

East County One Stop Board Meeting – March 22, 2006

MEETING NOTES:

Board Members Present: Debbie Foote - DHS, Karen Cusick – Worksource Oregon, Kay Lopez – MHCC/Workforce Connections, JoAnn Espinosa – Springdale Job Corps, Derek Beaudry – Human Solutions, Karen Hubbard – Linfield School of Nursing, Connie Foster – OVRs.
Others present: Joan Pasco, Project Manager

Agency Announcements:

Springdale Job Corps: Seeking an Auto Body Instructor. Connie will put this out via the Job Developers Network.

MHCC/Workforce Connections: Fast Pass program: Summer Term - a basic college prep program geared around 6 career fields. Students enrolling in Fast Pass will have enrollment priority for the summer term. A working adult version is also offered on Fridays and Saturdays. Their Office Specialist I program is in progress and has the largest enrollment to date. The next OSI class will be given in fall term. The LRI - a new soft skills assessment tool is being introduced. It has two levels, entry and advanced.

Discussion generated: in 2000, ECOS hosted a Menucha retreat on assessments. The retreat generated a report on all assessments used by ECOS partners and their experience with each tool. At that time, ECOS partners began a discussion about sharing assessment tools and processes and perhaps letting other agencies participate in each other's assessment process, or figure out a way to do large group testing as opposed to each agency doing the same assessments for a small group.

Joan will email a copy of that assessment matrix and we can continue this discussion at the next board meeting. – Attached to the email with these minutes.

DHS – Self-Sufficiency Services: They are experiencing staff reductions in local offices; food stamp cases continue to grow; clients are getting new case managers.

Worksource Oregon: The process and logistics of moving Workforce Connections staff into their office is high priority. A joint staff potluck was held to do team building and work on the physical layout of new office space. Move-in target is July. The other Worksource Oregon offices in the Portland area will also be merging office space with one-stops. East County is the first to initiate the move. All employment offices are in a hiring freeze unless someone retires. UI claims have been reducing in number.

Linfield School of Nursing: 2 students are working with Human Solutions - placed in 6 to 8 low income housing units – to do preventative health outreach to residents. Also working on a program to use health care professionals who have been trained in other countries to become medical interpreters.

USS Ranger: A new foundation is working to bring a decommissioned aircraft carrier to the Portland area; have it moored on either the Columbia or Willamette and convert it into a training and event center. Planned activities include military reunions, business conventions, job

development training center, including vocational and technical education in its machine shops. The ship could also be used as a command post during natural disasters.

Old Business:

The Minutes from Feb. 22-board meeting were approved as presented.

Discussion on possible action/activities that ECOS could initiate: The many ideas generated at the January Board Retreat were reviewed. (see attached list). ECOS board vetted a few ideas where our collective action could make a difference.

One area of interest is transportation – or lack thereof – in the Rockwood area. Ideas included working with the city and Rockwood Urban Renewal to encourage small alternative types of transportation. Many cities have developed innovative (and new small business) concepts that incorporate human powered Pedi-cabs, golf-carts, small trolleys, and other mini-units that people can tap into for short trips – examples included to the MAX line, the grocery store, medical appointments, transporting kids to after-school activities, etc. Many ideas were generated as to the usefulness of this type of conveyance. They are common in many urban areas. Links for more information: www.rhoadescar.com and www.pedicab.com. Business owners generate income from letting people participate in the pedaling, selling advertising on the units, and taking people on short trips within a small area. They are common in New York City, Denver, Phoenix, Edinburgh and London. Why not Gresham? Joan will contact city officials about the idea.

A second interest area is supporting Wallace Medical Clinic in its expansion effort. They need larger space (an existing medical, dental or chiropractic clinic that is not open in the evening is ideal), volunteer medical professionals, and interpreters. They currently provide free medical care two nights a week in Rockwood, but would like to do more, and the need is certainly there. They generally have to turn people away within 30 minutes, as they will have more in line than can be treated in the 3 hours of clinic time.

New Business:

SCSEP Grant – ECOS partner support for the Easter Seals Application: Easter Seals Oregon is making a competitive bid to provide “Senior Community Services Employment” in the counties of NW Oregon. The program supports low-income persons over the age of 55 that need new skills to be competitive in the workforce. ECOS partners were asked to provide letters of support for this grant application and, if appropriate, serve as a host site for work experience. The letters are needed by March 30th. If you need more information in order to draft a letter, please contact Joan.

Budget/finance report – The board approved the finance report as presented - refer to finance report – attached, separate excel doc.

2006 ECOS partner contributions are due – Invoices have been sent out:

Contributions have been received from Springdale Job Corps, Mercy Corps, MHCC, Rockwood Weed and Seed, Goodwill Industries, and OVRS – Thank you all for your prompt response. As you know, these contributions are needed to cover the non-grant related costs of operating the ECOS 501 c3 organization.

Current Grant Activity

United Way – Marian George – Innovation fund application – **SSP project**: Senior Safety Pin project – matches nursing students from Linfield with isolated seniors. Grant application was submitted on March 3. Only 5 applications were received in this category.

United Way – Kedma Ough – Community fund application – **DBA project**. Differently-abled Business Association: United Way funds requested to support creation of a business association to serve needs of small business owners who also have a disability. This would be a three-year grant. At the end of the project, a separate, 501 non-profit would be developed to support the association into the future. The grant was submitted on March 17th. We do not know how many other applications were received in this category.

Patent process training project – Kedma Ough - Lemelson Foundation and OECDD Innovation funds. ECOS representatives Kedma and Kay Richards met with the Lemelson Foundation on March 21st and were invited to submit an application to develop training and support for persons with inventions and intellectual property right issues. A more in-depth report will be made at the April ECOS board meeting.

ECOS is a supportive partner on a second JOLI grant with Easter Seals Oregon, CCDS and Mercy Corps – application for 2006 funds to replicate the CEO project in Woodburn and Salem. If funded, Easter Seals Oregon will be the fiscal agent.

Project reports

CEO/JOLI project with Easter Seals – Joan reported on progress with the CEO project. 65 businesses were enrolled and 57 are still active in the project. When asked how many of these would have been successful without the program, Joan said perhaps 2 or 3. None of the participants would have been likely to get conventional funding and all needed some seed money to get started. Monthly training and business coaching will continue for these businesses through Feb. of 2007.

Rockwood Weed and Seed - Brenda could not be here but emailed this report: we're moving forward with the Drug Free Communities Application and that will be submitted on 4/10/06. If anyone has a special interest in helping our youth to choose a drug free life, there are spots on the Coalition. The 5th year of RWS funding application will be due on 4/27/2006. The M.A.D. (Make A Difference) Rockwood/West Gresham Business Coalition will meet again on Thursday, March 30 at 9:30am at the Rockwood Grange. Everyone is invited if interested -- call 503.473.9227 to RSVP or for more info.

OECDD Market Vendor Incubator Project – The first of three 10-session marketplace workshops will conclude on March 27th. The series will be repeated in the fall of 2006 and again in the spring of 2007. The other major event planned is a statewide conference and training to be held during the winter months.

Workshop for HS students on social service careers – Meg Kilmer PHS: The first planning meeting went well – next planning meeting is April 3rd at noon – Gresham Employment Office. ECOS partners are assisting the School-to-Work team in conducting a half-day workshop for students to explore careers in social services and non-profits. The conference will be held in May.

Update on **Linfield School of Nursing practicum connections**. Karen is working with Human Solutions, Wallace Medical Center and possibly Child Care Development Services. Nursing students are getting practicum experience providing preventative and diagnostic services.

Meeting schedule for fall/winter:

Finance and Management Team: Monday, April 17 11:30 at Applebee's 102nd and Halsey

Board Meetings: 4th Wednesdays – 9 AM to 11 AM

April 26 – Avita, May 24 – Human solutions, June 28 - Portland Habilitation Center

ECOS 2006 Board Retreat

Current trends impacting East County and ECOS partner agencies:

2005 retreat identified these primary challenges

- 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;
- More job seekers than jobs = an employee supply driven economy
- The number of long-term unemployed individuals. (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.)
- Sustaining placement rates - (some partners report that rates are excellent 6 months after service, but decline to poor within 12 months).

2006 - What has changed? Any new challenges? Discussion included:

State of the economy and supply/demand state of hiring:

This issue generated a great deal of discussion. The board worked through an exercise to determine economic and workforce change since 1998. We are experiencing a growing gap between the “haves” and the “haves not” – due to loss of middle class jobs – outsourcing, loss of manufacturing jobs, and loss of good jobs being replaced by low paying jobs:

Other trends driving services in 2006:

Self-employment continues to grow as a viable option for people who have given up trying to get a traditional job. Self-employment is becoming a larger piece of the employment pie, however, has less visibility, resources and support.

We are experiencing a **shift in responsibility for benefits** from the employer to the individual. Benefit packages are becoming more portable and will be owned by the individual rather than the employer. This is a trend predicted several years ago. In a demand side workforce economy, people will be able to negotiate higher employer contributions to benefit packages, health care and 401 K accounts. However, in a supply-side economy, employers have little incentive to offer contributions equivalent to what they used to provide in company plans.

The **working poor has increased at least 30%** since 2004. Agencies project new cuts in the food stamp program at the federal level. Hunger and housing issues continue to grow as significant survival barriers for many people. Transportation costs are increasing – bus fares have gone up as well as gas prices. Many families have no funds to cover a crisis: car repair, medical emergency, etc. In addition, they may work for employers that will fire them if they miss two days of work, so they defer preventative medical treatment and care and work until they are severely ill. Overtime options have also been reduced resulting in loss of income.

There is a health care crisis: The decline in employer offered health care benefits, cuts in the Oregon Health Plan and increase in poverty is taking a huge toll in East County. There is virtually no preventative health care. Emergency rooms are providing the health care of last resort. There are 3 new hospitals being built in the Portland Metro area and all three are considering whether or not to provide emergency room services due to increased cost of serving indigent patients.

Seniors and frail elders have fewer services and resources than they did five years ago. Retirees are beginning to seek roommates to help with housing costs. Elder care and adult day care is hard to find and expensive. There are few programs to help people stay in their own homes rather than go into more expensive assisted living facilities.

Youth services, especially for teens have almost disappeared. Project YESS had 37 staff and served 800 teens in 1988. Today they have a staff of 9 and serve 150 teens. There are no more summer employment programs, business mentorship and job shadow programs. The YO (Youth Opportunity) center has closed. Resources for youth employment services have diminished considerably.

Setting aside arrests and convictions/Expungement and percentage of persons with criminal records: ECOS partners report that **about 60% of clients served in all programs have a criminal record** in their background that limits employment options. This issue continues to grow and is a constant source of frustration for all agencies. There is little political support to fund programs for ex-offenders. No agency resources can be used to assist with the cost of expungement. Project Clean Slate was a good beginning, but that program is overloaded with persons needing assistance and the wait list is long.

Gaps in service identified in January 2005 – still significant gaps in 2006: ECOS partners were asked to help by directing resources and energy into programs that will help mitigate these areas that are underserved.

- 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

Additional gaps in service identified since last retreat:

- Replacement of the Clothes Closet in East County – a site is needed by July to replace the Helping Hands resource sponsored by Human Solutions, Salvation Army, Sno-cap and Catholic Charities
- Need for a no-cost laundry facility – clients are returning for free clothes to replace dirty clothes due to lack of laundry facilities
- Aging in Place – need more resources for care givers that can work with seniors in their own homes
- Support for inventors – Intellectual property rights and the patent process
- Long-term technical assistance for new businesses – especially micro-enterprises
- Resources to fund organizational development for non-profits (as opposed to program activity)
- Services for youth have almost disappeared (especially teens)

Additional gaps identified at the Board Retreat:

- Post employment retention and transitional services are needed as well as technical support services for self-employed persons. This includes a need for emergency funds for self-employed individuals – from loan pools or from training funds. Mentors and job coaches are needed for both the traditional employed and those that are self-employed. This is a huge systemic need expressed by most ECOS partners.
- Phone, I.D. and mail services for the homeless – low to no-cost services are needed by many persons. Lack of any of these three will prevent or limit employment options.
- Short-term emergency funds are needed to help people avoid the trap of “payday” loan sharks and expensive tax refund scams.
- Urgency level lack of affordable housing units at all levels: emergency, transition and permanent.
- Lack of support for people navigating the SSI process.
- Child care for children with special needs.