

TO: Youth Council

DATE: 12/13/06

FROM: Youth Council Staff

For Action

For Information

For Discussion

SUBJECT: July - September 2006 EMPOWER Quarterly Report

PROPOSED MOTION(S): Information only.

DISCUSSION: See attached.

ATTACHMENT(S): July - September 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: **October 2006** (July/ Aug/ September)

A. Overall status of the program:

The EMPOWER program enrolled two new participants this quarter and exited 30 (thirty); this brings the total number active to 220 EMPOWER participants. 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 all WIA-Client action reports for goals, activities, exits and follow-ups (phase II) remain up to date.

B. Past Quarter Highlights:

- 1) **EMPOWER Workshops:** Staff updated and restructured the EMPOWER Workshops over the summer. The EMPOWER Workshops were provided to youth only in the month of September this quarter. The following is an accounting of workshops offered and number attended:
 - a) **EMPOWER Orientation:** Conducted on Friday Sept. 8th, with an attendance of 22 youth;
 - b) **EMPOWER Workshop I:** ‘*Gettin’ Ready for the Job*’ conducted on Friday, September 15, had 15 youth in attendance;
 - c) **EMPOWER Workshop II:** ‘*The Real Game California*’ was conducted on September 18, 20 and 22 with an average attendance of 14 participants in attendance per session;
 - d) **EMPOWER Workshop III:** ‘*Gettin’ a Job*’ was conducted on September 25, 27 and 29 with an average attendance of 12 participants per session. The EMPOWER Zone is now incorporated into a part of Workshop III and will be provided to all participants.

- 2) **EMPOWER ZONE** was held on September 29th, where eleven 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. *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.

- 4) **Quarterly EMPOWER Partners meeting** was not held this past quarter. Partners agreed that a meeting was not needed.
- 5) **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 on the MCOE campus. All participants are invited and encouraged to attend. A meeting was conducted on August 24th, 2006 and attended by thirty participants to follow-up with recommendations made from a focus group conducted on June 27, 2006; where seventeen EMPOWER and YOP participants and program staff discussed how the program can improve services to increase attendance and interest in The Opportunity Club meetings.

The participants agreed that the third Thursday of every month is a good time to meet. An updated calendar is to be provided at each meeting on updated information and announcements on upcoming community events and activities. The discussion on the Opportunity Club becoming an informal student organization was tabled for a later meeting. The students created a 06-07 schedule of all the meetings dates, time and topics for the upcoming Opportunity Club meetings that will be posted at MCOE in Bldg K, all school sites and the YOP/EMPOWER Website.

- 6) **Merced County's Teen Conference** "*Climbing Towards Success*" was attended by both YOP and EMPOWER participants from throughout the county. The 3rd Annual 'Teen Summit' event was held at the McCombs Youth Center on September 30th, 2006. Youth had an opportunity to visit resource tables that provided information from partnering agencies throughout the county. The conference held two breakout sessions in the afternoon to provide workshops on topics of interest for youth to include: "The Law & Teens"; "Internet Safety"; "Eating Healthy" and "Handling my Feelings".

7) **Community Service- Coat Drive:**

Merced County Office of Education EMPOWER/ YOP Programs are preparing for the third annual coat drive. This community service project is an opportunity for our participants to become involved in community service. This is an excellent way for them to give back to their communities in which they live. When choosing a school to sponsor, a school is selected that is "most in need" and where our efforts will truly benefit. Last year, the YOP and EMPOWER participants delivered coats to ninety-seven (97) children attending Planada Elementary School.

This year, Don Stoll Elementary is the selected school. The YOP mentors and EMPOWER advisors are working hard with their participants to find sponsors and holding fund raisers through out the County. The participants will assist in purchasing and the distribution of the coats; so that they can visually see who is benefiting from their efforts. Our plan is to distribute 140 new coats on November 9th, at 1:30 pm to Don Stoll Elementary students.

8) **The EMPOWER Focus Group** meeting was conducted on September 29th with ten EMPOWER participants to discuss and provided feedback on questions regarding the entire EMPOWER Workshop Series, to include feedback on the EMPOWER Zone.

9) **EMPOWER Success Stories:**

Geongka Moua enrolled into the EMPOWER program on 8/16/04. When Geongka first enrolled in the program he had very little work experience and uncertain about his future. Geongka knew that getting an education was important, but unsure on the type of vocation that he wanted to pursue. Then in 2005, Geongka was place on work experience at Valley Community School as an assistant to the Campus Liaison. Geongka found himself working with students and school staff on a daily basis. The work experience at Valley Community High School helped Geongka to develop his social and supervisory skills. In August of 2006, Geongka applied for the Campus Liaison position with Golden Valley High School and was hired to begin on September 1, 2006. Geongka now knows that education is the right career choice for him and is proud to be a part of Merced Union High School District.



C. Past Quarter Deficiencies: none

D. Past Quarter recruiting and marketing efforts:

Recruiting efforts for EMPOWER is 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. Next quarter challenges:

F. Technical assistance needed:

Available training on Managing for Success(Youth Case Management), and WIA Common Measures.

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

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