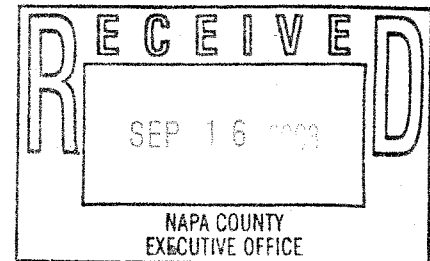




Napa Valley Workforce Investment Board

August 27, 2003

The Honorable Scott Snowden
Presiding Judge
Napa County Superior Court
825 Brown Street
Napa, CA 94559



Dear Judge Snowden,

This letter transmits the Napa Valley Workforce Investment Board's (NVWIB) response to the Grand Jury findings, stated in the July 2003 report. The NVWIB is an advisory board on workforce development issues in the County. As such, NVWIB provides oversight of Job Connection activities, including functions performed by the Training and Employment Center (TEC), a division of Health and Human Services. The Grand Jury reviewed TEC this past year and reported 4 findings. The Grand Jury findings and the NVWIB responses are attached to this letter.

The NVWIB works closely with Health and Human Services/TEC management and is committed to providing workforce services in the most effective and efficient way. The NVWIB appreciates the attention and interest the Grand Jury gave TEC and Job Connection and looks forward to implementing the enhancements referenced in the responses.

Please feel free to contact me at (707)255-2729, or Craig Smithson, NVWIB Executive Director, at (707)429-8413 if you have any questions or need for clarification.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Arvin Chaudhary".

Arvin Chaudhary, Vice Chairman
Napa Valley Workforce Investment Board

TRAINING AND EDUCATION CENTER REPORT

FINDING #1: State and federal WIA performance evaluations do not track the use of basic Core services which are utilized by more individuals than other services. The costs for providing these services to the community are absorbed in the staff costs of each on-site partner agency. WIB performance measures should include a broad picture of One-Stop Center activities. The full scope of staff time, available resources, program success and service to the community cannot be adequately evaluated without including timely data gathered by the Connect Card. This important segment of service should be a part of the equation reviewed when making decisions.

Response: NVWIB agrees with the finding. NVWIB concurs with HHS's response: The agency reports to the state the amount of WIA formula funding to be used for CORE services. The report, the annual modifications to the Five-Year Strategic Plan, does not contain information about the true costs of operating the Employment Network Center, which is where CORE services are carried out. Additionally, State performance measures are based on only those clients who are enrolled into WIA, and do not consider all clients served through CORE. The WIB, however, reviews One Stop performance based upon the planned activities submitted by the agency to the State via the modifications to the plan. Information is reported to the WIB at least quarterly regarding actual performance compared to planned performance in terms of number of clients served in total. Finally, what has not been previously reported is the total cost of operating the Employment Network Center, including HHS/TEC's cost of CORE or other agencies' participation in those costs.

RECOMMENDATION #1: Reevaluate the procedure for swiping Connect Cards to better measure the number of users versus the number of times someone comes through the door. Include and monitor the number of individuals using Core services in the new performance standards currently being developed by WIB.

Response: The NVWIB concurs with the response submitted by HHS: The recommendation is reasonable, however, does not capture the full extent of the issue. There are two means of monitoring performance of the One Stop, or the WIA programs agency. One is for the WIB to monitor overall performance of the One Stop through review of reports describing numbers of participants served, including CORE; the costs of carrying out those services in total; and; the costs incurred by HHS/TEC and those picked up by other One Stop Partners. Secondly, the State has set performance measures that are negotiated annually with the Federal Government, then subsequently negotiated and passed on to the local area. These performance measures as currently designed do not include the measurement of CORE outcomes. To do this requires legislative change. WIA is in the process of being reauthorized and this measure is not contained in any proposed changes to the law.

FINDING #2: The Job Connection has been commended for meeting performance standards set by state and federal governments. Although completing federal and state performance requirements are necessary for WIA compliance, they are basically useless in evaluating and

planning One-Stop Center activities. Surprisingly, previous WIB members and Job Connection were so focused on mandated evaluations that there appeared to be little concern about obtaining easily understood information that could be useful in making decisions and setting policy.

Response: NVWIB agrees, in part, with this finding. Where it is true that the emphasis of HHS/TEC has been in meeting State performance goals, the department has not taken lightly the need to develop reporting for the WIB that would give them a comprehensive picture of the activities and performance of the One Stop.

RECOMMENDATION #2: The Grand Jury is pleased that the current WIB is developing more readily understandable reports. These reports should not become a standard unless all members of the WIB can make sense of the data provided.

Response: The Job Connection staff is currently preparing quarterly plan vs. actual reports on all programs. These reports are submitted to the WIB and the Youth Council on a timely basis, along with discussion regarding program activity. Additionally, the Job Connection's continuous quality improvement program is generating helpful information on the quality of customer services. The Job Connection Partners Committee and the WIB on a regular basis review that information.

FINDING #3: Of those WIB members interviewed, a majority was uncertain of their roles, how Job Connection worked, or how WIB evaluated the performance of TEC in running the One-Stop Center. The majority of those interviewed felt the federal and state performance standards and formulas were incomprehensible.

Response: NVWIB has reviewed the finding and understands the implications. A newly developed new member Orientation was implemented on August 26, 2003.

RECOMMENDATION #3: WIB needs to provide new members with better orientation so they can play a more effective role in determining and evaluating policy. The Grand Jury suggests an initial "new member" meeting, scheduled at a time other than regular WIB meeting, to acquaint new members with WIA and their roles as members. They should also be given a brief tour of Job Connection. In addition, a long-term member should act as a mentor, advising the new member during his or her first year.

Response: The Board of Supervisors recently appointed four (4) new members to the WIB. Those members will receive a complete orientation on August 26, 2003, and given an opportunity to tour the Job Connection's Employment Network Center. Orientation manuals are also given to new members as a handy reference guide to programs and services.

FINDING #4: The Grand Jury was pleasantly surprised to find such valuable resources for the community available at the Job Connection. Attempts should be made to better market these resources to make Napa County residents aware of the benefits available. The focus of this marketing should be: awareness of the self-service Core services, name recognition for Job Connection, use of on-the-job training for employers, and benefits available to companies

through the One-stop Center. Second, there is a great need to extend services to low-income and low-skilled workers throughout the Valley, including the Latino population. A better outreach programs need to be developed to inform these individuals who can truly benefit from WIA programs.

Response: NVWIB agrees with these findings and concurs with HHS's response: Job Connection is a valuable service to the community to both job seekers and employers. Outreach and marketing have been more targeted to audiences suitable for programs funded under special projects, such as the Nurses Workforce Initiative and the Knowledge Administrator Training program. These projects provided funding for building capacity in these occupational areas and also had performance expectations specific to numbers of people served. WIA formula funds have been decreasing over the past several years, thus limiting HHS/TEC's ability to enroll large numbers of people. Consequently, recruitment and outreach did not seem prudent. Additionally, there have not been funds to support enhanced employer/business services, therefore, marketing toward this group did not seem warranted. With this being said, the value added to the community of the Job Connection services would be greatly enhanced by increasing its visibility to all parts of the Valley and to business.

Recommendation #4: Work with local service organizations and small business groups to inform more companies about available services. Develop a relationship with the county's newspapers and other media to obtain coverage about services and special training programs. Publicity should be generated at the beginning of the fiscal year, when sufficient funds are available to serve those responding to that publicity. Religious newsletters and local market bulletin boards may be used to reach the public. Job Connection should access free public service announcements when available.

Response: The WIB recently established a new Business Services Committee that will be responsible for providing guidance to the Job Connection's outreach and recruitment efforts. Part of the marketing strategy will include the implementation of a "Speakers' Bureau", composed of private sector WIB members. The "Speakers' Bureau" will provide marketing presentations to business and community groups throughout Napa Valley.

Additionally, the WIB and the Job Connection have agreed to expand outreach and recruitment efforts to reach more Napa Valley residents and businesses in need of workforce services. The goal of reaching more of our residents is contained in the revised scope of work in the Memorandum of Understanding between the WIB and HHS/TEC for 2003-04.

The NVWIB works closely with Health and Human Services/TEC management and is committed to providing workforce services in the most effective and efficient way. The NVWIB appreciates the attention and interest the Grand Jury gave TEC and Job Connection and looks forward to implementing the enhancements referenced in the responses.