

QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT

I. MID VALLEY SCHOOL-TO-WORK SUPPLEMENTAL PROJECT

Grant Award No. U-7003-8-00-88-60
Reference Non-Financial Modification No. 2
Yakima County, Washington

II. Contact Person: Tamara Bosler, STW Program Manager

III. Report Period: January 1, 2001 to March 31, 2001

IV. Performance Narrative:

Our Urban/Rural Opportunities Supplemental Grant was awarded a non-financial grant extension through June 30, 2001. That extension was requested through our non-financial Modification No. 2 with the Department of Labor.

Since the Workforce Investment Act has encouraged local WDC's to 'retool' under the Youth Council umbrella, newly acquired memberships have encompassed the full range of partners from former students to local business and education participants. Since July 2000 we have involved our local Youth Council in discussions to further develop StW efforts with our consortium. Strong leadership and support from this office encourages continuation of "best practices" within the StW environment as the WDC Youth Council takes the lead roll in developing programs for both in-school and out-of-school youth in the Yakima Valley.

By providing StW administrative leadership to the new WIA Youth Council, we will continue to strengthen the link between education, business, the Chamber of Commerce, and Yakima County Economic Development organizations to acquire a seamless system integrating business and education for our youth.

Our Youth Council is currently instrumental in the decision-making process concerning projects and expectations regarding Consortium activities from now until the end of the grant period. This time is allowing them to facilitate the outcomes as originally projected through StW objectives by adhering to the initiatives that reflect a value-added approach. The Youth Council for, example, was the decision-making body in designing a Request for Concept Papers approach to the newly acquired DOL StW extension monies for the Mid-Valley Consortium. They researched best practices and subsequently, determined that those funds would be used in keeping with the initial intent of the grant, e.g., Teacher Internships, Website Development, and School-Based Enterprises. Each of these special concept projects is immediate, yet sustainable in their own right with pertinent information for youth.

As StW Supplemental funding sunsets, our consortium plan for closure incorporates sustainability activities for our youth through the WIA Tri-County Youth Council.

We are committed to the following sustainability strategies:

- a. Continue Referring Consortium Districts to Best Practices
- b. Regular Tri-County Youth Council Meetings
- c. Connect Consortium Districts to Each Another
- d. Maintain (www.careerlinks.org) Web Site
- e. Steering Committee Involvement with the Business Education Partnership

Capacity and System Building:

The StW Supplemental project has allowed substantial benefit in strengthening the educational and business connection as a seamless system that integrates both business and education cooperatively with the following administrative staff activities. The items listed below will show a natural progression that demonstrates expansion from an original three (3) school district consortium to capacity and system building involving a three (3) county region focused on workforce development issues critical to the success of the individual and the survival of industry in our valley as we continue to struggle with the current skill gap dilemma, the food processing and marketing dilemma, the Valley's drought condition, the future of our emerging workforce (youth).

- a. Our partnership with the Greater Yakima Chamber of Commerce has developed a cooperative partnership with all seventeen (17) Yakima County School Districts. Our Mid-Valley area is now able to access databases available for student and/or staff job shadowing opportunities and internships, business tours, and classroom and career fair speakers/presenters.
- b. The Tri-County Workforce Development Council and its Tri-County Youth Council are an integral part of the Business Education Partnership Steering Committee with the Greater Yakima Chamber of Commerce, Yakima Valley Community College, Perry Technical Institute, and Educational Service District Superintendents and Business/Industry leaders. This project has incorporated the best practices of the Spokane Summit model from their Chamber of Commerce (Workforce Education Development Council). This Business Education Plan involves a Steering Committee, Task Groups. The Steering Sub-Committees are defined as: Emerging Workforce, Current Workforce, and Transitional Workforce. Our office carries the lead with the Transitional component and is currently preparing an action plan.
- c. Administrative staff is involved with the WorkSource (One Stop) as Employment and Training advisors and WIA contract supervisors connecting WDC Eligible Training Providers with prospective employees/trainees.
- d. The annual Yakima Valley Business Expo generates and develops leads in the business world where product and client meet and the private industry sector creates and projects company image with StW managers, coordinators, and others in the workforce development arena.

- e. Networking and visiting with local firms and learning what they have to offer our youth in employment opportunities during the monthly “Business After Hours” program opens potential learning opportunities. These events are designed to help make valuable business contacts.
- f. The Spring (April 13, 2001) Business Education Partnership Summit brought the leadership of both sectors together to address issues pertinent to education and business creating solutions to those issues related to workforce development. This year’s Summit included keynote speakers Frank Blethen, publisher of the Seattle Times and Terry Bergeson, OSPI Superintendent. Tri-County staff is instrumental in the task force developing the Summit’s purpose and outcomes.
- Determining a way to connect soft skills and technical skills from the classroom to the job
 - Developing a clearinghouse of programs available from business to education
 - Continuing to provide Teacher/Business job shadowing and internship programs
 - Encouraging Skill development for vocational opportunities as well as college education
 - Providing skill level development for existing companies
 - Providing/identifying resources for training and re-training for all types of jobs
 - Making a variety of training programs accessible
 - Coordination of training institutions and curricula
 - Continued improvement of local WorkSource database linking people, jobs, training, etc.
- g. Staff has been instrumental in transitioning into the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) with successful proposals for both State and Federal Skill Gap projects. We are currently fusing our Mid-Valley StW education components with those workforce and economic development initiatives.
- h. The original Mid-Valley StW administrative staff is the backbone and administrative entity for the Eastern Washington Agriculture and Food Processing Partnership Grant (\$750,000), Governor Gary Locke’s Skill Training for Incumbent Workers Program (\$500,000), and a Washington state Securing Key Industry Leadership for Learning Skills (\$120,000) project. Each of these speaks to capacity and system building within the education and workforce communities.
- i. We recognize that significant gaps exist between employer workforce needs and the availability of qualified employees. In that regard we are committed to continue to identify gaps between employer expectations and employee qualifications to salvage the economic health of our region. That can only be done through developing a system that will address the gaps in workforce readiness and finding ways to continue training incumbent workers and young adults to capitalize on the full potential of our employers. We are committed to a visible StW agenda by increasing the depth and breadth of employer/education partnerships for greater capacity and system building throughout our consortium and the Tri-County region.