

Emerging Worker Committee

Region: 9

Committee Member: Bill Lennox

Region Representative: _____

The Emerging Worker Committee, formerly the TOC/OWA Youth Council, is conducting a survey of WIA 1B Youth Services throughout the Consortium. We would like to compile data related to the ten required program elements listed in WIA section 129(c)(2) and receive feedback regarding best practices, partnerships, funding levels, service levels, and barriers to delivering services.

The Emerging Worker Committee has several new members who sincerely wish to be outspoken advocates for our local area. We hope the data we gather will help us develop a better understanding of issues all of you face on a day to day basis and hopefully provide valuable information for possible legislative action and/or better awareness of the valuable services being delivered to at-risk youth.

Thank you all for your cooperation and time with this endeavor.

1) Tutoring, study skills training, and instruction leading to secondary school completion, including dropout prevention strategies. Please describe who in your region is providing these services. Are there strategies that have worked particularly well? The school districts in the region provide for varying levels of alternative education for their students. MCCOG also has been operating an alternative school/credit recovery program for a number of years. However due to continued funding reductions since 2001, MCCOG will discontinue it's alternative education program and limit services to drop out youth to referral to other community resources for educational advancement. The alternative school was well attended and clearly served a need, however with limited resources the youth focus has shifted to out of school and older youth engaging in efforts to enter the labor force.

2) Alternative secondary school offerings. Who is providing these services? In your opinion, are there enough alternative school offerings in your area? Approximately how many of the WIA clients on your caseload are attached to alternative education programs?

The school districts and MCCOG have been providing alternative education services. Since 2001 the number of youth engaged in this activity at MCCOG has declined from around 75% to around 30%, which matches the systematic decline in youth funds. There certainly is a significant need for alternative school services at this time, however non-school district supported opportunities are declining as funds decline, and priorities shift to the out of school population.

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3) Summer employment opportunities directly linked to academic and occupational learning. Please list the type of summer activities WIA eligible youth are participating in. Who are you partnering with to deliver these services? Have funding levels affected the number of youth you can serve? (Please provide a brief history of participation levels if possible) Up until the fall of 2008, MCCOG has provided opportunities for summer employment to active participants of it's alternative education programs. Included in this are preemployment competencies, job specific competencies, safety training and credit recovery.

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This has been done in partnership with Youth commissions, OYCC, the National Scenic Area, the Mazamas, an a few other smaller partners. However for the funding reasons noted in earlier responses, MCCOG will be shifting the vast majority of its youth service efforts to out of school youth and their engagement in the labor force. An in school alternative education program coupled with a summer employment program are high cost activities in times when youth funding is about 50% of what it was in 2001. Accordingly service levels have also decline from about 150 youth a year to slightly over 60 youth this year...again with today's emphasis on out of school youth.

4) Paid and unpaid work experiences, including internships and job shadowing, as provided in 664.460 and 664.470. Are these services being provided in your region; if so; who is providing them and how are they funded if applicable? Does WIA eligible youth have access to school-to-work programs in your region? If possible, please indicate what percentage of the regions current caseload has received this service. What barriers if any, do you encounter when trying to deliver this service? Paid and unpaid work experience has been provided in this region, primarily by MCCOG in partnership with other programs. The partnership consists of those noted in the response to #3. Currently about 10% have opportunities in this area, and that will decline this fall as in-school youth services shift back to the schools and MCCOG's shift to out of school youth services. Barriers primarily are a lack of funding and the need to prioritize services to out of school youth.

5) Occupational skill training. (Same questions as above)

This will be available in the future to out of school youth and as such will still be limited as resources cannot support a significant level of services.

6) Leadership development opportunities, which include community service and peer centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social behaviors. **Please describe best practices and partnerships which may have helped develop positive leadership opportunities in your region.**

There presently are limited opportunities for leadership development, except for those provided by MCCOG in implementing crew work activities as a component of summer employment . Some of the summer jobs are composed of a crew doing a number of area projects, accordingly members are learning teamwork and other group leadership activities.

7) Supportive services, which may include the services listed in 664.440. **Are you able to provide supportive services at the necessary level to help WIA eligible youth break down barriers to employment? What are some of the barriers the youth you serve experience? Are there other partners who can assist with such barriers?**
Support services available for barrier removal are severely limited as a result of the continued funding reductions since 2001. MCCOG must rely often on other partners to hopefully respond to barrier removal.

Historically, child care, transportation and housing represent the three major barriers that are seen across the board.

8) Adult mentoring for duration of at least twelve (12) months that may occur both during and after program participation. **Please describe how this service is delivered in your region.**

Due to resource limitations this is a service that has not been utilized to any notable level.

9) Follow-up services, as provided in 664.450. Please describe your follow-up services for WIA eligible youth. Do staffing levels affect the type of services you are able to deliver? Are you able to help youth financially with follow-up services?

Follow-up services for terminated youth are conducted for one year as mandated by the Act. However those services are limited to information and referral for barrier removal which may hinder maintaining educational or employment opportunities or which limit advancement opportunities. Once again financial constraints limit MCCOG's ability to provide funds for such activities. Staffing levels required to meet program compliance activities have to take priority other discretionary activities such as follow-up funding for barrier removal.

10) Comprehensive guidance and counseling, including drug and alcohol abuse counseling, as well as referrals to counseling, as appropriate to the needs of the individual youth. Please describe how this service is delivered. What partnerships are involved? Approximately how many of the youth you serve have issues with drug and alcohol problems? Approximately how many of the youth you serve are attached to the juvenile justice system?

This type of activity is primarily limited to information and referral. Referral resources are primarily the Mid-Columbia Center for Living and other resources such as the school districts, community college and the juvenile justice system. Approximately 30-50% of youth served have issues with either/and/or D&A and the justice system.

Any additional comments you would like the Emerging Workforce Committee to be aware of, advocate for, etc. etc. etc. (now is a good time to let your voice be heard)!

As funds continue to decline, more and more of the remaining resources available end up being utilized for mandatory compliance and tracking activities, thusly limiting discretionary activities such as training and support services.

