

US DOL ETA Workforce Innovation Fund SGA/DFA PY-13-06 CFDA# 17.283

ABSTRACT

Applicant: Monterey County Workforce Investment Board, based in Salinas California

Area Served: Monterey County

Project Name: Youth Ambassadors for Peace

Funding level: \$3million total (Project Cost = \$2,550,000, Evaluation Cost = \$450,000)

Project Type: A

Description of Proposed Project: What if our youth could develop strong job skills and positive relationships, and be constructively engaged as leaders in their community, all at the same time?

We believe this could break the cycle of violence in Monterey County. *Youth Ambassadors for Peace* provides opportunities to vulnerable youth, who are hard to serve. The 18-month program offers an intensive, relationship-oriented, hands-on leadership and career preparation experience for 240 youth. This innovative program addresses youth needs as well as the larger community problem of gang violence, by weaving the following tested and un-tested components:

Innovative Recruitment – uses cross-systems data to identify those youth who are truant, out-of-school or involved in misconduct, finding the hardest to reach – those who need support the most.

Multi-Disciplinary Case-Management – provides assessment, goal setting, connection to resources, and support in navigating the complex maze of programs and services.

Intensive Youth Development – offers dynamic leadership coaching, where youth move beyond the typical training to take on roles of community researchers, educators, and advocates. Youth-led action research projects stimulate positive social change and develop skills.

Reconnection with Education – (re)engages youth with developmental education, high school diploma and GED programs, college preparation, or trade schools according to individual needs.

Career Pathways Exploration – provides exposure to various career options, with emphasis on real-time Monterey County high-demand sectors.

Mentorship Plus – creates opportunities to be mentored and to mentor. In their internship, Ambassadors are paired with on-site mentors to support learning in both soft and technical work skills. Ambassadors also mentor and tutor younger students in an after- or summer-school setting.

Alumni Services – links graduates to continued adult services and professional relationships.

Short- and long-term outcomes all lead to a decrease in violence: increased engagement with education and training leading to earning credentials; development of workplace skills leading to employment with potential for higher earnings in targeted industries; engagement in positive relationships with adults and peers, a demonstration of socially acceptable attitudes and values, increased self-esteem and resiliency, and increase in positive community and civic engagement.

Short-term systems-level outcomes are: strengthened partnerships that lead to greater cooperation across services; improved methods of service delivery, and more efficient use of resources. Long-term outcomes are: cross-system services and blended and braided funding, and collaboration in data collection strategies will result in integrated data management systems to support cross-system analytics. Ultimately, the community will experience improved public safety and positive attitudes towards youth overall.

Description of Proposed Evaluation: The proposed evaluation design includes: (1) an implementation study of the program’s design process and its execution, (2) an outcomes study of pre- and post-intervention results for participants, studying three spheres: education / training / employment, youth development, and violence reduction; and (3) a cost-to-outcomes analysis.

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