

**West Central Job Partnership
Workforce Investment Area NW 145
TANF Youth Development Program
PY 09 – July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010**

A. Program Summary

The proposed project will serve 120 eligible youth in Lawrence and Mercer Counties. The project will strive to reduce the number youth that drop out of school in the two-county area by guiding and assisting them in making informed choices, both academically and career-related. In addition to reducing the drop out rate, the project's goals include: increasing labor market awareness and knowledge; identifying and validating career choices and pathways; linking academic and occupational training to careers; and developing employability skill levels.

Program Goal #1: Increase labor market awareness and knowledge.

Youth will attend a minimum of three (3) events designed to increase the participants' knowledge of local high priority occupations. These events will be age appropriate and may not be the same from school to school.

Events may include classroom presentations, career expositions or fairs, labor market orientation programs, and/or field trips to employers in Mercer and Lawrence Counties. Activities may also include exposure to advanced or technical training opportunities within the local area. Events will focus on increasing the participant's knowledge of local high priority occupations that provide sustaining wages but do not require a four-year college degree.

Emphasis will be placed on high priority occupations in the following industry clusters: Wood Product Manufacturing; Plastics and Rubber Products Manufacturing; Fabricated Metal Products Manufacturing; Health Care; Social Assistance; Administrative Support Services; Construction; and Truck Transportation.

Participants will be expected to demonstrate an increase in knowledge of high priority occupations in the local labor market, the earnings and skill requirements for such occupations, the availability of vocational education opportunities in the local area, and the high priority occupation employers in the local area.

Program Goal #2: Career Exploration and Validation.

Contractors shall assess each participant's career interests and will assist each participant in completing a journal or portfolio describing his or her participation in the program and demonstrate the knowledge gained as a result of that participation.

The portfolio will contain a brief but accurate description of the operations, the types of jobs available, and the skills expectations of at least three (3) places of employment within the two-county area and should identify at least three (3) high priority occupations in the local labor market that do not require a college degree; describe the actual tasks and technical functions, pay scales, and benefits associated with each of those occupations; and, relate the type and sources of training

required to enter those occupations.

The portfolio must demonstrate that the participant has gained in-depth knowledge in at least one (1) area of his or her assessed career interests by identifying a local employer who offers employment in that career area and describing the educational requirements, pay scale, associated benefits, actual tasks and technical functions associated with that career.

Program Goal #3: Coping Skills Workshops.

Contractors will schedule, coordinate, and supervise participant attendance at a minimum of three (3) workshops dealing with coping skills; *e.g.*, anger management, self-esteem building, drugs and alcohol abuse, peer pressure, etc. At least one (1) of the workshops will deal with making intelligent decisions and the relationship between academic decisions and career consequences.

The increase in the participant's skills in the subject area of each workshop must be measured. Contractors may employ such means as it deems necessary to measure the increase, however forms must be fully completed by the participant and verified by contractor staff in order for the participant to receive credit for attending.

Program Goal #4: Completing Current School Year.

Contractors will work with the school Guidance Counselors to assess youth who may be at risk of dropping out of school. Contractors will work jointly with the Guidance Counselors to identify barriers that may be contributing to absences from school and/or scheduled program activities and will assist in eliminating the barriers. Youth who are identified as needing remediation in reading and math will be referred to specialized tutoring programs and/or community service programs designed to assist them in coping with personal problems that may interfere with educational achievement or employment opportunities.

West Central Job Partnership intends to issue a Request For Proposals to recruit service providers who offer innovative programs to address workforce development needs of youth in TANF households. All programs must promote basic skills in reading and math, career awareness and/or work readiness skills.

Contracts will be negotiated with youth service providers who have demonstrated ability to provide the services outlined above.

- B. TANF Link and Complement to LWIA Youth Strategies – the LWIA strategic plan is to align all youth programs within our two-county area, regardless of funding sources, and gear all activities toward the Career Education and Work Standards (CEWS) benchmarks. WCJP staff is working with school districts, meeting with Superintendents, Guidance Counselors and teachers regarding the CEWS and the importance of imbedding these standards into regular school curriculum. All funding sources (TANF Youth, WIA Youth, ARRA and RCEP) are blended to provide comprehensive program activities for youth and professional development for school guidance counselors and teachers relative to career awareness, STEM occupations and High Priority Occupations in the LWIA and surrounding areas. The LWIA will work to significantly increase internships and other work-based learning opportunities for all the youth who participate.

C. Measurement of Goals and Objectives

Program Goal #1: Increase labor market awareness and knowledge. Goal Outcome: 80% of the participants will complete three labor market awareness events and demonstrate an acceptable level of knowledge in the areas indicated above. Various means may be used to measure the increase of knowledge, but most often participants complete a pre-activity questionnaire as well as a post-activity questionnaire.

Program Goal #2: Career Exploration and Validation. Goal Outcome: 80% of the participants will complete the career exploration portfolio.

Program Goal #3: Coping Skills Workshops. Goal Outcome: 80% of the participants will complete three coping skills workshops and demonstrate an acceptable level of knowledge in the areas indicated above. Various means may be used to measure the increase of knowledge, but most often participants complete a pre-activity questionnaire as well as a post-activity questionnaire.

Program Goal #4: Completing Current School Year. Goal Outcome: 80% of the participants will complete the current school year.

- D. Collaboration Efforts - West Central Job Partnership (WCJP) will place a strong emphasis on recruiting and enrolling youth from TANF households into activities funded by the TANF youth development program. WCJP will utilize the lists provided by DPW to recruit TANF household youth into the program. A brochure will be developed that will outline the TANF youth development program activities and incentives. A supply of the brochures will be provided to the CAO Case Workers to distribute and discuss with welfare clients with age appropriate children during scheduled appointments. The brochures will be distributed to all participants at DPW-funded EARN program orientations conducted by WCJP. The RCEP grant is utilized to provide professional development for school guidance counselors and teachers regarding STEM occupations, high priority occupations, Career Education and Work Standards, career exploration activities for youth and work readiness programs such as Keys to Work curriculum and Work Keys testing. The Mercer County Deputy Chief of Juvenile Probation is active on the LWIA's RCEP and Youth Council and is aware that referrals will be accepted for program activities. The LWIA recently received the second annual Friend of Education award presented by the Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV for collaboration efforts relating to: Work Readiness, Work Certified and GED programs for welfare clients and WIA older youth; Project Work in-school disabled youth program to promote transition from school to work; and STEM initiatives. The LWIA has a long history of working with OVR to share training costs for disabled individuals who attend post-secondary educational or vocational training facilities.

E. Contact Information

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