



Summer Hire-A-Youth Program Engages Youth and Employers

Youth Council: Anaheim Youth Council

Element: Career Preparation

Functions: Coordinating Youth Services, Measuring Quality and Impact of Local Efforts

Subjects: Innovative Programs, Youth One-Stops

The Challenge: Over the years, the Anaheim Youth Council has consistently provided funding for subsidized youth summer employment programs. However, the Youth Council's funding sources have dwindled consistently over the past few years, which has meant that resources have not been available to support summer youth employment programs.

The Practice and Evidence: As summer youth employment funding for subsidized work has dwindled steadily, Anaheim Youth Council responded by creating a program to connect youth to unsubsidized summer work. The program connects youth to local businesses seeking employees for the summer months by leveraging the existing outreach of Anaheim's One-Stops and partner agencies.

Hire-A-Youth is coordinated by Anaheim's One-Stop (Anaheim Workforce Center) and is a cooperative effort between the Anaheim Workforce Investment Board and Youth Council, Anaheim Workforce Development Division, Youth Employment Services (YES), City of Anaheim Community Services, Anaheim Chamber of Commerce, Employment Development Department, Anaheim Union High School District, and North Orange County Regional Occupational Program (ROP). These partners work together to solicit unsubsidized jobs from the business community and outreach to youth participants.

Created in 2002, Anaheim's Hire-A-Youth Program has resulted in 3000 referrals and 1100 youth hires over the last three years. Hire-A-Youth has no eligibility or residency requirements, as the jobs are 100 percent unsubsidized. Jobs are developed for 14-17 year olds as well as for young adults 18-21 and generally are in sectors that youth have voiced interest in. Each June the Hire-A-Youth partnership hosts a job fair to match employers with prospective youth workers.

The Details: Anaheim's business team works collaboratively with EDD and the Chamber to outreach to targeted businesses; businesses then mail or e-mail back potential jobs, and the business service team follows up with them for specific job orders. Concurrent with the business outreach, the ROP, YES, and City of Anaheim do outreach to youth to invite participation in the Hire-A-Youth program and in other services of partners.

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Youth look through a book of Hire-A-Youth listings at partner offices, receive up to three referral cards at each visit, and contact the employer directly. Youth are then either hired or directed back to Hire-A-Youth for additional assistance, training, or referrals.

All job orders and youth referral cards are collected at the central hub at the Anaheim Workforce Center. The center's staff also complete follow-up with employers and collect all related program data and evaluative information.

Over the past three years, the Hire-A-Youth program has become increasingly strategic in their business outreach, mailing out targeted letters to businesses by using the Chamber of Commerce mailing list as well as a proprietary mailing list. "In previous years, we mailed Hire-A-Youth information to all companies with ten or more employees, which resulted in 6000-8000 mailings; the result of this "shotgun" approach did not meet our needs," said Rita Slayton, Manager of Anaheim Workforce Center who oversees the Hire-A-Youth program. Now the team has evaluated the types of jobs that are of interest to youth from previous years and targeted 2500 companies with an employee base of 10 to 250 in the service, retail, hospitality, entertainment, and manufacturing industries. This targeted approach has resulted in a steady source of job listings that serves the larger population of 16-17 year olds, something they had not be able to generate in previous years.

Youth outreach has grown to be increasingly more coordinated and comprehensive, mirroring the program's business recruitment success. Outreach is done at malls, fast food restaurants, community-based organizations, and local youth hang outs, coordinated through multiple youth-serving partners. Additionally, youth are offered basic job skills workshops, including interviewing, applications and resumes, and job retention.

All of the partners have reaped benefits as a result of participating. By leveraging the work of the Anaheim Workforce Center's business service team, the program does not require extra funding or sponsorship, as it is an extension of the work done under WIA. The benefit to the business service team, beyond the youth employment, is the development of new business resources for WIA-eligible participants.

Breakthrough Moment: "In our third year, 2004, we broke through many of the barriers of previous years," comments Slayton. "We had repeat businesses, good jobs, more youth, and an improved process." Part of the success is that most operations were centralized two years ago to the Anaheim Workforce Center – One-Stop, which has reduced duplication and gaps in the program."

What's Next for this YCidea? Serve more youth in need—foster, emancipated, probation, welfare, homeless, and disabled youth through building more partnerships with local youth-serving agencies that serve these populations; in turn, target more businesses that are willing to hire youth that are most at risk, and most in need.

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Where to Go for More Information

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