

**TO: Youth Council**

**DATE:02/08/06**

**FROM: WIB Staff**

**For Action**

**For Information**

**For Discussion**

**SUBJECT: EMPOWER Quarterly Report**

**PROPOSED MOTION(S): Information Only**

**DISCUSSION: EMPOWER Quarterly Report, Oct, Nov, Dec 2005 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: **January 2006** (October, November and December 2005)

**A. Overall status of the program:**

The EMPOWER program enrolled 9 (nine) new participants during this quarter and exited eighteen; this brings the total number active to 264 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:**

- a) EMPOWER Orientation: Conducted on November 4, 2005 had 18 participants in attendance
- b) EMPOWER Workshop I: Conducted on November 18<sup>th</sup>, ten participants in attendance
- c) EMPOWER Workshop II-Job readiness was conducted in the month of November, ten participants successfully completed an ROP employability portfolio and practiced interviewing techniques.

**2) 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.

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

**4) Opportunity Club:** is an ongoing activity that provides bi-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. A meeting was held on November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2005 where ten participants from through out the county viewed the HBO Documentary *Smashed- Toxic Tales of Teens and Alcohol*. The presenter, Cyndie Bray, an EMPOWER Career Educator from Merced Office of Education, asked provoking questions after the video to our participants regarding the dangers of drinking and driving. Pre and post surveys are given to provide feedback for future sessions. Most participants tell us they come away with a different outlook on the dangers of drinking & driving and partying in general.

**5) Working Professional Curriculum Update:** In 2005 program year, EMPOWER staff revised the ROP Working Professional course outline that is the framework for all EMPOWER workshops, work experience activities, and the locally approved youth credential. In December, staff met again to update the ESLR's Competency Assignments/ Alignments to the new course outline. The task was to match the competency in the Working Professional to the assignment met through our workshops or program activities. This alignment process will assure that the Working Professional credential awarded is based on

rigorous state standards. Next quarter the staff will create program brochures, update training plans for community classroom and create one lesson plan. These new developments will be brought before an Advisory committee for approval on April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

- 6) **The REAL GAME CALIFORNIA:** Cyndie Bray, Blanca Rodriguez, Becky Lincoln (EMPOWER Staff) and Brad Eagleton, (YOP Mentor) attended training in Stockton at the San Joaquin County Office of Education for the *Real Game California* pilot curriculum on September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2005. A team of Career and Workforce Development experts and educators from California created the *Real Game California* prototype. All activities, learning objectives and performance indicators have been aligned with California Academic Content Standards; SCANS; National Career Development Guidelines, and ASCA National Standards for School Counseling Programs.

Merced County Office of Education was selected as a pilot site to provide the Real Game California. On November 7, 8 and 9, the EMPOWER staff introduced “The Real Game California” Workshop to fifteen EMPOWER participants. The curriculum provided valuable information in the areas of budgeting, career assessments, career search, and real life situations that may occur on the job. The students provided feedback that indicated to the staff that they enjoyed the workshop and the information was beneficial.

- 7) **Community Service: Coat Drive:** This year, the YOP mentors and EMPOWER advisors worked hard with their participants to involve them in raising money for the Planada Coat Drive. The participants found people to sponsor a child or held fundraisers; also the participants were involved in the purchasing and distribution of the coats. On November 16<sup>th</sup>, 97 new coats were delivered and distributed to 97 smiling K-5<sup>th</sup> grade Planada elementary youth. It is the hope of our program to make this an available community service activity every year. With each passing year, we hope to have the full support of the community and active participation of all the participants.

**The following pictures are highlights from the day:**



**Mentors, Advisors and participants worked hard for Planada's children to stay warm this winter.**



- 8) **EMPOWER Success Stories:** Alicia Cervantes was a participant that started with the Jobs for California Graduates. When Alicia became a part of the EMPOWER program she was not working or attending college, but had completed the Medical Assisting Program. Since Alicia had her certificate, she was offered work experience hours at Livingston Medical Group. While she worked, she was able to save some money to attend the Phlebotomy class offered at Abrams College. She completed the Phlebotomy class in November 2005 and then in late December she decided to apply with *BloodSource* in Merced. She immediately contacted her advisor Rebecca Garcia to make an appointment with her to assist in updating her portfolio and to practice her interviewing skills. On the day of the interview, she called Rebecca to tell her that she was hired. Alicia will be in training for about a month; she is not able to draw blood until she receives her certification from the state.

Rebecca is excited for the success of her participant; she added “I believe that Alicia did not want to seriously look for a job after completing the Medical Assisting because she was not confident in her abilities and there were some self-esteem issues. Alicia has come a long way from the person that I met back in October 2003. She has become a confident and responsible young adult. I am very proud of her.”

- 9) **Focus Group:** On December 2<sup>nd</sup>, Jean Lamming, a Research Associate from the Department of Human and Community Development at UC Davis, conducted a Focus Group with 11 (eleven) EMPOWER participants. This is a statewide survey conducted by UC Davis on WIA Youth program that will be presented to the Governor at a future date. She asked the participants question on what they think are good and bad jobs, and how the EMPOWER program has helped them better prepare for the world of work. Jean provided snacks and gave

each student a \$25.00 Target gift certificate for their participation. Comments provide by our EMPOWER participants on benefits for the EMPOWER Program are as follows

*“The EMPOWER Program - breaks the cycle, we now have the opportunity to work at jobs that are not minimum wage or be on welfare.”*

*“The EMPOWER program help us to aspire to higher education. Most of us are the first one in their family to attended college. We recognize the correlation between the lifestyle we want with higher paying jobs & education.”*

**10) Current Drugs and Gang Trends-** “What are they going to do next?” Empower staff attended training hosted by Merced County Office of Education on November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2005 at the Merced Civic Center. Staff received a crash course on the latest trends of illegal drugs and gangs from experts on the front lines; everything from new slang words for illegal drugs *Ecstasy* to movies that offer insight to the gangster mentality was presented. The seven hour workshop was facilitate by John Vigallon, director of Help Adolescent Recovery and Educational Services and Rod Little an ex-narcotic officer and Certified Post Instructor on Drugs.

**C. Past Quarter Deficiencies:** none

**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. Next quarter challenges:** WIA Common Measures Policy

**F. Technical assistance needed:** Available training on 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.

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-** Younger Youth Program  
Date: **January 2006** (Oct. Nov. Dec. 2005)

**A. Overall status of the program:**

This quarter YOP enrolled thirty-nine new participants and exited fourteen participants for a total active enrollment of 391 YOP participants. Ninety-eight percent (176/ 172) of the basic skills, work readiness, and/or occupational skills goals were attained. 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) **Career Industry Days:** These ROP sponsored events provide youth with detailed information and exploration of specific career pathways. Career Industry Days include tours of local businesses, guest speaker presentations, and hands-on activities related to various careers within a pathway. Career Industry Days are held from 8:30 am to 2:00 pm at the Merced County Fair Grounds in the Exhibit Building. The YOP mentors are encouraged to invite those students whose career goals or technical training is aligned with these pathways. The following two career days were attend by our participants:

- A) Careers in Business, Marketing, and Computer Information Systems, Oct 27, 2005
- B) Careers in Arts and Communications, on Thursday, November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2005

2) **Community Service:** The YOP mentors and EMPOWER advisors worked hard with their participants to involve them in raising money for the Planada Coat Drive. The participants found people to sponsor a child or held fundraisers. They also were involved in the purchasing and distribution of the coats. On November 16, 97 new coats were delivered and distributed to 97 smiling K-5<sup>th</sup> grade Planada Elementary youth. It is the hope of our program to make this an available community service activity every year. With each passing year, we hope to have the full support of the community and active participation of all the participants.



**3) High Concentration of Youth Award:** The Merced County Local Workforce Investment Area was awarded \$62, 500 from the Governor’s 15% WIA Discretionary Funds. Merced County Office of Education (MCOE) is providing \$33,917.00 in matching funds to provide services for an additional 30 in-school youth with disabilities. The grant funds must be spent by December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2006.

**4) YOP Success Story:** Jackie Maldonado is a 2005 graduate from Le Grand High School, she was enrolled in the YOP Program for the program year 2004-2005. While enrolled in the program, and she had the opportunity to choose a worksite in which she would work her 192 hours. She originally had picked Footlocker or Footaction at the Mall; unfortunately those slots had been taken. The next option she had was Costco Wholesale. She was not too excited about working there, but with Jackie being so cooperative, gave it a try. Jackie started working there and sure enough, the first week she called her mentor Ramiro Govea and told him that all she was doing was pick up trash and move in shopping carts. Mr. Govea talked to her and told her to hang in there for another week before she decided to look for another site. Well, she stuck it out and the rest is history! She completed all of her 192 (YOP) hours there and before the program was over the store supervisor told Mr. Govea that they were going to hire her as soon as the program ended.

Jackie is now part of the Costco Wholesale team. She was hired in August of 2005 and started with a wage of \$10.00 per hour. Even though she works many hours she really enjoys working there. The last time she saw her mentor, she told him that she is grateful for the Youth Opportunity Program. She feels that with the Work Experience that the program was able to give her she was able to be hired. When she is at work, customers sometimes tell her that she is too young to be working there. They ask her how she was able to get hired at such a young age and she always replies, “I was able to get hired because the Youth Opportunity Program gave me the chance to work here”.



**C. Past quarter deficiencies:** none

**D. Past quarter recruiting/marketing efforts:** Recruiting efforts for YOP are limited.

**F. Next quarter challenges:**

**G. Technical assistance needed:** Available training on WIA Common Measures Policy

**TO: Youth Council**

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- C. **Past quarter deficiencies:** none
- D. **Past quarter recruiting/marketing efforts:** Recruiting efforts for YOP are limited.
- F. **Next quarter challenges:**
- G. **Technical assistance needed:** Available training on WIA Common Measures Policy