

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY INITIATIVE

Earning Income – Building Assets - Changing Lives

Summer 2010

NEWSLETTER

All Programs

Thank you!

We had a very smooth process this year of getting contracts out the door and final invoices paid. Thank you for moving quickly in getting us budget and scope of work information for contracts, and for getting us final invoices to close out the 09-10 fiscal year.

We will have contracts for you shortly once they are processed internally at PDC. Please contact your contract manager if you have questions.

Update on EOI Credit Repair Program Provided by Metropolitan Family Services (MFS)

Recent accomplishments include:

- One participant was able to clear almost \$12,000 of credit card debt. She was recently approved for a business line of credit which had been denied prior to involvement in EOI credit repair.
- The program has helped many participants get student loans into the federal Income Based Repayment plan. This has increased their cash flow and allowed them to focus on paying down other debts.
- Disputing errors on their credit report allowed one participant to remove \$5,000 of credit card debt that was not his.

Interesting Fact

The largest source of past debt for EOI Credit repair participants is medical bills. To prevent future problems, MFS tries to help people access the OR Health Plan and encourages them to discuss potential financial assistance with hospitals and other medical providers as early as possible.

Who Participates

The EOI Credit Repair project has had about equal referrals from Workforce and Microenterprise Projects.

How to Refer

Your agency should have the referral form on file, if not contact your EOI contract manager. Email the completed form to Amy Corbett at MFS amyc@metfamily.org Remember: SE HABLA ESPANOL

Summer Quarterly Chat Next Week 7/15, 9AM at Urban Grind

Our next Informal Chat will be next week:

Date: Thursday July 15th

Time: 9:00am

Location: Urban Grind
2214 NE Oregon, Portland 97232

Lynn will facilitate the discussion and we hope that you join her to discuss current topics of importance to you.

Customer Satisfaction Survey of Your Graduates

Your contract requires that every project conduct a participant satisfaction survey with each graduating class for continuous quality improvement. Please forward the results of your annual survey to your contract manager as part of the 1st Quarter Narrative Report.

Workforce

Prosperity Planner Requirement

REMINDER: At some point in their three years, (the earlier the better) all EOI workforce participants **MUST** be assisted with completion of the Prosperity Planner, a WSI tool for career planning, budgeting and identification of potential public benefit available for the participant.

We recommend using the Prosperity Planner before and after employment placement to help maintain participant clarity and focus on their personal financial situation. You will find the Prosperity Planner at <https://www2.prosperityplanner.org/> . If you have technical or use questions about this tool, contact Pam Hester at Worksystems, 503-478-7322 or phester@worksystems.org.

Microenterprise

Saving Green by Going Green Update

In the beginning of June, the assessment portion of the Saving Green by Going Green sustainable microenterprise program wrapped up with recommendation presentations to the ten participating businesses. Businesses ranged from a graphic designer and a tow truck company to childcare facilities.

EOI VISTA Caitlin Horsley and a class of PSU Capstone students performed the assessments which included energy and water usage measurements. After researching, each business was presented with individualized recommendations of low to no cost changes, and also some opportunities to apply for grant funds given to EOI by the Northwest Area Foundation. Representatives from the city's BEST (Businesses for an Environmentally Sustainable Tomorrow) program attended presentations along with EOI staff and contractors.

Next, the grant application will be distributed to participating contractors giving participants the opportunity to apply for grant funds. After the grants have been dispersed, we will begin to look at options for the next round of Saving Green by Going Green.

AmeriCorps VISTA Transition

Sadly, our wonderful AmeriCorps VISTA, Caitlin Horsley will be leaving us in August. Caitlin has done a lot of great work for EOI, most notably the Saving Green by Going Green Pilot, conducting a satisfaction survey of EOI graduates, and providing great assistance with the Employer Appreciation Luncheon and brochure.

Nevertheless, EOI has qualified for another VISTA through the Oregon Microenterprise Network (OMEN) for the coming year. After several interviews EOI has selected Caitlin's successor...drum roll please...Carly Vendegna!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Carly is from Virginia by way of Chicago and will be starting with EOI August 20th. Her experience includes microenterprise and community development work in India and workforce development assistance to formerly incarcerated individuals in the U.S. Please introduce yourself and make her feel welcome and at home in Portland!

I-Trac Update

Thank you for entering your data on time (today is the due date!). Andrew will once again request a report from I-Trac to be sent to you. We still do not have the online reports ready as other work on the database and data requests have taken priority. We will conduct training as soon as reports are up and running online correctly.

There are a couple of things you should know about changes to the databases that will happen soon. For all clients, you will see an automated exit show up in the completion tab for clients that have finished 3 years of service. You will not have to do data entry to complete this on your own.

Workforce:

1. Soon you will be able to enter two jobs and report against them in the quarterly check in section. This will be helpful if you have a client with two part-time jobs and it will allow your client to hit the 25% increase in income.

Participant Story

A story from Outside In:

Talia began working with us in the spring of 2008. She grew up in the foster care system and faced many barriers to employment, including: drugs, a spotty job history, very poor anger control, and a lack of confidence. After completing Job Readiness Training, she focused on acquiring her GED and retaining a stable, survival job. Her long-term goals included owning her own business and working as a youth counselor.

Within months *Talia* successfully completed her GED and obtained employment at Market Strategies (MS). While at MS she was coached on how to keep her job, and how to increase her skills and experience within her existing job. *Talia* asked for extra tasks when she finished her own, offered to learn any new software applications, and volunteered to train her co-workers. She looked for ways to build her team and make them more effective.

Problems at work became another opportunity to learn. For example, a coworker *Talia* was training was being sexually harassed by another co-worker. After coaching from ERC staff, she went back and calmly presented the situation to her boss who thanked her for her candor and two weeks later promoted her to be a leader for her team.

Recently *Talia* applied to become a peer counselor, working with street youth, as part of a multi-agency harm-reduction effort to reduce drug dependency. She got the job, and plans to continue working at MS, as she continues to build her skills and resume.

Important Dates

Save the Dates: Workforce Meeting: Next meeting is Thursday, September 16, 2010 1:30 PM-3:30 PM. Location TBD

Save the Dates: Microenterprise Meeting: Next meeting is Thursday, September 23, 2010 1:30 PM-3:30 PM. Location: TBD

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Get in touch: knoxl@pdc.us
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Got topics for the newsletter? Send them to Andrew Reed: reeda@pdc.us