

TO: Youth Council

DATE: 10/13/04

FROM: Youth Council Staff

For Action

For Information

For Discussion

SUBJECT: Youth Council Facts/Accomplishments Paper (Draft)

PROPOSED MOTION(S): Accept the paper.

DISCUSSION: The Youth Council's role is to strategically link/connect all youth delivery systems in a way that promotes a countywide vision of successful youth. During the Youth Council's July 14, 2004 meeting, members requested that a Youth Council Fact/Accomplishment Paper be developed to use as introductory material to other youth groups and agencies.

The paper was brought to the August/September Youth Council meetings and several Youth Council members offered constructive remarks. The attached paper incorporates those remarks, and is presented for acceptance or further development.

ATTACHMENT(S): Draft Youth Council Facts/Accomplishments Paper

Merced County Youth Council

(A Standing Committee of the Workforce Investment Board)

The Youth Council is a committee of citizens and youth services providers, meeting regularly to give our youth a better shot at success.

In Merced, the first Youth Council meetings began in 1999. Since then, the Youth Council has:

- a. Served 2,200+ youth (aged 14-21) through sponsored youth programs
- b. Provides oversight for 2.5 million federal dollars being spent in Merced County each year:
 - a. Sets project goals
 - b. Develops and disseminates requests for proposal
 - c. Contracts with service providers
 - d. Provides contract oversight
- c. Helped raise the high school graduation rates of Merced County's "at-risk" youth
- d. Helped to establish a CISCO Academy for the Dos Palos-Oro Loma Unified School District
- e. Helped to get a Countywide Needs Assessment Survey and Gap Analysis/Asset Map created
- f. Helped Los Banos establish a CISCO Academy for their youth
- g. Has produced and distributed over 3,000 copies "Youth Resource Directory" for those in need of food, clothing, shelter, etc.
- h. Sponsored two youth to attend the League of California Cities Annual Conference in 2002
- i. Active involvement as presenters and attendees at California Workforce Association annual youth conferences for past 4 years
- j. Sponsored over 500 WIA enrolled youth to attend the Perry/Yokely Youth Symposium in Merced
- k. Hosted State "Youth to Youth to Success" conference for youth members of 50 youth councils throughout the State
- l. Helped with the development of the Merced County Children's Action Plan
- m. Awarded "Architects of Change" award from State Youth Council & California Youth Council Institute

The makeup of the Youth Council includes parents, individuals from the Workforce Investment Board, participating service agencies (such as juvenile justice and local law enforcement agencies), educational institutions (K-16), local public housing authorities and individuals with work experience relating to youth activities.

The local Workforce Investment Board has charged the Merced County Youth Council with responsibility for:

- a. Developing the youth portion of the strategic plan for workforce development within Merced County.
- b. Recommending eligible youth service providers to administer services for Workforce Investment Act (WIA) eligible youth, subject to the approval of the local Board.
- c. Conducting oversight of selected programs to serve WIA enrolled youth, subject to the approval of the local Board.
- d. Coordinating youth activities within Merced County.
- e. Carrying out other duties, as authorized by the Chair of the local Board, such as establishing linkages with educational agencies and other youth entities

The Merced County Youth Council views its role as the agency to:

“Strategically link/connect all youth services delivery systems in a way that promotes a countywide vision of successful youth”.

To help accomplish this, the Youth Council has embraced the State Youth Council’s **“All Youth – One System”** concept.

By July 1, 2000, the Youth Council was funded with \$2,501,693 by the US Department of Labor (DOL). The Youth Council had also begun the tasks of defining youth programs, writing a Request for Proposal defining the programs to be served, selecting the youth program providers, and then providing oversight for the programs. Since the program’s inception, 2,244 youth have been served with that number continuing to grow.

The Youth Council’s Workforce Investment Act contracts with service providers have brought over \$8.5 million into the Merced County economy. Of special significance to the 2200+ enrolled youth is the fact that over \$3.5 million has been paid directly to youth engaged in year-round work-experience programs.

The programs have raised the attainment rates for high school diplomas and GED certificates for Merced County’s “at risk” youth.

The accomplishments of the Youth Council are impressive.

- The Council was financially instrumental in the establishment of a CISCO Academy for the Dos Palos-Oro Loma Unified School District.
- When Los Banos needed help in establishing a CISCO/Electronics Laboratory to serve Los Banos High School and Merced College students, the Youth Council responded.
- Youth Council members visited the County high schools to survey youth concerning their social, educational, and economic needs. That information resulted in a County-wide Needs Assessment Survey and Gap Analysis/Asset Map being created in January 2002. The documents were presented to the County Board of Supervisors and the City Councils of Merced, Atwater, Los Banos, Dos Palos and Gustine.

- The Youth Council produced a Youth Resource Directory, aimed at providing a ready resource for youth in immediate need of food, clothing, housing, protection, counseling, transportation, medical attention, and recreation. It was distributed to over 3,000 at-risk youth, and is now in its second printing.
- The Council sponsored two youth to attend the League of California Cities Annual Conference, September 2002, in San Diego.
- They sponsored the attendance of more than 500 WIA enrolled youth enrolled at the Perry/Yokley Youth Symposium in Merced to hear Coach Herman Boone, the individual the Disney movie, "Remember the Titans", was based on.
- More recently, nine present and former Youth Council members were important contributors to the development of the Merced County Children's Action Plan.
- The Council hosted a conference for youth who were on their local youth council, or were interested in doing so. Seventy-seven young people and adults representing youth councils throughout California attended. A strong message was developed by the youth, "The Voice of Youth has Strength and Power," and was presented by youth attendees to the State Youth Council at its meeting in Oakland.
- In 2003, the California Youth Council Institute and the California State Youth Council awarded the Merced County Youth Council, the Architect of Change Award. The award was given to honor those Youth Councils who had shown leadership in their community, and had significant impact on the youth they serve.

This year, the youth of Merced County are receiving \$2.6 million dollars worth of programs and work-experience employment, which is being guided and monitored by the Youth Council.

The Youth Council continues to support the personal development of the County's youth, while helping to craft a system that will help each individual achieve success as they reach maturity and enter the workforce.

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 established workforce investment areas throughout the United States. Local workforce investment boards (WIB) were then created to focus on strategic planning, policy development and oversight of their local workforce investment systems.

Youth Programs are also an integral part of the Act, and local Youth Councils were mandated as a subcommittee of the Workforce Investment Boards.

The Act dictates improved youth programs with strong connections between academic and occupational learning that are linked closely to local labor market needs and community youth programs and services.

Youth programs include activities that promote leadership development through community service opportunities; adult mentoring and follow-up; and targeted opportunities for at-risk youth living in high poverty areas.

The Workforce Investment Act can be found at 20 Code of Federal Regulations Part 652 and Parts 660 to 671.

All Youth – One System

The “All Youth – One System” model was designed by the California State Youth Council in an effort to develop a comprehensive youth system in California that is integrated and connected. The system will provide youth access to the opportunities, services and support that they need to become productive, happy and healthy adults.

People at the state and local levels are striving to address the myriad of options our youth experience. Yet, many struggle in isolation. The “All Youth – One System” is intended to provide a comprehensive framework and guidance to unite these efforts.

The State Youth Council (SYC) envisions a system that is integrated and connected. It will leverage the investments of a range of programs and departments at state level. Key to the system is the recognition of the unique talents and gifts of individual young people and the provision of opportunities tailored to meet the needs and maximize the potential of each of our state’s youth.

The SYC has developed a set of priorities and a work plan that will lead to the development of a comprehensive youth plan that will link services and programs, leverage federal, state and local, as well as public and private resources, and provide our youth with multiple opportunities and the support to develop the knowledge, skills, abilities and qualities they need to be successful.

SYC priorities are to involve and engage youth so that they may participate in the decisions that affect their lives. The “All Youth – One System” will provide connections and resources for youth so they have “real-time” support. An immediate goal is the promotion of the effective implementation of targeted programs so that we begin the process of system development. Local Youth Councils are supported, encouraged, and empowered so that they may serve as catalysts for the changes needed to provide truly comprehensive services for all youth in their communities. Finally, the SYC will lay the groundwork for a comprehensive plan for youth by bringing together the leaders who are calling for the creation of such a plan, and will align and target their activities and resources to support the plan’s development.

It is recognized that at every level, key stakeholders – including leadership, parents and youth themselves – need first to become engaged in dialogue about how best to align and deliver quality education programming, a range of programs, real-world experiences, needed services and other opportunities for growth that will ensure a bright future for all California’s youth.