and Housing Authority:** Provides long-term work sites for youth mentoring, and work supervision.
- **Youth Opportunity Program (YEOP):** Program run by the local Employment Development Department (EDD) which serves at-risk youth between the ages of 15-21, who are currently in school, willing or would like to return to school, seeking employment preparation and in need of assistance of the services provided.

## **Procurement**

All training services for youth will be competitively procured

The County of Merced, in conjunction with the Workforce Investment Board (WIB) and the CEO, shall conduct procurements in a manner, which provides full and open competition.

***MERCED COUNTY ONE-STOP PARTNERS:***

**Private Industry Training Department** (One-Stop Operator) Title I Programs

**Merced College**, Carl Perkins Act

**Merced Unified School District** (Adult School) Title II, Adult Education/Literacy Activities

**Merced County Office of Education** (ROP), Carl Perkins Act

**Central Valley Opportunity Center**, Migrant and Seasonal Workers

**Housing Authority of Merced County**, HUD Employment and Training Program (MOU negotiated & signed by partner. See Section V, paragraph R, # 3)

**Merced County Community Action Agency**, Employment and Training (Under the Community Services Block Grant)

**Merced County Human Services Agency** (Welfare), Title V, of the Older Americans Act

**State of California, EDD, NAFTA**, State Unemployment Compensation, Job Services (MOU pending, see Section V, paragraph R, # 2 and # 3)

**State of California Department of Rehabilitation**, Title I Rehabilitation Act, 1973 (MOU pending, see Section V, paragraph R, # 2 and # 3)

These organizations have come together to provide a service delivery system to all customers using the Merced One-Stop Delivery system.