

## Mission Statement:

East County One Stop, Inc. (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 is registered as an Oregon corporation and is recognized by the IRS as a 501 c3 non-profit organization. ECOS is organized to create and maintain a collaborative workforce development system that will utilize the expertise of ECOS partner agencies to:

1. Increase the skill and ability levels of the East Multnomah County workforce which will enhance the competitiveness of business and industry in Oregon, and
2. 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.

*East County One Stop, Inc, and ECOS board of directors comprise the ECOS planning infrastructure.*

*This infrastructure exists to provide:*

- Workforce system development
- Advocacy and coordination
- Shared resources
- Collective tools

in order to enhance services to the customers of member organizations. This collaborative workforce development effort will facilitate access to services, thereby increasing the economic well being of east county residents.

It is important to note that the “One Stop Career System” is defined as both a place where customers are served as well as a way of doing business. In order to achieve the Workforce Investment Act mandate of “universal service” there must be both “walk-in” and “technological” access to information and services.

## History of the East Multnomah County One Stop Career System

Multnomah County Commissioner Sharron Kelley initiated the East County One Stop Career System in May of 1996. Its organizing principle was to develop an environment that would foster a systemic approach to workforce development in East Multnomah County. It was anticipated that all organizations contributing to the employability and quality of the workforce would be included in planning and implementation efforts. **ECOS was designated as one of six regional recipients of Federal DOL One Stop Planning and Implementation funding from 1996 through 2000.** Charter organizers included the seven K-12 school districts and community based social service organizations in addition to county government and the following state and federally funded One Stop partners: Employment Office, Vocational Rehabilitation, Springdale Job Corps, AFS - Welfare to Work, the community colleges, and the former JTPA programs administered regionally through worksystems, inc. ECOS initiated several strategies intended to create a cohesive workforce development system. Those strategies included:

- **Technology development:** Creating the capacity for organizations to work with each other via email and use of the Internet and on-line resources. ECOS assisted with the development of an on-line information and referral system (Oregon Pathways, [www.anydoor.org](http://www.anydoor.org)), obtained or purchased the hardware and software capacity to enable smaller organizations access to on-line tools, and conducted staff training on the use of these tools. ECOS also assisted with technology up-grading as equipment became obsolete. Without this assistance, many smaller organizations would not have been able to participate and use the many on-line tools being development to assist with job search activity.
- **Relationship Development:** Fostering an environment of trust among and between partner organizations through shared training, agency tours, open houses, and communication channels. The first two years of organizational development focused on creating a shared mission, values, goals, and measurable outcomes for the alliance of partners. This relationship is characterized by mutual trust, respect genuineness, and commitment – evidenced by the fact that almost all early organizers are still actively involved, six years after inception.
- **Research, Information and Data sharing:** Conducting primary research on employment trends in East County which included an analysis of high demand occupations in East Multnomah

County and a matrix of the skills needed to compete for these jobs. Compiling and sharing demographic and economic data to facilitate reports and resource procurement for ECOS partner agencies. Conducting primary research on workforce issues, trends, and system performance. Research on system gaps helps partners focus existing resources on areas of greatest need. Current priorities include strategies to work with the Healthcare industry and services directed towards populations with high barriers to employment.

- **One Stop Center/Site Development:** In addition to the “virtual” capacity established within the ECOS system, several existing programs have been enhanced to meet the criteria for “walk-in, brick and mortar” One Stop Resource Centers that administer programs mandated by the Workforce Investment Act passed by Congress in August of 1998. ECOS works with four one stop partner resource centers (Workforce Connections – the East County Certified One Stop Center as well as resource centers located at Steps To Success, the Gresham Employment Office and Vocational Rehabilitation) and the following smaller “satellite resource centers”: Human Solutions, El Programa Hispano, and Eastwind Center all providing services to job seekers and their families. A community center with co-located social services and workforce resources is underway for the Rockwood area as well.

## **RETURN ON INVESTMENT TO DATE:**

ECOS’ system development was initiated through funding from Multnomah County and The Private Industry Council (now worksystems, inc.). The region received a three-year One Stop Implementation grant administered through the Department of Labor that provided one-stop system development funds from July of 1997 through June 30, 2000. The East County One Stop received about \$62,000 per year for each of these three fiscal periods.

The investment of these grant funds made it possible for ECOS to:

- Orchestrate a move from a fragmented, disconnected system to a cohesive network of workforce partners that work together, train together, share information and technology and collectively are able to provide better service to job seekers and employers in the region.
- Conduct a series of professional development workshops that enhanced the skills and ability of staff within our partner agencies. These workshops covered a variety of topics including: case management and documentation of case notes, job retention strategies, assessments, cultural diversity, strategies for working with high barrier populations such as the disabled, ex-offenders and non-native English speakers; technology training - use of OLMIS, Oregon Pathways, and other web-based job search tools.
- Systematically and strategically create an environment of trust and sharing among partner agencies and individual staff members within organizations. Having these relationships in place has created a unique environment of support that is highly valued and often referred to in individual agency and collaborative grant requests.
- Interact with employers in a series of employer focus groups and surveys. Data collected contributed to reports and documents including: High Demand Occupational Analysis and Skill Set Matrix; A Demand Driven Workforce Strategy for East Multnomah County; a list of services that employers have told us they would like the system to provide for them; a compilation of suggestions for enabling job seekers to be more job ready when they apply for employment, and the opportunity to develop relationships with over 60 area employers who are now connected to workforce training activities.
- Collect baseline and customer satisfaction data including the 1997 and 1999 ECOS Capacity and Barrier surveys, and annual stakeholder, employer and job seeker surveys.

**ECOS incorporated as a not-for profit Oregon Corporation on February 4, 2000. The organization applied for and received tax-exempt 501 c3 status in May, 2000. Successful grant applications since incorporation include grants from the Regional Investment Board of Multnomah and Washington County, the Verizon Foundation, Oregon Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development, and the US Department of Justice – Weed and Seed designation.**

## Current programs and Activities:

The organization continues to provide the basic services necessary to maintain the trust and relationships necessary for a strong partner alliance. We also have a commitment to maintaining a functional level of technical capacity for our non-profit and community based organizations. This entails acquisition of computing hardware capacity that is adequate to run current software and provide good Internet access.

ECOS has proven itself to be a valuable resource to its partners as a vehicle for creative problem solving and successful acquisition of resources for clients and the community.

A key goal for 2002-2004 is creating added value for ECOS partners. One strategy will be to encourage partners to use the ECOS 501c3 organizational structure and established collaboration to enhance their ability to secure new funds through foundations and other grantors. A prototype and grant proposal template is available on the ECOS web page to facilitate this connection.

Project Element:	Deliverables and work performed:
Strengthening Community Alliances	Developed or reinforced alliances, partnerships, collaboration and information sharing between more than 60 agencies, organizations, local governmental units, schools, training programs, social service agencies, neighborhood associations, and individuals. The cumulative in-kind value of the volunteer and contributed professional service time devoted to the ECOS projects is over \$130,000.
East County Health Care Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Convened a Health Care Planning Team comprised of industry and workforce training professionals.</li> <li>▪ Successfully wrote a grant to secure an additional \$73, 683 to carry this project into the next year.</li> <li>▪ Developed strategies to retain and attract skilled persons both as healthcare workers and industry trainers</li> <li>▪ Created an advocacy team to work with Oregon Board of Nursing to align certification requirements with industry need to assimilate persons that do not speak English as their native language; as well as facilitate the licensure of persons from other states, and re-certification for those who have left the industry.</li> <li>▪ Conducted an Employer survey and environmental scan that demonstrated areas of greatest need within the industry as well as what training programs are in place.</li> <li>▪ Completed an operational plan to track progress for the next 19 months.</li> <li>▪ Developing training curriculum for non-certified home health care givers that will be progressive and lead to career advancement into areas of certification.</li> </ul>
Enhancing services to underserved populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Created and designed the career-modeling project listed below.</li> <li>▪ Conducted, in partnership with PSU and MHCC, two workshops on hiring ex-offenders – one for employers held at PSU on June 5, 2001, and one for One Stop Resource Center staff on June 22, 2001.</li> <li>▪ Created One Stop Career Resource Center resource materials for persons seeking employment regarding conviction and arrest expungement and the Federal Bonding Program,</li> <li>▪ Conducted an on-line “Best Practices” 90 minute dialogue with One Stop Career program people from around the state – July 18, 2001</li> <li>▪ Collaborated with the Department of Employment Incarcerated Vets programs to assist with re-entry activities for persons returning to their communities from prison.</li> <li>▪ Distributed a white paper on employment laws and Title VII Civil</li> </ul>

	<p>Rights that protect ex-offender from employment discrimination.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Collaborated with the Oregon Department of Corrections Transition Team to link prison job training programs with local one-stop efforts.</li> <li>▪ Developed a list of employers that will consider hiring from the ex-offender population under certain circumstances.</li> <li>▪ This project attracted the attention of National policy folks who invited Project Manager, Joan Pasco to sit on a Council of State Government Re-Entry Policy Panel to determine best practices from around the country for helping ex-offenders with workforce and employment strategies/re-integrate into their communities and reduce recidivism.</li> <li>▪ Project also led to application for Federal grant to assist persons with disabilities – Dept. of Education Projects with Industry Program, which if funded, will provide \$220,000 per year for 3 years to expand this work and add a home-based enterprise component.</li> </ul>
Career Modeling Project:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Convened three planning teams: ex-offender, disabled and ESL groups to determine needs for each population and secure candidates for research</li> <li>▪ Designed the survey instrument, tested and refined same with each of the 3 populations</li> <li>▪ Conducted 40 interviews. 37 qualified for use in the project</li> <li>▪ Wrote the Career Model stories for each research candidate and prepared a fishbone diagram that demonstrates what tools, resources, and strategies each individual used to gain economic self-sufficiency</li> <li>▪ Posted Career Model tools on the Internet and are preparing workbooks for One Stop Resource Centers as guides to use these stories as a case management tool.</li> </ul>
<p>Bi-Lingual Job Coach Institute:</p> <p>Verizon Foundation has renewed its funding and enabling a second Institute to be delivered in Spring of 2003.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Conducted a feasibility study to determine need and assess whether employers would use this resource if available.</li> <li>▪ Developed curriculum for the 100 hour professional development training program</li> <li>▪ Secured a Verizon Foundation grant for \$10,000 for scholarship support and employer outreach</li> <li>▪ Secured five instructors to lead the classroom activity</li> <li>▪ Secured applicants, conducted institute and graduated 14 job coaches</li> <li>▪ Utilized continuous improvement strategies to use participant input in an on-going basis to improve the project for subsequent years and for replication to other areas.</li> <li>▪ Developed a web site to market this resource to employers and enable them to contact job coaches when needed. <a href="http://www.bi-lingualjobcoaches.org">www.bi-lingualjobcoaches.org</a></li> <li>▪ Refining curriculum and developing resources for the 2003 Bi-Lingual Job Coach Institute.</li> </ul>
Weed and Seed – Rockwood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Convened a 50-person steering committee and four task forces to help develop the original application.</li> <li>▪ Application was submitted in October 2001, designation was awarded in February 2002 – Rockwood was the only one of four Oregon applications to be awarded in this round.</li> <li>▪ Submitted final budget and governance reports in May 2002. Funding became available in October 2002 – five year project with funding levels from \$175,000 to \$225,000 each year.</li> </ul>
Rockwood International Marketplace	ECOS was awarded a \$50,000 grant from the Multnomah/Washington Regional Investment Board in August, 2002 to fund the planning and feasibility for an International Marketplace in the Rockwood area of East Multnomah County.

	The marketplace will offer a profitable venue for artisans and crafters to sell their work as well as create a viable new retail and tourist destination in an underserved community. This project is working in tangent with Rockwood Urban Renewal.
Support for Home Based and Small Business development	One of ECOS newest projects is an effort to encourage and support the development of small businesses and professionals who choose to work from their homes. The “Inside Out Business Options: Professional Out-sourcing” project helps develop earning opportunities for people that have physical barriers that prevent access to a traditional workplace as well as people who choose to work from home for a variety of reasons.

If you have any questions about the quality of efforts from the East County One Stop Career System, please contact our co-chairs: Gwen Nothwang – Workforce Connectors – 503.252.0758, or Catherine Zimmerman - Resource Connectors - 503.228.7023. Joan Pasco, ECOS Project Manager is available at 503.661.3981.