

October 24, 1996

TO: Employment Support Oversight Committee

FROM: Mike Curran
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SUBJECT: SANTA CLARA COUNTY EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT INITIATIVE WORK
FORCE PREPARATION TASK FORCE REPORT

BACKGROUND:

The goal of Santa Clara County's Employment Support Initiative is to develop a policy agenda that promotes self-sufficiency and employment for every family. The initiative was designed to create a new paradigm for community participation and collaboration. It represents a change in philosophy about how to address social issues and recognizes the interdependency of social, political and economic systems. It has established new partnerships and dialogues and expanded ownership of the problems, issues, and solutions associated with welfare reform. With employment as the center of welfare reform, the efforts of the Work Force Preparation Task Force are critical to the success of the Employment Support Initiative.

The Work Force Preparation Task Force was charged with developing policy recommendations for education, training and employment service providers that will improve welfare recipients and low income working families' access to employment. Members of the task force were recruited largely from domains outside of county government, not only for their expertise in the field of employment and training, but because they reflect the community delivery system that must rise to the challenge of increased service levels to the families who will be affected by welfare reform. A listing of task force members is attached to this report.

OUTCOMES:

The guiding principles and critical success factors identified by the task force in the attached report express a philosophy to sustain our efforts to put people to work. The task force's efforts have resulted in an expanded vision and mission for work force preparation systems. Finally, we identified important strategies necessary for successful welfare-to-employment systems.

The task force's report represents a new understanding of the interrelatedness and interdependency of not only work force preparation systems, but of other social and economic systems in the community. By sharing the challenge to respond to welfare reform and accepting the assignment to develop this report, we have expanded ownership of the issues and broadened the commitment to finding solutions to putting welfare recipients to work.

SANTA CLARA COUNTY
EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT INITIATIVE

**WORK FORCE
PREPARATION
TASK FORCE REPORT**

October 24, 1996

Santa Clara County
Employment Support Initiative
Work Force Preparation

PREAMBLE:

The world is changing, the economy is changing, and the welfare system is changing from one where children are supported by public resources to one where public resources build family capacity, through employment, to support children. Therefore it is recognized that the systems and cultures of the institutions which serve welfare families including social services, education, labor and community organizations must become employment focused. It is also recognized that to successfully meet the challenges of the changing environment, the partners within the work force preparation system must be committed to change and collaboration in accordance with the following Guiding Principles.

Guiding Principles:

- 1* There is a direct relationship among work force preparation, economic vitality and quality of life for all people in the community.

- 2* The leadership and commitment of business, education, labor, community and government are critical to the success of work force preparation.

- 3* Everybody is potentially employable.

- 4* The entire system needs to recognize and address the diverse needs of the whole client base, from the "hard to serve" to the working poor; it

is our collective responsibility to provide access to the full range of services.

- 5* The new work force preparation system should focus on access to services and wages that enable families to rise above the poverty level in our community.
- 6* Work force preparation systems and strategies must be outcome oriented, driven by the demands of the local economy and cognizant of the diverse needs of employers and clients, and rewarded accordingly.
- 7* The work force preparation system must also support continuous employment recognizing the need for transition services, career stabilization, retention, and advancement.
- 8* The new work force preparation system must be capable of capitalizing on areas in which the economy is growing.

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS:

To develop a successful welfare-to-employment system, policy makers shall recognize and foster, facilitate and be conducive to the following factors critical to the success of the system.

1. **HOPE** that over the long term our vision is achievable.
2. Social Services Agency's commitment and willingness to change.
3. Community and education systems' commitment and willingness to work as a team to achieve the welfare-to-work vision.
4. Training to prepare clients for the 21st Century.
5. Connectivity to training, education, job placement and community resources that work.
6. Stopgap "triage" resources and short-term strategies to meet immediate critical needs.
7. Responsiveness to changes in the local economy.
8. Adequacy of employment opportunities.

STRATEGIES

Strategies for successful welfare-to-employment systems are based on the factors identified as critical to the success of the systems. The following strategies have been correlated to one or more of the identified critical success factors. These are but some of the strategies that can be utilized. What separates these from strategies to be solicited from policy boards is that **they are within the County's domain.**

1. Promote and support community efforts that act as a safety net for individuals ineligible for government benefits which would include the provision of job training, ESL, citizenship training, medical, housing and emergency services.

Critical Success Factor: 6

2. Working with employers and established employer focus groups, obtain ongoing employer input to insure balance between work force supply and demand centering on what the employers value.

Critical Success Factor: 7, 8

3. Build a broad based collaboration to promote and support the Guiding Principles.

Critical Success Factor: 3

4. Allocate resources available to provide adult basic education/remediation and/or English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) within the context of vocational skills training.

Critical Success Factor: 4, 5

5. Foster the commitment from private industry to promote and facilitate life long learning for their workers including technical upgrading and integrated English-as-a-Second Language and basic skills training.

Critical Success Factor: 4, 5, 7

6. Expand work experience opportunities that lead to employment.
Critical Success Factor: 4, 5
7. Develop client-oriented individual plans based on family resources and circumstances that include strategies for upward mobility with resources targeted to stop the back and forth slide into welfare by the working poor based on targeted the family income to be above the federal poverty level.
Critical Success Factor: 2, 5
8. Address child care as a critical issue in the transition from welfare to work and long-term self-sufficiency by increasing access to child care resources.
Critical Success Factor: 3, 5
9. Employ strategies which are outcome oriented, targeted to employers and focus on solutions.
Critical Success Factor: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7
10. Promote flexible education and training programs and strategies with essential elements such as open-entry/open-exit opportunities, short-term certificate programs, hands-on training, flexible scheduling (including weekends), and career preparation offering upward mobility opportunities.
Critical Success Factor: 3, 4, 5
11. Promote collaboration which will increase the financial resources and capacity of community-based organizations to provide training which is always state of the art and meets the changing technical requirements of the employer community.
Critical Success Factor: 3, 5, 7

12. Include the following elements in the client/family work force preparation plan: self-sufficiency, upward mobility, child care, education and training, housing, medical coverage, and transportation.

Critical Success Factor: 2, 3, 4, 5

13. Establish a task force representative of employers, government, educational systems, labor, employment and training organizations, clients and the community at large to develop new and/or expand existing models for work force preparation.

Critical Success Factor: 2, 3, 4, 7

NEXT STEPS:

It is recommended that the Oversight Committee:

1. Adopt the above-referenced Guiding Principles, Critical Success Factors and Strategies.
2. Support the presentation of this report to other decision-making boards within the work force preparation community to solicit their support to identify strategies they will employ to contribute to the desired outcomes, and to further a broad-based community commitment to this employment support initiative.

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