

**TO: Youth Council**

**DATE: 06/09/04**

**FROM: Youth Council Staff**

**For Action**

**For Information**

**For Discussion**

**SUBJECT: Youth Programs – Eligibility for Services/A Percentage Analysis**

**PROPOSED MOTION(S):** That the Youth Council examine enrollment percentages in both youth programs and determine if sufficient youth are represented in selected enrollment categories; i.e., disabled, offenders, foster youth, substance abusers. If not, work with Merced County Office of Education (MCOE) to adjust the population percentages of new enrollees.

**DISCUSSION:** An examination of the proposed reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act, along with a recognition of other pending legislation, both federal and state, combined with a rise in grant funding available, reveals that three of the groups of “eligible participants” have been identified by Dept of Labor and California as those who might require more focus. Those categories are foster youth, offenders and substance abusers, and those with disabilities. All are presently served in our youth programs.

Merced County statistics from 2002 reveal the following concerning the age groups 10-17:

1. There is 9.7% of the total youth who have been involved with committing both misdemeanor and felony offenses. This includes drug offenses. However, this includes all County youth, not just those who could be considered WIA eligible. Doubling the percentages from 9.7% to 19.4% seems to be a more credible figure.
2. A total of 368 youth are in the foster care system. Of those, 115 are between the ages of 10-17. That represents 0.3% of the County youth population, ages 10-17. However, data for foster care youth is underrepresented. There are many non-Merced County youth who are now living in Merced County who are not included in that number. The Merced College Independent Living Program reports approximately 100 new referrals, ages 16+, to their program each year. Again, doubling the current statistic brings the total percentage of foster youth ages 10-16+ to 0.6%.
3. The data for those with disabilities is unavailable for youth only. All figures include individuals up to the age of 65.

An analysis of the youth programs from July 2003 – March 2004 reveals:

1. Younger Youth – 364 enrollees.
  - a. Foster Youth – 25 – 7% of total program (County 0.6%)
  - b. Offender + Substance Abuse – 54 + 24 – 21.4% (County 19.4%)
  - c. Disabled – 143 – 39%

**2. Out-of-School – 205 enrollees**

- a. Foster Youth – 13 – 6.3% of total program (County 0.6%)**
- b. Offender + Substance Abuse – 23 + 24 – 22.9% (County 19.4%)**
- c. Disabled – 30 – 15%**

**It appears that both programs are presently serving the appropriate percentages of enrollees in the highlighted categories. But, it is suggested that this study be presented to MCOE as an impetus to alert them to possible future changes in their recruitment of enrollees. Then if the anticipated emphasis to enroll more participants from the disabled, foster care, or offenders or substance abuser categories does materialize, then the youth programs will be better positioned to positively react.**

**ATTACHMENT(S): N/A**