

TO: Youth Council

DATE: 09/13/06

FROM: Youth Council Staff

For Action

For Information

For Discussion

SUBJECT: April – June 2006 EMPOWER Quarterly Report

PROPOSED MOTION(S): Information only.

DISCUSSION: See attached.

ATTACHMENT(S): April – June 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, 2006

A. Overall Status of the Program:

Fourteen new participants were enrolled into the EMPOWER Program during the months of April, May and June 2006. This brings the total active participants to 248. Status on all WIA-Client Action reports for goals, activities, exits, and follow-ups are up to date.

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:** Conducted on Friday on May 12, with an attendance of seventeen youth;
 - b) **EMPOWER Workshop I: ‘Gettin’ Ready for the Job’** conducted on Friday, May 19th had 14 in attendance;
 - c) **EMPOWER Workshop II: ‘The Real Game California’** was conducted in three sessions on May 22, 24 & 26; there was an average of 15 in attendance per session;
 - d) **EMPOWER Workshop III: ‘Gettin’ a Job’** was conducted in three sessions on May 30, 31 and June 1st with an average attendance of 15 per sessions;
 - e) **EMPOWER Workshop IV: ‘Keepin’ the Job’** was not provided in this quarter.

- 2) **EMPOWER ZONE** was held on June 1st, fourteen EMPOWER participants were judged on the successful completion of a job application, an employability portfolio, and on their individual and panel interviewing skills. Professionals from public, private and community-based organizations interviewed and scored each participant on a scale of 0-100. The event concluded with a recognition ceremony.

- 3) **Bldg K-Computer Lab:** EMPOWER participants use the computer lab daily to work on résumés, portfolios, and conduct job search. Ed Souza, an adult school teacher, is 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.

4) **Quarterly EMPOWER Partner meeting** was not held this quarter. The partners agreed that a meeting was not needed.

5) **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. This quarter a meeting was held on April 27, “Healthy Relationships- good decision making, how it affects my future” was the topic presented by Celeste Ramos and staff from the California Health Collaborative – teen pregnancy prevention program. There was a lively discussion with staff and youth that focused on steps to take in the decision making process and how the decisions made today can affect one’s future.

6) **EMPOWER Focus Group** meeting was conducted on June 27, where seventeen EMPOWER and YOP participants and program staff discussed how staff can improve services to increase attendance and interest in The Opportunity Club meetings. Recommendations were as follows:

- ❖ Consensus to meet on the third Thursday of each month;
- ❖ Staff to provide a monthly calendar for participants to advise them on dates of upcoming events and meetings, also to provide the calendar on the MCOE website;
- ❖ Field trips to area colleges and University of California campuses ;
- ❖ Opportunity Club becomes an informal student organization. The participants will elect officers, create a mission and vision statement and have by-laws;
- ❖ Participants asked to find additional opportunities to fund-raise;
- ❖ Participants asked to hold club meetings at other high schools in the County.

Next meeting is set for August 24th at the Merced County Office of Education to discuss ways to implement these recommendations and changes.

- 7) **March of Dimes:** EMPOWER and YOP students participated in a fund-raising campaign to benefit the March of Dimes. Thirty-four participants walked in the annual Walk-America on May 5 and approximately 50 participants together with staff held a fund-raising car wash on May 12th at Merced Union High School. The goal to raise \$1000.00 was met.

- 8) **“Exit Strategies”** training was provide for EMPOWER and YOP Staff by Mr. Rick Record from the State Employment Development Department on May 5, 2006. The training concentrated on ‘exit strategies’ to maximize positive outcomes and discussion on post-exit strategies. The training included an introductory discussion on the “Making Common Sense of Youth Common Measures”; common measures outcomes may be in effect next program year 07-08.

- 9) **ROP Marketing/ Working Professional Curriculum** revisions and updates were approved by a local advisory committee meeting on April 6, 2006. Staff presented the updates and revised training plans that will be used in the community classroom; as well as updated marketing brochures and a 4-step lesson plan.

- 10) **Merced County Children’s Summit 2006** was attended by EMPOWER staff on April 7th, 2006 at the Merced County Boys and Girls Club; the theme, “Launching Countywide Youth Assets Campaign”. EMPOWER staff participated in learning circles on ‘Youth Development- Promoting the Positive’ and ‘Helping Troubled Youth’. Sue Allen from the Search Institute, was the lunch keynote speaker, and provided the group with an in-depth discussion on the ‘40-Youth Development Assets- Zero to Five and Beyond’. The day ended with staff participating in a youth asset focus group sponsored by the Youth Development Action Team and facilitated by Sue Allen from the Search Institute. The discussion generated a list of community agencies that can assist to expand and promote the Youth Developmental Assets in our community.

11) EMPOWER Success Story:

Jessica Gutierrez has been a participant of the Empower Program since January 10, 2006. Prior to joining the Empower Program, Jessica attended and received a Medical Assistant Certificate from Merced College. Jessica was having a hard time finding a job as a Medical Assistant. She applied at several clinics and asked to several interviews, but she was never offered a job. No success in obtaining a job, Jessica attended an EMPOWER Orientation, and enrolled into the Empower Program.

Jessica attended “Gettin’ Ready for a Job”, “The Real Game California” and “Gettin’ a Job” Workshops. At these workshops, Jessica completed an employment portfolio and given instruction on how to dress for interviews and interview techniques. After completing the “Getting’ Ready for a Job” workshop, her advisor placed Jessica with Horizons Unlimited Healthcare as a medical assistant. When Jessica completed her 192 work experience hours she was offered a full time position with Horizons Unlimited Healthcare. She became officially employed on May 22, 2006.

C. Past Quarter Deficiencies:

D. Past Quarter Recruiting and Marketing Efforts:

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

E. Number of hard/soft exits:

Hard Exits: 21
Soft Exits: 00

F. Next quarter challenges:

G. Technical assistance needed:

H. 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