

ECOS Board Meeting Wednesday, April 6, 2005
Gresham Employment Department – 19421 SE Stark
9 AM to 11 AM

MEETING NOTES

PARTICIPANTS: Lani Staab – Goodwill Industries, Debbie Foote – DHS Self-Sufficiency, Kay Lopez – MHCC/Workforce Connections, Karen Cusick – Gresham Employment Office, Kim Rush – Portland Habilitation Center

Partner reports – news, events, and announcements:

Portland Habilitation Center: PHC is busy with multiple career fairs; recently hired a recruitment assistant and has many positions open for persons with or without disabilities. Jobs include janitorial, landscape technicians, foremen, irrigation specialist, administrative assistance, contracts administration assistance, data entry and a warehouse driver.

Side note from board: PHC has a valued shredding service but the barrels are unsightly and generally placed in visible sites in offices. There could be a business opportunity for someone who could design re-usable covers for these barrels that would make them more attractive in an indoors office environment.

DHS – Child Welfare and Self-sufficiency: Agency director Gary Weeks is resigning to take the helm of the Bureau of Labor and Industries for Washington State.

Gresham Employment Office: The new training lab at the Gresham employment office has 14 computer stations as well as a separate training area. Imatch Orientations with Workforce Connections take place twice a week from 9 AM to 11 AM. (Currently Weds and Fridays – as of May 1st, on Mondays and Fridays.) A Spanish version of the Imatch training is being designed and will be offered on Monday afternoons when available.

Job numbers are finally starting to increase; 1566 people have been placed since July 2004, with 13,291 people served during this time.

A youth employment representative has been added. He will be in the office for 6 months, serves youth 14 to 23 years. To reach him, call 503.669.7112 and ask for Cab. He already has 30 youth signed up with a goal of serving 125 over the six-month period. Cab assists youth with after-school, summer, and regular employment. Board members encouraged Cab to connect with Springdale Job Corps, Project Yess, Youth Employment Institute, Independent Living Resources – Emancipated youth programs, and teens in foster care through DHS.

Goodwill Industries: GW is recruiting for 2 positions; a recruiter/employment specialist and a skills assessment manager. Hiring has been up for the past two months – companies are adding employees. For information contact Lani at 503.228.6169. Ecumenical

Ministries has a housing resource that matches people in need of assistance with people in need of a home. The project is called JOIN - connecting the street to a home. Rob Justus, Executive Director - 3338 SE 17th Ave. (503) 232-7052 X 5608
www.joinpdx.com

MHCC Workforce Connections: Reported on the East County Economic Summit Conference held recently. Workforce Connections is participating in a pilot program to offer On the Job Training (OJT) contracts for eligible job seekers and businesses. The OJT provides reimbursement of up to 50% of the wage during the approved training period. This is an investment by the regional work system in upgrading job seeker skills and building business capacity through trained employees. Funding for OJT is available throughout Multnomah and Washington counties at the local One Stop Centers including Workforce Connections in East Multnomah County. This is a pilot program through the end of this program year, 6/30/05, but may be continued next program year.

Consistent with the employment department – job placements are beginning to increase. The WIA placement criteria are being examined. In order to be counted as a successful placement, the participant must be employed the 3rd quarter after completion. Self-employment does not count as a placement or job under WIA criteria.

General discussion: Although job numbers are up, wages in many cases are 50% lower than previous jobs. Portland public schools is going to be laying off teachers and employees; No. Clackamas schools will be hiring with many opportunities due to new school construction and new housing developments.

Old Business: As there was not a quorum present, the following actions were postponed until the April 27 meeting:

Approve Minutes from February 23 Board Meeting

Approve amendments to ECOS By-laws and Mission Statement as recommended at the Feb. 23rd meeting

The Board approved revisions to the ECOS Mission Statement. The new mission statement reads:

ECOS is an alliance of over 35 workforce and community partners convened to foster a systemic and holistic approach to workforce and community development through information and data sharing, prioritization of service need, encouraging efficient delivery of services, joint resource development and fund procurement, and collaborative problem solving.

Vision statement:

It is this system approach that utilizes the expertise of ECOS partner agencies to:

- Increase the skill and ability levels of the East Multnomah County workforce that enhances business operations for employers.
- Reduce the number of East County families living in poverty through the development of individual skills and removal of barriers that prevent greater employment opportunities.
- Jointly identify solutions to gaps in the workforce and community development systems and cultivate a greater understanding of complex community problems that require a

holistic approach.

By-laws review – recommended changes: The Board reviewed and is recommending the following changes to the organizational by-laws:

- Allow for partners to use a proxy vote
- Allow board decisions via an email vote.

Budget/finance report –

Annual ECOS partner contributions are being solicited to help cover the cost of the non-profit board and liability insurances.

We have received contributions from Springdale Job Corps and Mercy Corps.

Report on Warm Springs Casino in Cascade Locks: Karen Cusick called the Dalles Employment office regarding how East Multnomah County could work with them to help facilitate issues impacting the entire area. He was very interested in working with Multnomah County to address mutual issues. There appear to be many impacts and opportunities including new demand for shuttle services, motel accommodations, and jobs for persons living within a 75-mile radius. Over 1000 jobs will be created to support the casino itself. Other impacts will be on visitor traffic to Multnomah Falls, restaurants and fast foot outlets along I-84, the Outlet Mall and others. The board designated Karen Cusick to be its representative on the early planning group with the gorge communities.

Monthly Discussion Topic: Triage for hardest to place persons – ideas and resources to implement a strategy – each board member has been requested to bring a profile of a client that they define as “unemployable” and be prepared to share the needs or options of this individual with the group.

Profiles presented:

Profile #1: Typically a woman, over the age of 25 with 3-4 children. Dropped out of HS at the 9 or 10 grade level, can't get off TANF – if she gets a job her day care co-pay and housing expenses go up more than she would likely earn, so she can't afford to go to work. Tends to have good life skills, be living in a multi-generational home/culture; and move from crisis to crisis and have trouble setting/determining priorities. So – this person will generally keep having children until they age out and then she will have nothing left – no TANF, no job, no experience.

Profile #2: Middle-aged woman (about 42) has not worked for 3 years, needs dental work, suffers from depression, has state mandated meetings with her children which make it hard get to when working, soon to be homeless. Only real work experience was with Stream and as a waitress.

Profile #3: Disabled person, wheelchair bound – loss of limb use; long time unemployed, not capable of doing any physical work, has some telemarketing potential; traditional workplace would be very difficult for this individual.

Profile #4: Long term client, coming in almost daily, poor personal hygiene and appearance, inadequate social skills, has a chip on his shoulder, is focused on getting hired at Freightliner, or a high level job at Trojan. He has a degree and is bright, but is hard to place.

Profile #5: Long term problems with depression and post-traumatic stress. Has many personal issues that need to be addressed before he could be a serious candidate for a job.

Profile #6: A woman that has been hired 42 times – can get a job but can't keep a job.

Profile #7: Bright woman, presentable, articulate, good communicator, many skills. Unreliable, makes poor choices, makes commitments but does not follow through, seems afraid of actually being successful or off the system, has been through programs at VR, Workforce Connections, STS and TANF. Workforce partners have trained her many times, for many different occupations. She was fired from her last job at one of the school districts – apparently for making another poor choice of priorities.

Dilemma: Apparently most if not all ECOS partners are dealing individually with several clients like those profiled; the overall cost of spending time and training resources is high – taking funds and resources away from individuals that can benefit from services.

Solutions:

- Advocate for change in how benefits are phased out. Make housing costs more stable over a longer period of time for persons getting back to work.
- Advocate for education assistance and support while in school/training
- Provide on-going assistance for career advancement and skill development
- Utilize on-line and distance learning opportunities to help people get their GED's and Associate degrees. (for most people, it currently takes 4 to 6 years to get an Associate Degree and still survive – find ways to make this happen more quickly.)
- Fund mental health evaluations (About \$700 per person).
- Try to assist these folks with getting on SSI
- Ask all agencies to try to get more information at intake about where clients have already accessed service and what their outcomes have been.
- Consider joint staff meetings between partner agencies working with the same clients
- Make sure everyone gets release of information forms signed that will enable agencies to share information with each other

Message to all ECOS partners: the most successful outcomes will come from all of us working together; we will provide the best customer service while initiating a fiscally good practice that won't duplicate services for clients and will provide some solutions for the hardest to serve for all agencies.

Project reports

Rockwood International Marketplace: The last grant submitted to the City of Gresham through their CBDG funds was denied funding. Without money to hire staff, there cannot be a market this summer.

CEO/Joli project with Easter Seals: 44 low-income individuals are enrolled and have participated in one of three CEO Business Boot Camps. They are being supported with business start-up loans, one-on-one business coaching, support with all phases of their business and monthly training workshops. The 17-month project clock started ticking on October 1st – even though funds were not received until February. Project activities are planned through May of 2006 and we may request a no-cost extension depending on how participants are progressing.

Rockwood Weed and Seed – Brenda and hubby Jerry are proud parents of a baby boy born on St. Paddy's Day!! She will be back with the program sometime in May.

Next Board Meeting: April 27, 2005 – Gresham Employment office – 9 AM

Finance and Management Team: Monday, April 18th 11:30 at Applebee's 102nd and Halsey