

TO: Youth Council

DATE: 09/12/07

FROM: WIB Staff

For Action

For Information

For Discussion

SUBJECT: EMPOWER Quarterly Report

PROPOSED MOTION(S): Information Only

DISCUSSION: EMPOWER Quarterly Report, Apr, May, Jun 2007 is attached.

ATTACHMENT(S): EMPOWER Quarterly Report

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- **EMPOWER Program**
 Date: August 2006 for the 4th quarter, ending June 30, 2007

A. Overall Status of the Program:

Nine new participants were enrolled into the EMPOWER Program and **twenty-eight** participants were exited during the fourth quarter. This brings the total to 166 active EMPOWER participants and 143 participants in follow-up. The Empower advisors continue to track the number of participants enrolled in structured program activities to ensure that the majority of youth are receiving intensive services, as opposed to case management services. The status on WIA-Client action reports for goals, activities, exits and follow-ups (phase II) remain up to date. The EMPOWER outcomes for the fourth quarter results are as follows:

Performance Measurement	Negotiated Performance Level with State of CA. & Merced County Program Year 06-07	EMPOWER 4 th quarter Performance Results
Older youth (17-21)		
Enter Employment	65.8 %	88.9 %
Retention	75.0 %	88.9 %
Credential rate	39.0 %	78.6 %
Earning Change	\$3,484.00	\$4, 116.94

B. Past Quarter Highlights:

- 1) **EMPOWER Workshops:** are provided on an every other month basis. The following is an accounting of workshops offered and number attended:
 - a) **EMPOWER Orientation:** held on Friday on May 9th with an attendance of twenty-four youth;
 - b) **EMPOWER Workshop I:** ‘*Gettin’ Ready for the Job*’ held on Friday, May 18th had fifteen in attendance;
 - c) **EMPOWER Workshop II:** ‘*The Real Game California*’ was conducted three sessions on May 21, 23 & 25; there was an average of 16 in attendance per session;
 - d) **EMPOWER Workshop III:** ‘*Gettin’ a Job*’ was conducted in three sessions on May 29, 30 and June 1st with an average attendance of 15 per sessions.

- 2) **Bldg K-Computer Lab:** EMPOWER participants use the computer lab daily to work on résumés, portfolios, and conduct job search. *PLATO* is educational software designed to

increase math and reading skills, it is also available to the participants in the computer lab. Sign-in sheets are used to track the number of participants using the computer lab daily.

- 3) **Quarterly EMPOWER Partners meeting** was not held this past quarter. Partners agreed that a meeting was not needed.

- 4) **Opportunity Club:** The Opportunity Club is an ongoing activity that provides monthly sessions 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.

The Opportunity Club met on April 19, eighteen YOP & EMPOWER participants had the privilege to view a DVD presentation by Father G. Boyle who visited Merced County Office of Education on March, 23rd. Father Gregory Boyle, S.J. a Jesuit priest and Founder/Executive Director of *Jobs-For-A-Future/Homeboy Industries* gave a rousing presentation on “Kinship”. Father Boyle is a nationally renowned speaker at conferences for teachers, social workers and criminal justice workers about the importance of adult attention, guidance and unconditional love in preventing youth from joining gangs.

- 5) **EMPOWER Focus Group** meeting was conducted on May 25th; fifteen EMPOWER participants discussed with program staff the sensitive topic of *Internet Safety*”. The meeting focused on the advantages and disadvantages of using the internet; why it is important to know about *Internet Safety*, and discussed ways youth can protect themselves when using the internet.

- 6) **ROP Marketing Working Professional Curriculum** revisions and updates were approved by a local advisory committee meeting on April 24, 2007. Staff presented the updates to the curriculum and revised training plans that will be used in the community classroom; as well as updated marketing brochures and a 4-step lesson plan on Dr. Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences.

- 7) **McNamara Park Resource Fair** on May 4th Merced City held a 'Cinco de Mayo' celebration at McNamara Park from 4-8pm. Rebecca Garcia and Toulou Moua joined

other agencies in celebrating the holiday with the citizens of Merced. Ms. Garcia & Ms. Moua represented Empower/YOP by providing brochures and ROP related information.

- 8) Youth Transitions Conference:** On April 27th, YOP and EMPOWER staff attended a Youth Transitions Conference held in Visalia that focused on foster youth. Staff learned that within the first 18 months of aging out from foster care, 24 to 50 percent of the youth become homeless. The (ITFH) Interagency Task Force on Homelessness has determined that there was an urgent need to provide current and former foster youth with mental health, housing, educational and employment training services that are easily accessible and obtainable. Thus the following pilot programs were implemented; Project HOPE, Alameda County WIB; Project TRENDS, Ventura County WIB; The Foster Youth Pilot Project of the Northern Central Counties Consortium. All three programs have successfully collaborated with the (DSS) Department of Social Services, (EDD) Development Department, and (WIA) Workforce Investment Board in their area.

In conclusion, the message from the Youth Transition conference revealed a need for all agencies to collaborate with each other for the good of aging-out foster youth; emphasizing the vital role that each partner plays in a foster youth's future.

- 9) EMPOWER presentation to Merced County Probation Dept.** was held on April 5th at the Merced County Office of Education's Opportunity Zone. Staff invited probation to attend a morning or afternoon session where probation could view a PowerPoint presentation on the EMPOWER program and be provide with resource materials. Time was made available for questions on how the EMPOWER program may better serve their clients.

10) EMPOWER Success Story



When Marissa Enciso enrolled into EMPOWER in October 2004, she had dropped out of CSU San Bernardino to help her family financially. She is the first in her family to attend college and it broke her heart to leave college. During the assessment interview, Marissa was very depressed, but after learning about the all opportunities available with the EMPOWER program she began to feel hope and encouragement. More importantly, she had caring people around her, willing to listen to her problems.

Marissa was provided with clothing that enabled her to feel confident at interviews and a Thanksgiving food basket with a 17lb turkey from the EMPOWER community service project was made available to her family. Shortly, the EMPOWER program found Marissa employment for the Christmas season at JC Penny and due to her excellent work; J.C. Penny hired Marissa part-time after the holiday season.

In January 2005, Marissa accompanied EMPOWER staff to the CWA conference in Anaheim; she was given the opportunity to shared her compelling story and heartfelt testimony with CWA conference attendees.

Then in April 2005, Marissa was interviewed and selected as the only college student not attending an Ivy League school to be one of twelve representatives during a summer internship to visit Honduras and investigate sweat shops.

In the fall of 2005, Marissa returned to San Bernardino University to continue and complete her goal to graduate. Marissa graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice in June of 2007 and was recently hired as a Bilingual Instructional Assistant at Chowchilla High School. Her goal is to work for Immigration and Citizenship Services in Fresno.

C. Past Quarter Deficiencies: none

D. Past Quarter Recruiting and Marketing efforts:

Recruiting efforts for EMPOWER are limited. The contract specified that as participants exit, new participants will be enrolled in the following quarter after exits, upon availability of funds.

E. Next Quarter Challenges: none

F. Technical assistance needed: none

G. Number of clients receiving social services and examples of services received.

Numerous referrals were made to agencies to assist with food, clothing, housing and transportation