

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: September 1, 2000 to December 31, 2000

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 supplying leadership, background, and successes and failures with youth to our Consortium and the new WIA Youth Council, we will continue to strengthen the link between education, business, Chambers of Commerce, and Economic Development organizations to acquire that seamless system that integrates business and education for our youth.

Our Youth Council will be instrumental in the decision making process concerning projects and expectations between now and the end of the grant period. This timeframe will allow them to facilitate the outcomes as originally projected through StW objectives by adhering to the initiatives that reflect a value-added approach.

The Mid-Valley participant's Supplemental StW performance will strive to be responsive to the core **sustainability** concepts of Career Pathways, Personal Portfolios, Senior Projects with a Career Focus, and Thirteen Year Plans.

It should also be noted that, as we step away from direct Supplemental funding, our consortium plan for closure incorporates, supports, and expects sustainability under the spirit of connectivity.

We are committed to the following **SHARE** strategies:

- a. Referring Consortium Districts to Best Practices
- b. Staying In Touch With District Coordinators
- c. Connecting Districts to One Another
- d. Exchanging Web Site Connections/Resources
- e. Networking with State Office
- f. Staying Connected with Chamber Programs

Capacity and System Building Continue:

The purpose here is to provide you with updated information in keeping with the proposed objective for our Supplemental Mid-Valley School-to-Work Grant extension that spoke to continued **capacity** and **system building** within the business community of our Yakima Valley consortium.

The additional StW Supplemental timeframe through **June 30, 2001** 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 struggle with the current skill gap dilemma, and the future of our 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 committee with the Greater Yakima Chamber of Commerce, Yakima Valley Community College, Perry Technical Institute, and Educational Service District Superintendents and Business/Industry leaders.
- 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. Our participation in the local Business Education 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. Tri-County staff is instrumental in the task force developing the Summit's purpose and outcomes, e.g.,
- 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 of the WIA Tri-County Youth Council as well as the 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.
- j. As you can see, we are committed to keeping the StW agenda visible by increasing the depth and breadth of employer/education partnerships for greater capacity and system building throughout our consortium and the Tri-County arena. In the end, continued development of Career Pathways, Personal Portfolios, Senior Projects, and a Plan for after graduation will help develop a workforce prepared to give industry the skills it requires to be competitive in the global economy.