

**TO: Youth Council**

**DATE: 5/11/05**

**FROM: WIB Staff**

**For Action**

**For Information**

**For Discussion**

**SUBJECT: Out-of-School Youth Program Quarterly Report**

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

**DISCUSSION: Out-of-School Youth Report, January/February/March 2005 is attached.**

**ATTACHMENT(S):**

**Out-of-School Youth Quarterly Report will be available at the meeting.**

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

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

Re: Merced County Youth Council Quarterly Report- EMPOWER Program

Date: April, 2005 for the quarter ending March 31, 2005

**A. Overall status of the program:** **Forty-one participants** were enrolled into the EMPOWER Program during the months of January, February and March 2005. Status on all WIA-Client Action reports for goals, activities, exits, and follow-ups show continued improvement and are now up to date.

**B. Past Quarter Highlights:**

**1) EMPOWER Workshops:**

- a) EMPOWER Orientation: Conducted on the second Friday in the months of January, February and March; on the average 25 participants attended each session;
- b) EMPOWER Workshop I: Conducted on the third Friday in the months of January, February, and March; on the average 20 participants attend each session; and
- c) EMPOWER Workshop II-Job Readiness was conducted in the months of January, February, and March where participants completed an ROP employability portfolio and practiced interviewing techniques.

**2) Bldg K-Computer Lab:** EMPOWER participants use the computer lab daily to work on résumés, portfolios, and conduct job search. Sue Tyler, adult schoolteacher, continues to be available for six hours per week in the computer lab to assist EMPOWER participants with PLATO educational software designed to increase math and reading skills. Sign in sheets are used to track the number of participants using the computer lab daily.

**3) 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. This quarter, the following Career Industry Days were held at the Merced County Fair Grounds:

- a) Careers in Education held on Thursday, January 27, 2005; and
- b) Careers in Health and Science held on Wednesday, February 23, 2005.

The EMPOWER advisors were encouraged to invite those participants whose career goals or technical training aligned with these pathways.

**4) Program Activity Support System (PASS) Training** was provided for EMPOWER Advisors and support staff on January 18, 2004. Mary Cavazos and Mayra Ramirez, representatives from our partner EDD, provided the training. PASS is a case management tool that can be accessed via the Internet. The EMPOWER advisors are encouraged to use this management tool to enter their diary notes in participant files.

- 5) **California Workforce Association Fourth Annual Youth Conference: ALL YOUTH. ONE SYSTEM: CONNECTED** was the theme of this year's CWA Conference held on January 25th- 27th 2005 in Orange County, CA. EMPOWER staff presented at this year's conference, sharing the EMPOWER Orientation model and SAGE Assessment. Presenters included representatives from the EMPOWER program, EDD, Merced Worknet, and Marissa Enciso, an EMPOWER participant.
- 6) **Career Pictorial Training** for EMPOWER Advisors was held on February 3 and 4, 2005. This two-day session provided a curriculum for implementing the elements of the career decision-making process based on the work of Richard Bowles, a renowned career development educator and author of "*What Color Is Your Parachute*".
- 7) **Youth Performance Management training** was provided to EMPOWER staff by Mr. Rick Record from the State Employment Development Department on Feb. 23, 2005. This training included an overview of the younger and older youth performance measurements, including critical quarters effecting program services, exits, and follow-ups.
- 8) **Youth Exit Strategies training** was provided to the EMPOWER Staff by Mr. Rick Record from the State Employment Development Department on Mar. 23, 2005. This training built on the previous training that provided in-depth discussion on exit and post-exit strategies.
- 9) **A Framework for Understanding Poverty Training** was attended by Blanca Rodriguez and Roberto Rivera, two EMPOWER advisors, on March 8 and 9, 2005. Two local experts Hilary Levine and Karen Westersund provided the training in Fresno. They presented the research and processes developed by Dr. Ruby Payne, author of the book "*A Framework for Understanding Poverty*". Roberto and Blanca shared their notes, information and materials from the training with the rest of the staff.
- 10) **Juvenile Hall Project:** Staff and administrators from EMPOWER, Juvenile Hall, Merced County Probation, and Valley Community School met on February 18, 2005 to review procedures for the purposes of recruiting, enrolling and serving youth for this special project. The updates for the project were presented to Merced County Youth Council on March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2005.
- 11) **Quarterly EMPOWER Partner meeting** was held on January 7, 2005. Attendees included representatives from Merced College, Merced Adult School, and EMPOWER staff.
- 12) **EMPOWER Focus Group** meeting was conducted on March 22, with EMPOWER program participants to discuss and provide feedback for the development of Workshop IV on Financial Literacy.
- 13) **Opportunity Club:** The Opportunity Club is an ongoing activity that provides monthly sessions to EMPOWER participants on current job, educational, community, and leadership opportunities, as well as information regarding life skills for EMPOWER and YOP youth in Merced County. Sessions are conducted in Bldg K at the MCOE campus. All participants are invited and encouraged to attend. This quarter's schedule was as follows:

- January 18, 2005: *Decisions and Choices* was the topic presented by Angela Farr-Health Educator from Planned Parenthood. The presentation included a lively discussion on services and most recent statistics to help participants make informed choices and decisions.
- March 28, 2005. Guests Speaker - Rob Jarvis, who works for our local adolescent drug and alcohol treatment and prevention program, RAFT, "Recovery Assistance for Teens" provided an informal discussion with program participants about alcohol and drug use.

**14) Working Professional Curriculum update:** EMPOWER staff revised the ROP Working Professional course outline, which is the framework for all EMPOWER workshops, work experience activities, and the locally approved youth credential. On March 24, 2005, the ROP Working Professional Advisory Committee, made up of community business partners, parents, participants and educators, met for a community review and approval of the course outline. The ROP Working Professional Course outline was approved by the Advisory Committee to be forwarded to the Merced County Office of Education Board of Trustees, and then to the California Office of Education for final approval.

**15) Los Banos Update:** Crystal Capone, Fabian Saucedo and Sebastian Wood of Los Banos earned their G.E.D. in the last three months. Six other participants anticipate completing their G.E.D. by the middle of June 2005. A Graduation Ceremony and Celebration is planned for the G.E.D. graduates on June 30th, at the Los Banos Worknet.

**16) Success Stories:**

*Marissa Enciso*, the EMPOWER participant who presented at the CWA conference last January, has been accepted for an internship this summer to visit Honduras and investigate "sweat shops". She went through a selection process, interviewed and was chosen as one of the twelve representatives from the United States. They will all meet in Washington, D.C., and then travel to different destinations through out the world. This is an opportunity for Marissa to learn about other cultures and governments outside the United States.

*Rosario Iniguez*, an EMPOWER participant and mother of a three year old girl and a five year old boy, earned her High School Equivalency Certificate just two months after she started the program. Rosario is now working at a local business in Merced. In the future, her plans are to pursue a career in the nursing field.

*Johnnie Mejia*, is an EMPOWER participant who maintains a positive attitude, even under pressure. Johnnie is presently employed by the Career and Alternative Education Department at the Merced County Office of Education as a media technician. He has been very instrumental in the creation and design of numerous projects, including industry day events, retirements, guest speakers, etc. He is willing to do whatever is asked of him, and often goes beyond the call of duty to assure success and attain quality projects. Johnnie is able to balance his demanding workload with continued college courses, and will be attending San Francisco State College in the fall.

**C. Past Quarter Deficiencies:**

The EMPOWER program met the earnings and retention performance measures, and slightly missed the employment and credential measures. These performance measures were for the period April 1, 2003 through March 31, 2004 and reflected, at least in part, the performance of the previous contractors (Arbor and JCG). Significant training and strategies have been implemented to ensure that the performance measures are met for the period April 1, 2004 through March 31, 2005.

**D. Past Quarter Recruiting and Marketing Efforts:**

- 1) EMPOWER staff distributed fliers and brochures at the Winton Health and Family Resource Fair held on February 9, 2005 at the Winton Middle School, Winton, California.
- 2) Empower staff dispersed brochures at the Merced Job Fair held on March 30<sup>th</sup> 2005; 38 youth were invited to the April 8<sup>th</sup> EMPOWER orientation.

**E) Number enrolled & number of participants in each program component: *March 31, 2005***

<b>Total number of active participant enrollments:</b>	<b>282</b>
	(273 in Feb)
<b>Total number of participants in follow-up:</b>	<b>122</b>
	(142 in Feb)
<b>Enrollment in program components:</b>	
<b>Adult Basic Education, GED, HS diploma</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Career Technical Training</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Workshop II</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Work Experience</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Unsubsidized Employment</b>	<b>73</b>
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<b>Total enrolled in program components</b>	<b>190</b>

**F) Number of hard/soft exits**

Hard Exits: 00  
Soft Exits: 00

**G) Next quarter challenges:**

Developing the Program budget for 2005-2006.

**H) Technical assistance needed: None identified at this time.**

**I) Number of clients receiving social services and examples of services received:**

Numerous referrals have been made to agencies to assist with food, clothing, and housing.