



American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) – Update

May 28, 2009

In the South Central Michigan Works! Region - through our contractors - we have established an Expanded Summer Youth Opportunities program, lasting initially from May 1 to September 30, 2009. This program is projected to provide paid work experience for up to 450 youth and will be in-school youth (ages 17-20), and out-of-school youth (ages 18-24), all youth served in the program will meet WIA youth eligibility requirements. Prior to May 1, 2009, program year 2008, the total number of youth enrolled in an employment activity was 60.

We currently have 150 enrolled and on the system, most of them are the out-of-school youth. We have about an additional 100 youth that we have documentation on and we will be putting them on the system over the next week. These 100 youth will be participating in the next work readiness seminar on June 4th and 5th at the Jackson Career Center. These are mostly in-school youth or those that will have just graduated. We have approximately 200 youth that have completed intake and are missing documentation, we currently have a Career Manager working with the youth to obtain these documents.

We currently have about 45 youth who have started their work experience and we have submitted over 100 resumes to various employers. There are several of them that really want to make good choice in what youth they choose for their workplace because once they have completed their work experience they would like to keep them on.

We also have quite a few employers that have been interviewing in the Service Centers. All in all we believe that we have had a great response from the employers and the youth in the tri-county area.

Activities:

The proposed Summer Youth Opportunities program had two primary activities:

- Two two-day Work Readiness/Safety Seminars will be held for all youth scheduled to enter work experience. The first session will be for out-of-school youth and will be held in the second week of May, and the second seminar, for in-school youth, will be held in the second week in June. The seminar will cover basic employment information such as completing I-9 and W-4 forms, basic work behaviors such as attendance, punctuality, teamwork, working with supervisors, on-the-job communication with supervisors and co-workers, and accepting criticism. The seminar will also present money management information on banking and budgeting and on occupational safety and health. All youth participants attending the seminars will complete a pre-test evaluation of their work readiness and employability skills.
- The second major activity will be paid work experience. Participants will be placed at private sector for-profit and non-profit worksites and public sector worksites, with all

worksites identified by SCMW Business Solutions staff. The contractor, HRDI, has initially planned for up to 50% of the worksites to provide “green work experiences in such areas as conservation, reclaiming of public park areas, recycling of computers and the providing energy efficient home upgrades through the publicly funded home weatherization program. All youth completing the work experience activity will complete a post-test evaluation of their work readiness and employability skills. In-school- youth work experience will average 10 weeks in length, with participants paid at minimum wage level, while out-of-school youth work experience will average 12 weeks in length, with payment being at the wage level established by the worksite employer for similar work done by regular employees. We estimate such wages will average \$9.00 per hour. In-School-Youth placements will be at public sector worksites, while out-of-school youth may be placed at public sector, private sector for-profit or private sector non-profit worksites. HRDI will contract with all worksites for work experience, will serve as the employer of record, will maintain payroll and will maintain workers compensation for all work experience participants.

Training will be provided for worksite supervisors – both those hired by the contractor and those employed by the worksite employers. Training topics will include: an overview of the Expanded Summer Youth Opportunities, Work Experience policies, rules and processes, safety requirements, timesheets and evaluations, and basic work experience responsibilities and duties.

In addition to the activities, we will also continue the Legacy recruitment and GED program as part of the ongoing recruitment of out-of-school youth and to provide educational support to participants.

Outcomes:

We anticipate a variety of potential outcomes for participants in the Expanded Summer Youth Opportunities Program. These include:

- All youth participants that complete a pre-test Work Readiness/Safety Seminar work readiness/employability skills evaluation, complete their work experience activity, and demonstrate an increase in work readiness/employability skills on their post-test evaluation will receive a Work Readiness Certificate,
- Successful completion of the work experience activity and placement/hiring into full time employment,
- Successful completion of the work experience activity and continued participation in the year round Youth program, for completion of high school and enrollment in post-secondary education degree program, in an occupational skills classroom training program or in a registered apprenticeship program,
- Successful completion of the work experience activity and (for older youth) concurrent enrollment in the WIA adult program, for potential No-Worker-Left-Behind training to prepare for employment in a demand occupation.