

Project/Program Profile

Name of Project/Program: Vocational and Academic Training Service (VATS)

Organization: Central Valley Opportunity Center (CVOC)

Location of Project/Program: East Campus Educational Center, 1900 G Street, Merced, CA 95340

Year Project Completed/ Program Began Operation: 1984

Funding Sources: Merced Unified School District, Merced County Office of Education, Migrant Education, Region III, and CVOC (CVOC uses Community Services Block Grant funding.)

Populations Served: Low-income, migrant farmworkers, and those in danger of dropping out of school, between the grades of 8th and 11th grades

Number of People Served: 120 people, each year

Number of Staff: 17 staff including teachers, aides, bus drivers, admin staff, etc.

Total Cost of Development/ Operation: \$130,000

Partners: Merced County Office of Education, Migrant Education, Region III; State of California Department of Community Services and Development; Merced Adult Education; Merced Unified School District

Services Provided: Accredited high school courses, ESL skill development, vocational development through vocational classroom training, vocational exploration activities, assistance making up high school credits, enrollment in core classes (science, history, health, math)

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SERVICES: Employment Training

(Italicized portions offer further explanation. If the standard is not fulfilled by the project, it is noted in the italicized explanation. Crossed-out portions are not applicable.)

Level 1: Program Feasibility Assessment

These basic criteria determine the feasibility of an employment training program. The focus is on the organizational and financial readiness of the program.

1. NEED

a. Community Need

i. There is high unemployment and/or underemployment.

1. *There is also a need for education in the migrant farmworker community: 50% migrant drop-out rate, 2-3 years behind in grade level, 25% with limited English skills.*
2. *Since many children of farmworkers are unable to attend school while working with parents in farm labor, the program also exposes them to other vocations outside of farm labor.*
3. *The program serves low-income, migrant farmworkers, and those in danger of dropping out of school, between the grades of 8th and 11th grades.*

b. Market Study/Needs Analysis

i. The market study confirms the need for, and viability of the program.

There was no market study conducted for this program.

1. There are no other employment training programs in the area that can work with the target population.
2. There is enough demand for services and sources of funding to support the program.
 - a. *School staff identify eligible migrant students who are failing courses and at risk of dropping out and assist them in applying for the project.*

ii. The market study informs the organization about demographics of the area, competition, and barriers to entry.

c. Local Support

i. The beneficiaries of the program support the program.

ii. Neighbors and local community members support the program.

iii. The program is in alignment with local city, county, state and/or federal development goal(s).

2. ORGANIZATIONAL READINESS

a. The organization is willing and able to do the program.

b. The program is in alignment with the mission of the organization.

c. The Board of Directors embraces a CED strategy and/or embraces the program as a part of the CED strategy.

d. The organization and/or its partners have a track record of participating in similar programs.

e. The organization has the financial and operational capacity to undertake the proposed program.

~~i. The organization can support the additional debt (if any) created by the program.~~

1. *There is no debt. CVOC pays its portion of the funding (approximately \$43,000) through Community Services Block Grant funding.*

ii. The organization has qualified staff that can undertake the program.

iii. The organization has access to reliable, qualified vendors and service providers.

3. FINANCIAL FEASIBILITY

- a. Program cost
 - i. The program is affordable to the organization, and the projected cost is appropriate to the concept.
 - 1. *The total cost is \$130,000 to serve 120 students each year. The average cost \$108 per student.*
 - ii. The operator or staff providing the cost estimates is qualified and experienced with employment training programs.
- b. Funding sources
 - i. There are enough sources of funding for the uses.
 - 1. *The program is a joint effort of Merced Unified School District, CVOC, and Merced County Office of Education, Migrant Education, Region III. Each partner provides roughly 1/3 funding for the project.*
 - ii. The organization has endeavored to secure all available competitive and noncompetitive funding sources for which the program qualifies.
 - iii. The actual disbursement of each source is timely and in sync with the needs of the program.
 - iv. The organization is aware of the compliance implications of each source.
- c. Cash flow
 - i. ~~The program produces enough cash flow to support the proposed debt structure (if any).~~
 - 1. *There is no debt created by the program.*
 - ii. If the program is low-cost or free, it is subsidized enough to sustain itself beyond the first year.
 - 1. *The program is free to students, and the program has sustained itself for 27 years.*

Level 2: Operating Considerations

These criteria are essential for a successful, operating employment training program.

1. MARKET BARRIERS

- a. The organization understands why past programs have not worked and instead addresses prior issues in innovative and alternative ways.

2. DEVELOPMENT TEAM & PARTNERSHIPS

- a. The organization has assembled the best team for the program, including vendors, employees, trainers, outreach coordinators, and management staff.
- b. If the organization is lacking in any area (financial, experience), it has partnered with another entity to operate the program.
 - i. *CVOC partners with two other entities to operate the program.*
- c. The program is supported by public sector, private sector, and community partners.
- d. Through an open dialogue with the community, the organization has sought and incorporated community participation in the program

3. SITE CHARACTERISTICS

- a. The area that is served by the program makes sense.
 - i. *The program serves students throughout Merced County, which has a high migrant worker population.*
- b. The offices and training sites of the program are located near or adjacent to transit.

- i. Students from schools throughout Merced County are bused to the program. The four buses are paid for by Migrant Education and CVOC. This bus service is critical to the project since students come from various parts of Merced County.*

4. PROGRAM DESIGN & OPERATION

- a. The program is run in the appropriate language(s) for the clientele in the area.
- b. The program is culturally appropriate to the clientele in the area.
- c. The program is tailored to the specific geography of the clientele in the area.
- d. The program teaches skills that prepare participants for employment.
 - i. The program teaches basic life skills.
 - 1. *Students learn basic computer skills.*
 - ii. The program teaches occupational skills.
 - 1. *Vocational development is a key element of the project. Farmworker youth have an opportunity to learn basic business computer skills, learn about employment soft skills and explore a variety of occupations they may be interested in pursuing through the internet. CVOC provides the vocational exploration instructor.*
 - iii. The program provides job readiness.
 - 1. *Students learn basic business computer skills*
 - iv. The program teaches skills that are in demand by local employers.
 - 1. *The program does not specifically teach skills in demand by local employers.*
- e. The program places graduates of the program into employment.

The focus of the project is on education, rather than employment. The program helps students catch up on High School credits and to get them academically up to speed, and better position them for future employment. Many of the students have gotten behind in their studies because they are migrating or working in the fields late into the school year. A small number of students do graduate from High School with the credits earned from the project, and these students are encouraged to pursue college or vocational training options.

 - ~~i. Jobs provide a living wage.~~
 - ~~ii. Jobs are for local hires.~~
 - ~~iii. Jobs are for low and moderate income individuals.~~
 - ~~iv. Jobs provide life skills.~~
 - ~~v. Jobs provide health benefits.~~
 - ~~vi. Jobs have potential for upward mobility.~~

Level 3: From Feasible to Exemplary

These criteria elevate an employment training program to an exemplary program.

1. FUNDING & FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

- a. The program uses a funding program or funding source that is new and innovative.
- b. Each funding source was heavily leveraged to gain further resources.
- c. Certain features of the program were adapted to capture funding, but the program was not completely changed in order to capture one particular funding source.
- d. There are multiple stakeholders providing funding, and this mix of funding sources maximizes the feasibility of the program.
 - i. There are three separate stakeholders providing funding for the program.*
- e. The program exceeds minimum standards required by funding sources.
 - i. There is deeper low and moderate income targeting than required by funding sources.

2. FUTURE PROJECTS

- a. The program strengthens the position (financial, political, capacity, experience) of the organization.
- b. Through the program, the reputation of the organization was enhanced. Issues that the staff faced were dealt with in a diplomatic manner, enabling future programs.
- c. The success of the program will enable future funding on other programs.
- d. The community is happy with the program and will participate in more/similar programs in the future.
- e. The community is more knowledgeable about employment training programs.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- a. The program has less environmental impact than traditional programs during operation.
 - i. *The environmental impact of the program is unknown.*
- b. The program provides green job training.
 - i. *The program does not provide green job training.*

4. ECONOMIC IMPACT

- a. The program attracts new businesses to the area.
 - i. *The program does not specifically attract new businesses to the area.*
- b. The program helps retain existing businesses.
 - i. *The program does not specifically retain existing businesses.*
- c. The program improves matching of employees with employers.
 - i. *The program does not match its students to employers.*
- d. The program encourages development, redevelopment, and investment.
 - i. *The program does not specifically encourage development, redevelopment, and investment.*

5. COMPREHENSIVENESS

- a. The organization provides or connects to other programs that provide multiple services e.g. social services.

6. DIVERSITY

- a. The program serves a mixed income clientele.
- b. The program encourages mixed age, gender, ethnic, etc. participation.
- c. The program supports minority businesses.

7. PUBLIC BENEFITS

- a. The program provides job training that is needed in the neighborhood but is currently lacking.
- b. The program provides a skilled labor market for local employers.
 - i. *The program provides a more well-educated labor market for local employers.*
- c. The program results in other positive economic impacts.
 - i. *The program provides education so that participants can improve their income with higher paying jobs in the future.*
- d. The program results in other positive social impacts.
 - i. *The program provides education so that participants can improve their income with higher paying jobs in the future.*

8. EVALUATION

- a. The organization reevaluates the program periodically and adapts to the changing needs of the community.
- b. The organization edits the curriculum and materials as necessary.
- c. The program tests whether skills are really gained, not just taught.

9. LONGITUDINAL DATA

- a. The program tracks financial indicators of its participants (e.g. # of participants who have gone on to open savings accounts)
 - i. *Client eligibility and demographic data required by CSBG funding is tracked. High school credit attainment for program services is tracked. No post program follow up services are provided, but the majority of students return to regular school instruction after the program.*
 - b. The program tracks job retention/employment status after completion of the program.
 - i. *The program does not track employment status.*
10. REPLICABLE/SCALABLE
- a. This program can be replicated in other communities, regions, and/or states
 - i. *Yes, the program can be replicated in other schools, and can also be implemented during the school year, not just in the summer.*

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