

MEMORANDUM

**Date:** October 31, 2011

**To:** WDB Planning and Development Committee

**From:** Lisa Larson, Education and Training Coordinator  
Michigan Works! – CISD

**RE:** **WIA Youth RFP Program Design**

**SUMMARY:**

The W.I.A. Youth Program request for proposal (RFP) packages will be issued in January to solicit proposals for the contracts to be operated in PY12, PY13 and PY14. Planning & Development Committee members are asked to consider the following information in helping to develop the program design for this next three-year planning cycle:

- the program requirements;
- input that was obtained during Youth Forums from community members across our region; and
- staff recommendations for the RFP package

Staff requests that the Planning & Development Committee recommends approval of the program design recommendation to the full Workforce Development Board at the November meeting.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

**W.I.A. Youth Program Requirements**

The W.I.A. Youth Program is designed as a year-round program, serving in-school and out-of-school youth, and include a summer youth classroom component. The youth programs build on and coordinate with existing youth programs and services in the community to offer a comprehensive continuum of services for youth participants to improve their educational and skill competencies while providing effective connections to employers. A minimum of 50% of the W.I.A. Youth Program funding will be expended on activities for out-of-school participants. In-school participant activities will be coordinated with school programs and each youth's Educational/Employability Development Plan. The following activities and services are planned:

- Objective assessment & individual service strategy development;
- Career exploration and career development activities, including classroom-based components, employability skills development, job shadowing, community service and unpaid work experience;
- Paid work-experience activities in the for-profit, non-profit and public sectors, including summer employment opportunities, with an increased focus on scheduling work during gap periods and hours that work best for individual participants;
- Scholarships for post-secondary education, leadership training and other similar activities;
- Case management and adult mentoring;
- Employer coordination: youth job fairs, employer calendar planning, employer incentives for supervision of youth employee.
- Job development and placement;
- Youth access to additional education and services in the community: substance abuse prevention, character development, anger management, leadership, and consumer advocacy.

### **Youth Forums Input**

A series of three meetings were convened during the month of October 2011 for the purpose of gaining community input into the planning of the W.I.A. Youth Programs. These meetings were attended by adults representing various organizations serving youth in Barry, Branch and Calhoun counties as well as youth from all three counties. These meetings were conducted as a focus group to:

- Review the current design of the local W.I.A. Youth Program
- Identify activities currently in place to serve youth in each community
- Determine gaps in service delivery
- Develop recommendations for new program design
- Develop recommendations for new partnerships and linkages

The information gained from each meeting is summarized and included in this packet as a separate document. Gaps in service delivery that had significant discussion are listed below.

### ***Gaps in Service Delivery***

- Presentations about the Michigan Works! Youth Program to school counselors and dissemination of information to all school personnel
- Dissemination of Michigan Works! information to community agencies
- A center where youth can gather to do their homework and participate in fun activities
- A “hub” where youth can go to receive information about community programs available as well as skills on how to navigate issues such as finance, school, and medical needs (one stop shopping)
- Entrepreneurship opportunities for youth
- Connecting youth with corporate mentors, male mentors and mentoring in general
- Partnering with transportation entities
- Combine work experience with classroom based activities (such as Career Ready 101)
- Tutoring
- Awareness of the National Career Readiness Certificate in schools

After reviewing the input received at the forums (separate handout to be provided at Nov. 4 meeting), staff has developed the following recommendations for change in the W.I.A. Youth Program design.

*Recommendations for Changes in Program Design*

**Provide Assistance and Linkages to Entrepreneurship Opportunities**

Bidders will provide an explanation of how their organization will provide information and access, and create opportunities for youth interested in starting or building their own business. Contact will be made with appropriate agencies throughout the region to discuss how to expand entrepreneurship opportunities and provide services in a fashion different from past efforts. In the event collaboration can occur, the successful bidder will fully participate with the organization to the benefit of customers.

**Provide a Clear Plan for Outreach to all School Counselors in Barry, Branch, or Calhoun Counties**

The successful bidder will provide an explanation of how they plan to make contact with all school counselors in the county in which they are bidding. This should be in the form of group presentations as well as one-on-one contact in person. An effort should be made to disseminate information about the W.I.A. Youth Program to teachers within that school district as well as counselors.

**Provide a Clear Plan for Outreach to Community Agencies**

Bidders will provide an explanation of how they plan to make contact and disseminate information about the W.I.A. Youth Program to community agencies.

**Enhance Mentoring Opportunities**

Bidders will partner with mentoring agencies throughout their county. Specifically, bidders should seek out agencies which have male mentors who can serve as a role model to the male youth participants. In addition, connections will be made with businesses for the purpose of creating mentoring/job shadowing opportunities for youth in a work environment.

**Work Readiness Training**

Bidders will provide youth with work readiness instruction in a classroom setting or give youth the opportunity to work independently on the Internet based tutorial, Career Ready 101, that is available in all Michigan Works! Service Centers. This training will prepare the youth for work experience opportunities as well as unsubsidized employment.