



Job Search Workshops Available to All Youth

Youth Council: San Joaquin County WorkNet

Element: Career Preparation

Function: Coordinating Youth Services, Engaging Local Leadership to Take Action

Subject: Innovative Programs

The Challenge: The number one challenge facing the San Joaquin Youth Council has been how to serve youth in the summer under WIA. According to Elena Mangahas of San Joaquin County Worknet, “Even though the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) is no longer in place, we still have to respond to [a high] unemployment rate” that persists in the San Joaquin Valley towns. Entry-level jobs are primarily retail with some manufacturing and warehouse. Youth are competing with adult welfare recipients who are also seeking entry-level jobs. Council members wanted to secure commitments from local employers to hire youth for the summer. They knew that employers would only be willing to do so if the youth were well prepared, so they looked for a way to provide youth with the knowledge and skills they needed to be work-ready.

The Practice and Evidence: The Youth Council engages in efforts to link employers and youth. Since the area’s chambers of commerce are part of the WIB infrastructure, the Youth Council members have long-established relationships with the local business community. They are able to ask for—and receive—commitments from employers to hire youth for the summer. However, says Mangahas, “To make this agreement really [worthwhile], we don’t just send youth who are not prepared. We prepare them via the Job Search Workshop.”

The workshop “focuses on the critical job search techniques that will help young first-time job seekers find the job that is right for them,” explains Mangahas. “It is available to every San Joaquin County youth between the ages of 16 and 21. What we’re doing really is prepping the youth and giving quality referrals to the local employers.” The workshop is also portable and can be replicated.

The WorkNet also links youth with volunteer opportunities particularly in local library volunteer programs, the Tutor Resource Collaborative of non-profit learning centers, and the Stockton Parks and Recreation Department’s theater arts programs and events. Youth interested in volunteering contact WorkNet via e-mail at the Worknet web page called “Volunteer Interest.” Mangahas reports, “We’re continually connecting youth to the community even if it’s not an employment position.”

The program has been successful. Mangahas notes that businesses have continued to offer summer jobs for youth, signaling that they are pleased with the youth they have hired. Youth who have taken the workshop are happy to have job search skills and to find jobs. The Youth

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Council members and staff find that the approach makes it possible for them to serve more youth through the summer. Mangahas says, “When the youth unemployment rate is higher than our adult unemployment rate, it calls for assistance for our young job seekers. [The workshop tailored for youth gives] them a better understanding of the labor market, the expectations of employers, and what they have to do to be successful in their job search.”

The Details: The model is an updated version of all the outreach efforts the WIB conducted under JTPA. “We had many of the practices that we carried over, the same community connections and partners involved. We [made a point of working with] the ones we had good experiences with.”

The workshop is offered throughout the year at all the County One-Stops as well as at high schools during career days. Once a youth has completed the workshop, she or he is invited to visit a One-Stop (called WorkNet). Each WorkNet center is equipped to assist in resume writing and internet-based job searching. The centers also offer listings of CalJOBS, employment postings, and intranet postings that are targeted for youth who are looking for summer, part-time, or temporary work. WorkNet also holds an annual job fair as well as employer-specific mini job fairs throughout the year, and youth customers are notified about them.

Breakthrough Moment: The breakthrough moment came when the Youth Council members and staff realized that they were still able to serve youth during the summers even though WIA does not fund summer jobs programs.

What’s Next for this YCidea? The Youth Council and Worknet system will continue to connect with chamber of commerce members and to offer the Job Search Workshops for youth. They anticipate that the demand for the workshops—and the youth who complete them—will increase.

Where to Go for More Information

San Joaquin County WorkNet

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Tools

[San Joaquin County WorkNet website](http://www.sjworknet.org)

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