

Project/Program Profile

Name of Project/Program: Vernon-Central Workforce Development Network Program

Organization: Coalition for Responsible Community Development (CRCD)

Location of Project/Program: 3101 S. Grand Ave., LA, CA 90007

Year Project Completed/Program Began Operation: 2009

Funding Sources: Primarily private sector and foundation sources, such as Pfaffinger Foundation and United Way of Greater Los Angeles.

Populations Served: Low-income residents between the ages of 17 to 25 within the Vernon-Central neighborhood of South Los Angeles (primarily zip code 90011)

Number of People Served: 60 per year

Number of Staff: 8 – 3 Youth Advocates/Case Managers, 1 Career Placement Coordinator, 3 trainers, and 1 Director

Total Cost of Development/Operation: \$10,000 per youth

Partners: Los Angeles Trade Technical College, Los Angeles Conservation Corps, All Peoples Community Center

Services Provided: Education and training in high-growth employment sectors such as computer technology, environmental conservation, and construction. Youth Advocates/Case Managers provide intensive case management and support services, placement and follow-up services.

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. *According to the CRCD 2007 Strategic plan, CRCD partners chose to “work in this area because it has the most need and lacks services, especially for young people. With more than fifty-five different street gangs in the area, young people have few alternatives and are drawn into that lifestyle at an early age.”*

b. Market Study/Needs Analysis

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

1. There are no other employment training programs in the area that can work with the target population.

a. There are no other employment training programs in the area that provide intensive case management and long-term services to the target population.

2. There is enough demand for services and sources of funding to support the program.

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

1. *CRCD’s service area includes the Vernon-Central neighborhood of South Los Angeles. These communities have gained more than 72,500 residents between 2000 and 2005. The communities are composed of both an aging population and a youthful community with more than half of the residents under the age of 25. More than half of the residents entering the ninth grade do not graduate high school. The vast majority of the population is Latino (77%), 14% are African American, 4% are non-Hispanic white, and 3% are Asian and Pacific Islander.*

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.

- i. *CRCD is committed to youth and workforce development. Over 146 jobs were created for youth and young adults through its workforce development programs in 2010.*

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

- i. *CRCD’s mission is to “sustain, coordinate and improve local planning, development and community services that address the needs of low-income and working-class residents and small businesses in South Los Angeles.”*

- i. CRCDC serves as the lead agency for the Vernon-Central Workforce Development Network, collaborating with partners, overseeing program components, and evaluating the program. The organization provides a case manager, trainer, and the Director for the program.*
 - b. If the organization is lacking in any area (financial, experience), it has partnered with another entity to operate the program.
 - i. The organization partners with the Los Angeles Trade Technical College, which provides the postsecondary education component; the Los Angeles Conservation Corps, which provides a case manager, trainer, and sector-specific training; and All People's Community Center, which provides a case manager and trainer, and sector-specific training.*
 - ii. The program is a true collaboration, where the partners share resources and meet monthly to best serve the youth.*
 - 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.
 - i. The program incorporates input from youth in the community – particularly young people who are program participants.*
- 3. SITE CHARACTERISTICS
 - a. The area that is served by the program makes sense.
 - i. Vernon-Central is deeply impacted by concentrated poverty, a 20.7% unemployment rate, and 55 gangs.*
 - b. The offices and training sites of the program are located near or adjacent to transit.
 - i. The workforce development offices are located 1 block from a bus stop on Grand Avenue and 31st Street.*
- 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.
 - i. The program focuses on young people between the ages of 17 and 25, providing them with employment training as a pathway out of poverty.*
 - c. The program is tailored to the specific geography of the clientele in the area.
 - i. In Vernon-Central, 52% of residents are under the age of 25. As a result, the program targets this very large population.*
 - d. The program teaches skills that prepare participants for employment.
 - ii. The program teaches basic life skills.
 - 1. The participants further their education, learn leadership skills, and participate in community projects.*
 - 2. The intensive case management provided by the program ensures that the youth have stable housing, transportation, child care, and their other needs met in order to work and attend school consistently.*
 - iii. The program teaches occupational skills.
 - 1. The program teaches occupation skills in computer technology, environmental conservation, and construction.*
 - 2. The curriculum is adjusted from year to year. In 2010, the program provided clean energy training. In 2011, CRCDC staff provided construction training in-house.*
 - iii. The program provides job readiness.
 - 1. Participants gain work experience and learn work readiness.*

2. *Youth Advocates/Case Managers provide intensive case management and support services, placement, and follow-up services.*
- iv. The program teaches skills that are in demand by local employers.
- e. The program places graduates of the program into employment.
 - i. Jobs provide a living wage.
 1. *Wage depends on each employer.*
 - ii. Jobs are for local hires.
 - iii. Jobs are for low and moderate income individuals.
 - iv. Jobs provide life skills.
 1. *Skills provided at the job depend on the employer.*
 - v. Jobs provide health benefits.
 1. *Benefits provided depend on the employer.*
 - vi. Jobs have potential for upward mobility.
 1. *Room for mobility depends on the employer.*

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.
- 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.
 - i. *The program also provides a strong foundation for future collaboration with the other partners.*
- 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 is undetermined.*
- b. The program provides green job training.
 - i. *The program provides green job training, particularly in environmental conservation and construction/clean energy.*

4. ECONOMIC IMPACT

- a. The program attracts new businesses to the area.
 - i. *The program does not attract new businesses.*
- b. The program helps retain existing businesses.

- i. The program may help retain existing businesses by providing trained, local workforce.*
 - c. The program improves matching of employees with employers.
 - i. Currently, case managers identify placement opportunities. For most of the participants, they are placed into a combination of work and school. The program emphasizes educational goals such as finishing school, earning credentials, etc.*
 - ii. In the future, CRCD hopes to strengthen alumni services, including employment matching.*
 - d. The program encourages development, redevelopment, and investment.
 - i. The program encourages investment in local youth.*
- 5. COMPREHENSIVENESS
 - a. The organization provides or connects to other programs that provide multiple services e.g. social services.
 - i. CRCD and its partners provide other services that can benefit the participants of the program.*
- 6. DIVERSITY
 - a. The program serves a mixed income clientele.
 - i. The program serves low-income individuals only.*
 - 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.
 - c. The program results in other positive economic impacts.
 - i. In 2010, \$268,791 in wages and stipends were earned by young people while participating in workforce development programs by CRCD. These wages mean local dollars for the local economy.*
 - d. The program results in other positive social impacts.
 - i. By providing youth with job training, the program helps to build a skilled workforce for employers, provides a pathway out of poverty for youth, and diverts more youth away from gang life.*
- 8. EVALUATION
 - a. The organization reevaluates the program periodically and adapts to the changing needs of the community.
 - i. The Director of the program continually evaluates the program.*
 - b. The organization edits the curriculum and materials as necessary.
 - i. The curriculum changes every year to adapt to the latest training needs in high-growth employment sectors.*
 - 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. The program does not track financial indicators of its participants.*
 - b. The program track job retention/employment status after completion of the program.
 - i. Case managers are aware of the educational or employment status of the participants of the program, and provide 12 months of follow up services.*

ii. A goal of CRCDC is to improve alumni services following completion of the program.

10. REPLICABLE/SCALABLE

a. This program can be replicated in other communities, regions, and/or states.

i. This program can be replicated in other communities, regions, and/or states, but will need to be adapted to local community conditions.