

**ECOS Board Meeting Wednesday, April 27, 2005
Gresham Employment Department – 19421 SE Stark
9 AM to 11 AM**

ECOS May meetings:

Finance – 11 AM, May 16 – Applebee’s on Halsey and 102nd

Board – 9 to 11 AM, Wednesday, May 25 – Gresham Employment Office

April 27th Meeting notes

Participants:

Karen Cusick, Malcolm Boswell and Craig Bolton aka: CAB – Gresham Employment Office, Debbie Foote – DHS, Kim Rush – Portland Habilitation Center, Carolyn Morrison – Child Care Development Services, Derek Beaudry – Human Solutions, David Dragavon – MC Aging and Disability, Kay Lopez – MHCC Workforce Connections, JoAnn Espinosa and guest Kathy Howell – Springdale Job Corps, Lani Staab – Goodwill Industries, Joan Pasco Project Manager.

Introductions and welcome: Partner reports – news, events, and announcements

DHS Self-Sufficiency Services: Employment related day care services might be cut from the state budget. These funds cover mostly single parents and provide assistance with day care costs for low-income persons who are employed. Their day care co-pay increases as their income changes – but the entire program may be gone.

Update on FHIAP from Debbie Foote: FHIAP is a state program that helps uninsured Oregonians buy health insurance. FHIAP is not an insurance company. Instead, the agency gives subsidies (grants of money) to help pay the monthly cost of your health insurance (premium). This helps individuals and families pay for insurance at work or buy individual health plans if insurance is not available through an employer.

FHIAP members pay part of the premium. They also pay other costs of private health insurance such as co-payments and deductibles. Once approved for FHIAP, members are eligible to remain in the program for a year. After 12 months, members may re-apply.

<http://www.omip.state.or.us/IPGB/FHIAP/member.shtml>

Aging and Disability Services: The employment programs (EI) may be cut in the state budget. This program serves over 5000 people a year and gets many out of the welfare system through meaningful employment opportunity. If it should be cut, the long term societal costs will be greater than cost of the EI programs statewide. (letters of support to legislators would be helpful)

From David Dragavon: Information about impact of earned income on benefits:

www.workbenefits.org. Also related, though not Oregon Specific:

www.wicheq.com (from Wisconsin)

www.db101.org (from California)

The first one will step by step allow you to see the influence of work on an individual's disability benefits: SSI/SSDI, for instance (and print it out for you), don't recall if TANF and food stamps are thrown into the mix.

Portland Habilitation Center: Jobs are increasing; they have several openings including an admin support person and 4 landscapers.

Springdale Job Corps: The National Job Corps Director, Grace Kilbane recently visited the Springdale site – she is working to integrate the entire job corps system with workforce. She came into this position from the Employment and Training Administration. The center will be hosting an International Festival in August – with outdoor booths, food and entertainment. Kathy Howell, a guest from the Cascade Job Corps Center was also introduced.

Human Solutions: They are moving from the 122nd street location to 125th and Powell – the former Powell Valley Water Building, the first week of June.

Workforce Connections: Kay has been promoted to a supervisory position and will be working with both the One Stop Resource Center and Steps to Success.

Child Care Development Services: Working closely with the CEO JOLI grant processing micro-enterprise loans for the new businesses. Provider trainings continue to be strong and well attended.

Goodwill Industries: Jobs for GW participants are increasing. The Job Connection program workshops are booked two weeks in advance.

Old Business:

The Board Meeting Minutes from February 23 and April 6 were approved.

The following amendments to ECOS By-laws and Mission Statement as recommended at the Feb. 23rd meeting and forwarded from April 6 due to lack of quorum were approved.

The Board approved revisions to the ECOS Mission Statement. The new mission statement reads:

ECOS is an alliance of over 35 workforce and community partners convened to foster a systemic and holistic approach to workforce and community development through information and data sharing, prioritization of service need, encouraging efficient delivery of services, joint resource development and fund procurement, and collaborative problem solving.

Vision 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.

By-laws review – recommended changes: The Board reviewed and is recommending the following changes to the organizational by-laws:

- Allow for partners to use a proxy vote
- Allow board decisions via an email vote.

Budget/finance report – refer to finance report – sent to all board members prior to the meeting
Annual ECOS partner contributions are due

We have received contributions from the Gresham Employment Office, Easter Seals Oregon, Portland Habilitation Center, Springdale Job Corps and Mercy Corps.

Continued board discussion:

Triage for hardest to place persons – ideas and resources to implement a strategy – each board member has been requested to bring a profile of a client that they define as “unemployable” and be prepared to share the needs or options of this individual with the group.

Example profile: Individual gets \$900 a month from SSI due to a disability; is on the verge of being homeless; is just barely over the minimum income level for a variety of assistance, but under income for self-sufficiency. There are no programs to keep them in current housing – only after they become homeless which is generally a more expensive option than maintaining existing housing.

Possible Solutions: need a grid to explain how/who qualifies for SSI: what does this mean in terms of other outside income, what programs do people qualify for and which will they lose if they begin receiving SSI income? These folks need an advocate.

System Problems: each program counts income differently – some include all sources of income such as rent, child support, family income etc. others do not. The complexity of the system requires an advocate, as most people could not figure it out on their own.

Could we collectively hire/fund at least one person to serve as this advocate for all agencies?

New resources:

Kaiser Permanente is offering free health coverage for K-6 students in all Portland area Title 1 schools. Several in East County (including Alder and Lynchfield) are benefiting from this program. A secondary benefit is that families are not changing residence as often – as they do not want to lose this coverage. School population is becoming more stable.

Ecumenical Ministries has a shared housing program to match people needing a home with people needing in-home care and assistance.

Monthly Discussion Topic: Lack of youth services – hot summer projected!!

Local cop shops and agencies serving teen populations are forecasting a difficult summer as services/resources/activities for this age group have dwindled. With over 40 agencies connected through the ECOS network – can we work together to offer some intervention activities?

Discussion included:

ECOS could possibly help by being a connector between kids and activities/work/volunteer activities.

Craig Bolton (CAB) is on a 6 month assignment with the Gresham Employment Office to work with youth aged 16 to 24 years. He has connections to the schools and other youth outreach projects. He volunteered to be a clearinghouse for information to kids and help connect them to activities, volunteer opportunities as well as to jobs. His contact information is: craig.a.Bolton@state.or.us phone: 503.669.7112

The IRCO youth job fair had a lower than expected turn-out. There were many very young persons there – under age 14. **Addidas is hiring 16 year olds.**

The Oregon Humane Society needs youth volunteers to work with the animals.

Hillsboro is already experiencing a huge surge in gang activity.

Tri-Met offers summer youth passes for \$30 for the whole summer. They also have YTPA – Youth transportation project activity grants.

The summer food/lunch programs could be a good way to connect teens with volunteer activities.

Several years ago, East Hill Church sponsored a ‘Time Out Night’ for youth – lots of games and activities – safe venue for kids.

Perhaps the summer camp programs could take more volunteers/stipend assistants from teens – Boy Scouts, Campfire, etc.

The unemployment rate being so high has kids competing with adults for what used to be employment primarily for young people.

The Gresham Chamber once had a successful business mentor program for at-risk youth.

MCTV uses many youth volunteers during the summer months.

The assisted living and adult care facilities all use volunteer assistance and enjoy having young people get involved with seniors. Seniors also need help with computer set-up and troubleshooting.

Hands on Portland: www.handsonportland.org is a clearing house for volunteers.

Lents – Neighborhood Pride project – they engaged young people to canvas the community to identify skills and assets. Then they used the information to set up a bartering system. Items for trade included: day care, car repair, painting and odd jobs, dentistry, music lessons, sewing and altering, catering/cooking, photography, chiropractic care, computer trouble shooting, just about all services were available from someone in their survey area.

Bring back midnight and all night basketball. These venues included pool, video games, and other activities as well as BB.

Check with Sheriff Giusto and Police Chief Carla Piluso about youth intervention activities that we may assist with. Perhaps consider a forum to highlight the problem and seek intervention activities from the broader community. Try to get the schools involved before summer recess.

East County Demographic Analysis – attached to the email with these minutes: Malcolm Boswell, workforce analyst with the employment department presented the most current workforce study for East Multnomah County.

Project reports

Rockwood International Marketplace: No funds have been awarded to sponsor the marketplace for 2005. City budget cuts eliminated the parks and recreation position that worked with us last year. We have exhausted avenues to fund the events for this summer. Board discussion included perhaps doing just one event over the summer months. We have \$1765 in the marketplace fund –

the board recommended reserving this fund for future market use and to try to find another host for the event. The Gresham Sister City Association was an early supporter of the marketplace and initially planned to take it over after the first year of operation. They do not have the capacity as an organization to do this. Human Solutions would also be a good fit as event sponsor, as would IRCO. We have considerable materials to offer to an organization including signs, banners, a stage, and electrical equipment.

CEO/Joli project with Easter Seals: This project is on track and going very well. 44 low-income persons have started their own business, or path to self-employment. The six-month project report to funders was submitted on April 30th. A copy will be available to anyone that would like one.

Regional reports:

WSI and state workforce: Wsi is again advertising for a CEO. They will be reducing staff from 36 to 25, putting more funds into program areas. The search for a new President includes an ad hoc committee that is outlining goals and vision for the new person that emphasizes “code of conduct”, ability to build relationships, and move from chaos and confusion to a solid organization.

Workforce Connections: MHCC is working with adult basic ed on a partnership with Inverness Jail that includes food service training for incarcerated persons who could work with Aramark after release. Portland Bureau of Housing and Community Development is now distributing funds to all One Stops in the Portland area (4). Projects BHCD funds must meet their requirement of long range commitment to participants – more funds invested in fewer people with intense support services provided.

Gresham Employment Office: Workforce Orientations will now be held on Mondays and Fridays – 9 AM to 11 AM. No appointment needed – people can just show up. Jobs are increasing – finally!!