

ECOS Annual Meeting and Strategic Planning Retreat
Wednesday, January 26, 2005 – 9 to 3 PM
Springdale Job Corps – 31224 E. Historic Columbia River Highway
Meeting notes

Participants: Lani Staab – Goodwill Industries, Debbie Foote – DHS Self-Sufficiency, JoAnn Espinosa – Springdale Job Corps, Victoria Libov – IRCO, Ruthanne Cox-Carothers – Or. Easter Seals Cares, Karen Cusick – Gresham Employment Office, Kay Lopez – MHCC – Workforce Connections, Derek Beaudry – Human Solutions, Brenda Butler – Rockwood Weed and Seed, Carolyn Morrison, Child Care Development Services, Patti Swanson – self-employed, Kim Rush – Portland Habilitation Center, David Dragavon – Aging and Disability Services, Joan Pasco, Facilitator.

Outcomes from today's session – participants listed the following outcomes expected from today's planning session:

- Identify the value from participation in ECOS; determine value from collaboration, help ECOS be as effective as possible
- Determine the ECOS focus for 2005 – what is our purpose for the coming year
- Evaluate un-met needs in East County and find partner expertise to help meet these needs
- Evaluate the 2004 activities – is ECOS on the right track? What are the possible changing needs of the organization and its partners?
- Understand partner roles, commitment and collaboration in the ECOS alliance; what is expected of partners?
- Get more participation from partners in board activities
- Explore new funding options
- Re-examine the ECOS mission statement

ECOS history and financial report – Joan Pasco, ECOS project manager and Patti Swanson – charter board member of ECOS

History: Joan and Patti gave a brief recap of the organizational history from inception through 2005. This information is available on the ECOS web site at www.eastcountyonestop.org. Click on resources, then ECOS History.

Joan presented the following overview of the ECOS financial plan:

ECOS is an alliance of over 35 partner agencies. These agencies comprise the service providers for the East County One Stop Career System. The ECOS 501 c3 was created in order to generate non-Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funding for community and workforce development projects in East Multnomah County.

ECOS has successfully procured (or assisted with) over \$1.8 million in revenue since 2000. These resources have generated innovative programs to serve distressed communities, ex-offenders, small businesses, disabled, and non-native English speakers, giving these populations more opportunity for income producing enterprise and living wage career paths.

As an organization, the ECOS 501 c3 non-profit has very low overhead. It does not need to fund a permanent office or staff. The work of the non-profit is provided by support from partner organizations and contracted project management. Supplies are mostly donated. The main expenses of the non-profit are legal, insurance, accounting and project support. Grant funds flow through to projects and partners, with minimum indirect cost. Therefore, the ECOS operational cost is less than \$10,000 per year.

For this reason, the ECOS Operating Budget will not look like the budgets you are used to seeing. ECOS' philosophy is to serve as the "organizational glue" to keep a working and productive collaborative alliance functional and communicating. This is not necessarily an expensive function, but it is critical to the health and maintenance of the alliance.

Since inception in 1996, ECOS has accomplished an impressive array of creative and valuable work: collaborations, partner networks, on-line communication capacity for small non-profits, base-line research and evaluative benchmarks, compilation of data bases, professional development and networking for partner agency staff, community planning research, high demand occupational studies, transferable skill set matrixes, and much more – with a limited budget and cooperative support from partner funds, abilities and staff. This is an organization that works smart, leverages resources, and uses its strength and associations to accomplish large-scale projects on a limited budget.

ECOS Operational funds come from partner support, membership fees, and a 10% indirect fee for grants received. Each year's budget will be predicated on the successful receipt of grants. Without significant overhead, the organization is able to implement projects as funds become available – making forecasting somewhat difficult.

ECOS was a successful applicant for a Federal Weed and Seed Grant/designation for West Gresham. This grant totaled \$1.2 million over five years. However, ECOS is not the fiscal agent for this grant. Once received, Multnomah County became the fiscal agent. The ECOS partnership assisted with the Easter Seals Oregon JOLI grant - \$370,000 awarded in October, 2004 with Easter Seals being the lead agency and fiscal agent.

Overview of ECOS 2004 Activities:

Weed and Seed – currently in the 3rd year of a five-year project in Rockwood – an application for a second five years could be made in 2006 to be funded for 2007-2012; but a new area must be designated. Weed and Seed funds are used for community development, public safety, neighborhood improvements, job and income creation in a distressed community. The preliminary site being explored for the second east county designation is along Halsey from Fairview, Wood Village, Troutdale and Corbett. The area has a high percentage of low-income persons, few services, and would be a good fit for a Weed and Seed Community.

Rockwood International Marketplace: Critical need: staffing for at least 3 more years is needed – goals of the project include creation of new earning capacity for low-income persons, improved quality of life for the area, reduction of intercultural tension and increase in cultural education and understanding; in addition to community revitalization of Rockwood. A minimum of \$75,000 per year is needed to subsidize this project until it become self-sufficient.

Re-entry for Ex-Offenders: Addressing the challenging employment options and lack thereof, for persons returning to the community post prison. Continues to be a high priority for 2005. Key issues include expungement of past offenses from their backgrounds and creation of enterprise designed to hire from this group.

Self-employment options for low-income persons: Rockwood Marketplace and JOLI CEO grant both provide new resources for business start-up and self-employment. The JOLI Creative Earning Option project is a 17-month demonstration project to test the efficacy of intensive business start-up support on long term business success and growth in earnings.

Career advancement for cosmetologists: Partnership with the Dubois Spa and Salon to create a new training program for the industry. This was a one-year grant and the project was completed in September 2004. The training continues on an annual basis and is solely under the umbrella of the Salon. The grant funds provided seed money to develop the training and infrastructure to support it. ECOS role was as fiscal agent only.

Current trends impacting East County and ECOS partner agencies: Group discussion on how the landscape has changed in East County over the past five years as well as what trends can be expected/anticipated over the next 5 years.

Key challenges for workforce development in East County include the abrupt recession/decline in the economy; 9-11 and its impact on employer background checks; extreme budget cuts in services for the working poor; return to an employer demand driven market; and the number of long-term unemployed individuals. Also, people with high barriers to traditional employment will require 4 to 5 years of support in order to move to meaningful employment and self-sufficiency. (Some partners report that their placement rates are excellent 6 months after service, but decline to poor within 12 months).

Trends – past 5 years	Implications of trend:
Across the board budget cuts and service reductions	More unstable persons that are unemployable, increased depression, mental illness and medical costs
Tension between cultures is growing. In particular between African Americans and African immigrants; but generally between all native and non-native speaking groups	Need to find creative ways to bring families of different cultures together to increase support for new immigrants
Increased issues with undocumented workers; legal issues, fake ID's of good quality	Need a presentation on this issue at an ECOS board meeting – ignoring it has huge implications
Increased need for affordable day care for children and adults	Growing number of persons kept out of the workforce due to family issues
Latino and Russian population increase in East County; increase in small business start-ups and adult and child care facilities	Potential is high for small business start-up in this population base
Growth in numbers of people ages 25-40 in Portland metro area	Need to cultivate community leadership from this group
Sentencing guideline changes and impact on young people committing minor felony	Need to educate children about the life-long consequences of felony activity
Larger families = larger homes needed, more three and four bedroom units	Two bedroom units are not sufficient
Entry level jobs increasing; more call center jobs; fewer middle class income jobs	Disparity between the wealthy and poor is growing and will continue to grow
Increase in numbers of low-income and poor persons over the age of 45	Lack of education, can't compete for jobs; won't be able to retire
Number of people below federal poverty rate increasing in East County	Expect this trend to continue as East County has highest % of low income housing
Electrician union out-of-work waiting list growing (currently at 400-600 persons)	New construction remains slow; lack of opportunity in this field
Increased crime rate, changing nature of crimes, increased identity theft	Social and community cost will increase
Increased number of persons laid off that have not found work within one year	Many turning to self-employment
Medical and housing costs forcing elderly back to the workforce	Increased demand for part-time work
Continued budget cuts for education	Decline in this investment will have long term implications
Technology changes require frequent up-grades of skills and equipment	Cost factor plus need for skilled persons to assist with technology training
Closure of Columbia Villa and gentrification of NE led to large migration of low-income families to East County	All east county school districts report an increase in free and reduced lunch
The new proposed Weed and Seed area has a high percentage of the regions "most affordable homes"	In migration of low-income persons will continue
Region has moved from a "rural" to an "urban" community	Urban issues expand; citizen focus needs to change accordingly
Loss of jobs/industry closure: Reynolds, Fujitsu, LSI, Boeing – collective 2500 jobs lost – economic decline from 2001-2004	Created many long-term unemployed; fostered an increase in interest in self-employment and business start-up
East County is a small business area – 93% of all jobs are in a small business	Helpful trend for immigrant and ex-felon employment; all persons with employment barriers tend to fare best with smaller employers

Trends anticipated, next 5 years	Implications of Trend: For discussion at next ECOS Board meeting....
Social service and education budget cuts will continue	Private school enrollment will grow; expect hospitals to reach crisis level for indigent care
New Casino in the gorge	New jobs for east county, but will be entry level jobs; need to train for this industry
Increase # of boomers retiring	More jobs available than people to replace them
Continued technology innovation/change	
Open spaces will be developed	
Growing need for additional tri-met service	
New bridge over Columbia at Troutdale possibility	
Annexation and fire district issues will create change in Gresham	
Funding schools with lottery slot machine revenue	
Urban renewal investments in Rockwood	
Increasing number of non-native English Speakers	
Gap between wealthy and poor will continue to grow – loss of middle class jobs	
Out-sourcing jobs off shore will continue to increase	
City of Gresham budget will decline and not meet growth needs	
Development of Damascus and Springwater areas for jobs and homes	
Growth in warehousing/transportation and distribution jobs	
Gentrification of East County will begin	
Trend to replace local small businesses with big box retailers will continue	
More multi-family than single family homes/units will be built	
Ex-felon jobless situation will get worse	
Out migration of residents will escalate	
Need to live on less will grow in importance	
Earning potential for college grads will continue to decline	
Growing numbers of persons without medical insurance	
Portable benefits will become normal	People will carry their benefit package from job to job; employers will pick up a negotiated % of the cost
Bartering for services and goods will increase	
Cash based medical care will be more available – clinics that don't require insurance	Could spawn innovative ways to reduce health care costs

General outline of new gaps/renewed need generated from trend discussion: (Note: this list has not been prioritized)

- Services/resources/projects that address needs of non-native English Speakers
- Services/resources/projects that address needs of Ex-offenders returning to the workforce
- Training on un-documented workers – resources and solutions for this population
- Addressing the stigma and perceptions that create tension between cultures
- Accurately reporting and communicating changing demographics, trends, and issues of importance to all partners
- Older Worker issues – changing employment and retirement trends
- Multi-disciplinary Triage process – wrap around services for persons needing assistance from multiple agencies and with high barriers to employment
- Child and Elder Care support services needed
- Self-employment options and the Rockwood International Marketplace

- Innovative solutions to rising health care costs critically important
- Growing gap between the “haves” and the “haves not” – loss of middle class jobs

What’s in it for me? Why is an East County workforce alliance/collaboration of value to participants and the community at large? Participant responses included:

- Information – finding out what is available in the community; what is going on within other partner agencies. I can’t get this anywhere else, and I bring the information back and share with my own organization
- Referrals both to my own organization and for my clients to others
- The commitment from partners and alliance to growth and collaboration
- Access to a group dynamic that can “think outside of the box” when there appear to be no mainstream solutions
- We can now focus on what we do best rather than trying to be all things to all people
- ECOS group dialogue helps me find resources to break down barriers for my clients
- The new funds brought in are of value to the system
- Having someone outside our own agency available to write grants and seek new funding opportunities
- The ECOS alliance offers adequate program choice while minimizing agency replication or duplication of service
- Networking opportunities, collaboration equals more success for everyone
- I value the personal relationships we have developed and comfort level we enjoy with one another; as well as respect for differing opinions
- There are no turf or control issues in this group – “control will kill”
- High respect for the individual niche and work of each partner agency
- The email connection for problem solving and finding hard to find resources
- Sharing expertise between agencies is valuable
- Working together guarantees success for our own individual agency – we need partners to be successful
- Ability to bring forward new products with different groups – test these products and ideas in a group setting
- The power of a large group partnership – contributes to greater efficacy when advocating for east county concerns
- The initial concept that “any door is the right door”
- The hope that we can develop a triage resource team for our hardest to employ individuals

Project Wish List: If ECOS were to make application for a \$10,000 to \$25,000 grant, what project/program would you like to see funded? Suggestions for possible funders for each item.

Program Idea	Possible Funding source
Create a process for triage of most unemployable clients – wrap around services, jointly supported	Generate support from within?
Rockwood International Marketplace	CDBG fund – City of Gresham Ford Foundation Small business sponsorships – local \$ OECD
East County Clothes Closet – dress for success for men	Small business opportunity
Public transit services increased in East County	Advocacy with Tri-met Possible small business opportunity
Free medical care clinic in East County Medical professionals donate time two hours per week	NW Health Foundation Meyer Memorial Trust Oregon Community Foundation
Translation services for Business Tool Kit – Russian and Spanish Bi-Lingual services for existing programs	Small business opportunity – grant funds to outsource this work Lending library from existing resources
Re-entry: Create enterprise to hire this population; need a full	SOROS Foundation

time regional position for expungement/setting aside arrests and convictions	State Corrections Dept. of Justice Weed and Seed special initiative? Legal Aid volunteers? Legislative solution?
Expand weed and seed after initial 5 years New area proposed – Halsey from Fairview, Wood Village, Troutdale, up to Corbett – planning funds will be needed (ECOS invested \$36,000 in the first process)	Multnomah county? Dept. of Justice?

Tools and how to tap into them. Assessment and testing matrix, Language competency scale, Setting aside arrests and convictions, grant writers and foundation matrix, guide to grant writing, shared data bases, demographic information, www.eastcountyonestop.org
OLMIS - <http://www.qualityinfo.org/olmisj/OlmisZine>

Additional resources:

- 2-1-1 connect with services – referrals to agencies
- Oregon Helps – Eligibility Indicator - www.oregonhelps.org
- 5-1-1 connection to road condition reports in Oregon
- Website for the hearing impaired who don't have TTY relay service - www.sprintrelayonline.com.
- DHS office for non and limited English speakers is located at 34th and Broadway. They have over 30 language specialists on site. Call 503.280.6683 for more information

Mission statement review:

ECOS Mission Statement - review for discussion and possible revision: the ECOS Mission has not been reviewed or revised since inception. Board members offered many suggestions and directed Joan to prepare a draft for discussion at the next regular board meeting. The current mission statement reads:

"ECOS is a community alliance of over 40 partner agencies convened to manage and support a "One Stop" workforce development system in East Multnomah County, Oregon. ECOS was initiated in May 1996 to create and maintain a collaborative workforce development system that can work together "without walls". 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 which 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."

Draft for review and discussion at the next board meeting:

(What we are)

ECOS is an alliance of over 35 workforce and community partners

(Why we exist)

convened to foster a systemic and holistic approach to workforce and community development

(By way of)

through information and data sharing, prioritization of service need, prevention of unnecessary duplication of services, joint resource development and fund procurement, and collaborative problem solving.

Vision and Outcome 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.

Partner announcements and final thoughts:

Employment Department: reminder that we are conducting iMatch Skills training for workforce partners on February 8 and again on Feb. 10 from 2-4 pm at MHCC Maywood campus at 102nd and Prescott. If you are interested in attending this training please call Karen Cusick at OED (503) 669-8790, to schedule.

Work Readiness Alternative Workshops (WRAW) – Free training offered by MC Aging and Disability Services – each Tuesday from 1 to 4 PM at Multnomah East – 8th and Kelley. The 8-week training covers communication skills, self-esteem issues, other pre-employment skill development. Call David Dragavon to enroll. 988.3840 or david.dragavon@co.multnomah.or.us

IRCO: new project to help senior citizens with medical waiver and citizenship classes. Assistance to immigrants needing to access SSI benefits. Call Victoria Libov for more information: 503.234.1541

Information needed for next board meeting: Legal Action Center report about civic rights regarding hiring of ex-offenders and ECOS By-laws for review.

Monthly board meeting schedule – Next meeting: February 23, 2005 at Gresham Employment Office – agenda will include discussion about best meeting times for most of the board members