



VALLEY LEGACY

2009-2012



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VALLEY LEGACY

An Integrated Workforce Development Strategy for
Regional Industry Clusters in the
San Joaquin Valley

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Produced by:
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Program Leadership *and* Partners

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Demonstration Sites

Fresno County
– Reedley College, Reedley
– Sanger High School, Sanger

Kern County
– Bakersfield College, Bakersfield
– Delano Union School District, Delano

Kings County
– Corcoran High School, Corcoran

Merced County
– Pacheco High School, Los Baños

Tulare County
– Pixley Adult School, Pixley

San Joaquin County
– Stockton Adult School, Stockton

Stanislaus County
– Ceres Adult School, Ceres
– Patterson High School, Patterson
– Waterford High School, Waterford

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Workforce Investment Boards

Fresno Regional Workforce
Investment Board

Kern County Employers’
Training Resource

Kings County
Job Training Office

Madera County
Workforce Assistance Center

Merced County
Workforce Investment Board

San Joaquin County
Workforce Investment Board

Stanislaus County Alliance WorkNet

Tulare County
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Economic Development Corporation

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California State University, Fresno

Central Valley Educational
Leadership Institute,
California State University, Fresno

International Center for
Water Technology,
California State University, Fresno

Great Valley Center

San Joaquin Valley
Clean Energy Organization

West Hills Community
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Executive Summary *and* Introduction

Executive Summary

The California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley (Partnership) was awarded \$2 million dollars in funding through Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Discretionary Funds to conceptualize, plan, and implement a demonstration project that encompassed five deliverables aimed at preparing the San Joaquin Valley's (Valley) future workforce for high-wage, high-demand jobs in five targeted industry sectors::

- Agribusiness, including food processing and biotechnology
- Water technology
- Renewable energy
- Manufacturing
- Logistics/Distribution

This is Valley Legacy – to better align the region's K-12 system, higher education, and workforce investment board systems to create a seamless, multigovernment, multisector network focused on the development of a better prepared workforce for high-growth, targeted industries clusters by developing the following programs:

- 1 Sector-based Articulation
- 2 Basic Education Proficiency:
 - 2.1 English Language Institutes
 - 2.2 Digital Literacy Training
- 3 Entrepreneurship Centers and Development
- 4 Green Workforce

With the support and guidance of eight Central Valley Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs), 11 program sites were established; 1,200 participants were served including 380 WIA-enrolled clients. The temporal constraints on a two-year project made it difficult to adequately assess the project's impact on local employment rates; however, there were lessons and experiences to be gleaned from the implementation of these projects.

Implementation Experiences *and* Lessons

Valley Legacy involved a significant collaborative effort that involved educational, nonprofit, and for profit organizations which were essential for developing each respective program. Each program involved a large number of collaborators and contributors, which resulted in multifaceted and rich programs established in geographically diverse locations across the Valley. Several lessons were evident through the implementation of the project. First, establishing and maintaining partnerships was critical to the success and sustainability of these projects. Second, successful

startup, development, and design were largely based on the identification of necessary project champions and the utilization of existing, although perhaps underutilized, resources. Finally, nearly all of the project directors indicated that understanding local WIB eligibility and reporting requirements was critical to implementation.

Project Impacts *and* Achievements

Valley Legacy, although short in tenure, did leave behind a legacy in the Valley. More than 1,200 Valley residents participated in Valley Legacy-funded learning opportunities, yet organizations were transformed as a result of the projects conducted. Capacity building that resulted from the grant activities, particularly in the area of the English Language Institutes and sector-based articulation programs, have changed how participating organizations previously saw the role and potential of their English Language Learners and the technical education programs, respectively, which embodied the ideal of human capital-driven community development that were the recommendations of previous WIA evaluators (Campbell, Lemp, & Treiber, 2006). This project went well beyond the simple matching of clients with careers building capacity within systems.

All of the projects touched individual participants on a personal level, improving the lives of those that took part in each of the projects. Valley Legacy exceeded the projected number of WIA-eligible participants, as well as serving a significant number of ineligible participants. Participants walked away with skills that exceeded basic job hunting and resume building skills typically taught in workforce development programs. While critical, participants had the opportunity to build skills that would serve them for the long term, such as the Digital Literacy project's goal to give participants access to the Internet by both building practical skills (e.g., online banking, job searching), providing avenues to access the required equipment, and training local community members to provide troubleshooting and technical support services.

Sustainability

All of the programs that were established by Valley Legacy developed sufficient infrastructure, grew capacity, or secured additional funds and/or support to continue to serve participants at the current rate. Each of the projects exceeded the WIA-eligible participant targets, indicating there is a great need for the services that were augmented or developed as a result of these projects. Furthermore, many of these project sites were developed in areas where resources are scarce and need is high. Now that these programs are established, the allocation of additional resources would augment existing programs and expand offerings to more participants.



Introduction

The California Workforce Investment Board (CWIB) was established by Executive Order in response to the mandate of the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 (Public Law 105-220). CWIB assists the governor in setting and guiding policy in the area of workforce development. CWIB has adopted Sector Strategies as the statewide framework for workforce development, and is working closely with the Economic Strategy Panel, other state agencies and departments and its 49 local WIBs to support the emergence of effective statewide and regionally driven sector initiatives (State of California, 2007). To support the workforce system, CWIB works to:

- Promote and share innovative strategies.
- Promote linkages among education, workforce preparation, and economic development organizations at the state level.
- Facilitate collaboration among local areas and among the various partners in the system and facilitate coordination of the workforce development system at the state level.
- Promote coordination between the State Youth Council

- and the local youth councils and LWIA Administrators.
- Assist the Employment Development Department (EDD) in identifying potential needs for improved information about economic trends and labor markets.
- To the extent possible, consult with EDD to develop specifications for data and other information requests.

Valley Legacy sought to address the WIB's priority for supporting the workforce system by developing a demonstration project that aligned economic development efforts in support of target industry clusters in the San Joaquin Valley region (Valley). The Valley was targeted based on the current and historically documented high unemployment rates and the potential for sizeable growth in several specific industry clusters.

Overview of Valley Legacy

The California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley (Partnership) was awarded funding through WIA Discretionary Funds to conceptualize, plan, and implement a demonstration project that encompassed five deliverables aimed at preparing the Valley's future workforce for high-wage, high-demand jobs in the targeted industry sectors. This was done with the strong partnership of the eight Central

Valley Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs). The purpose of Valley Legacy was to better align the region's K-12 system, higher education, and workforce investment board systems to create a seamless, multigovernment, multisector network focused on the development of a better prepared workforce for high-growth, targeted-industry clusters. The project sought to develop demonstration projects at geographically diverse locations across the region (San Joaquin County to Kern County), where the following industry clusters were targeted:

- Agribusiness, including food processing and biotechnology
- Water technology
- Renewable energy
- Manufacturing
- Logistics/Distribution

The Valley is one of the world's richest agricultural areas and most impoverished and has been referred to as the "Appalachia of the West" (Brookings Institute, 2006), yet tends to receive fewer public investments compared to other California regions. Fresno and the surrounding counties of the southern San Joaquin Valley are characterized by chronic unemployment, high incidence of poverty, and low levels of educational attainment. In December 2009, unemployment rates among the eight counties in the region ranged from 15 to 19 percent, significantly higher than the national unemployment rate of 12.1 percent (State of California, Employment Development Department, 2010).

Before the economic crisis in 2008, Fresno's per capita income was \$19,019, just two-thirds of the statewide median income. Given Fresno's rapidly increasing unemployment rate, this gap was expected to grow in 2010. About one-in-five Valley residents lives in poverty; in some counties, poverty levels are as high as 24%. The per capita income is between \$18,800 and \$20,000 a year. Just 71 percent of

area residents have received a high school diploma, and just 18 percent have attained a bachelor's degree or higher. Even before the current economic recession, 16 percent of families and 20 percent of individuals were below the poverty limit (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

By nearly every indicator, the economic health of Valley residents lags behind that of California and the nation. More than a third of Valley residents do not speak English as their first language with a majority deriving their income from the agricultural industry. However, agricultural job loss, low wages, lack of industry, and the increased demand for a technologically literate workforce have created chronic levels of unemployment and poverty.

One of the employment issues in the Valley is the lack of workforce in the targeted industry clusters identified by the local WIBs. These industry clusters were the focus of Valley Legacy as a result of being identified as having potential for high-growth in the region based on a survey administered to stratified random sample of business in the region (Fresno Regional Workforce Investment Board, 2010).

The following **deliverables** were developed as part of this project:

- 1 Sector-based Articulation
- 2 Basic Education Proficiency:
 - 2.1 English Language Institutes
 - 2.2 Digital Literacy Training
- 3 Entrepreneurship Centers and Development
- 4 Green Workforce

Eleven project sites were established on high school campuses and adult and community schools, serving more than 1,200 participants. Project participation target and actual counts are included in Table 1.

Table 1. Project Participation Targets and Actuals

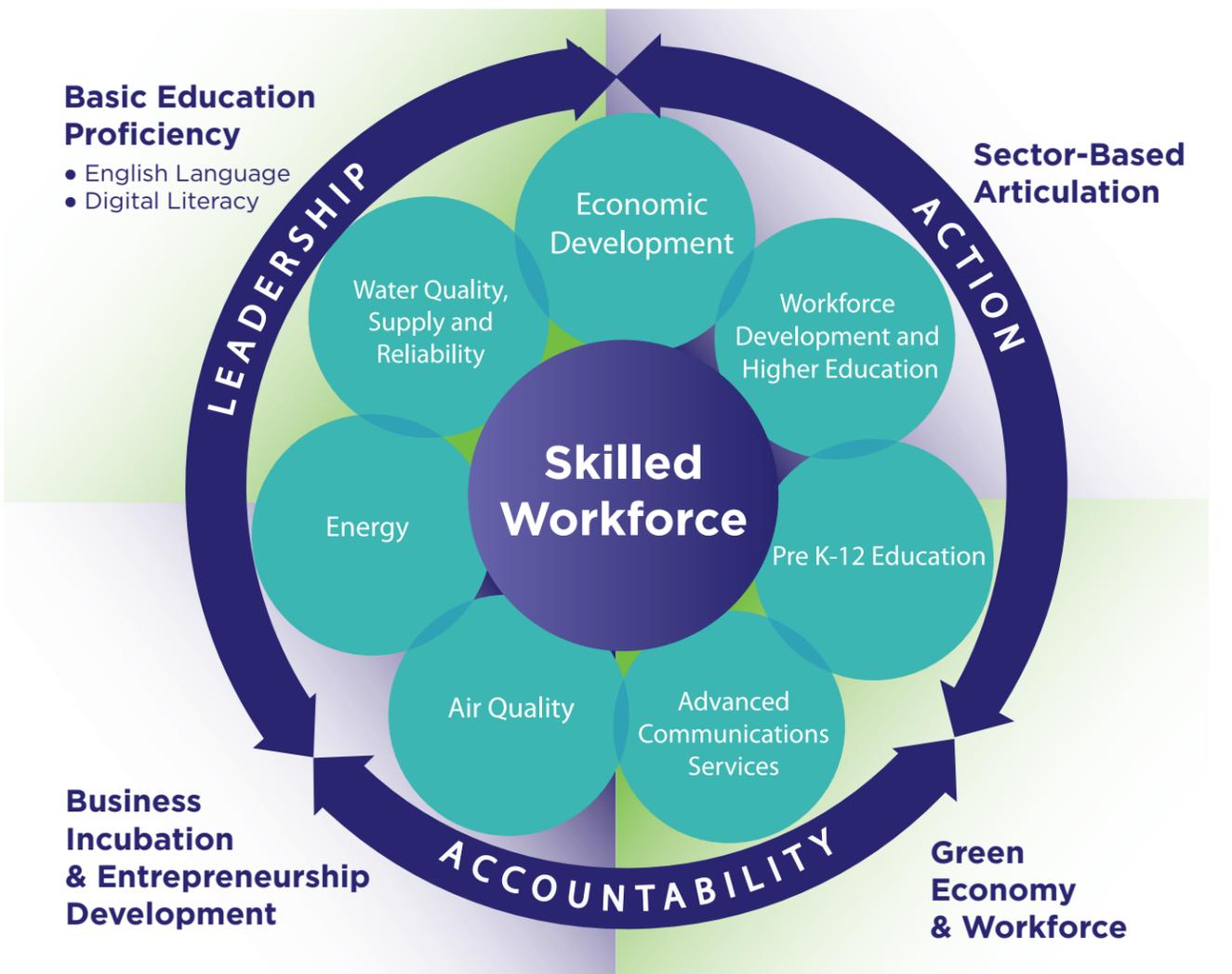
	Deliverables				
	1	2.1	2.2	3	4
Target WIA Participants	60	100	150	30	N/A
Number of Actual WIA Participants	68	125	150	41	N/A
Percent of Target Obtained	113%	125%	100%	137%	N/A
Number of Other Participants	312	175+	43	300+	N/A
Total Participants	380	300+	193	341+	N/A

Purpose and Method

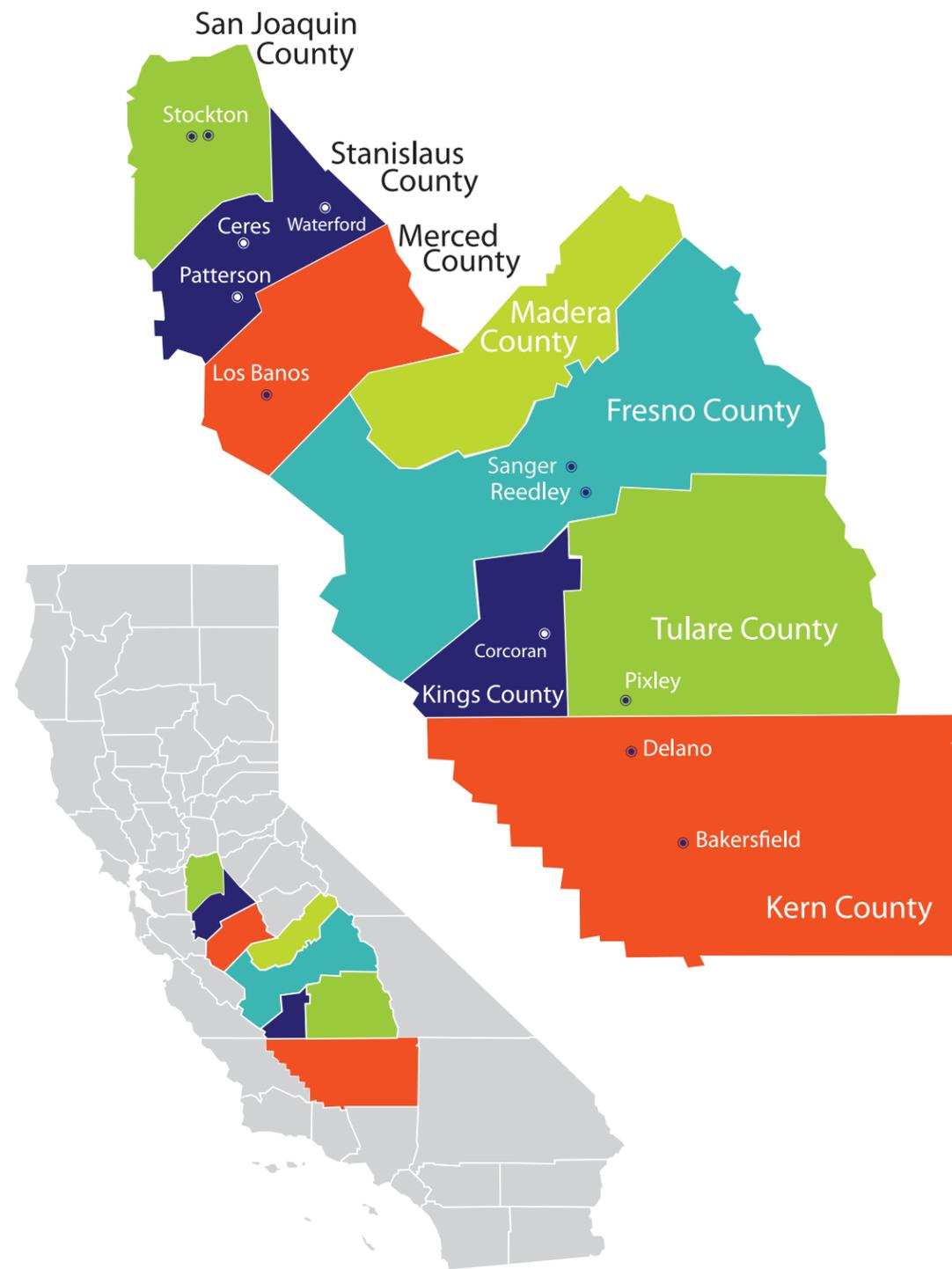
Implementing any new project involves extensive planning for developing an operational system. The planning and startup process can be particularly intricate when program objectives are complex and multiple partners are involved. Project partners used the grant funds to expand or improve upon their existing projects while others started entirely new initiatives. In both cases, all of the projects devoted significant time and effort to the development of partnerships, identification of needs, program design, and instituting management systems to comply with approval and reporting requirements.

To better understand the critical issues and key lessons surrounding the implementation of the workforce-related projects supported by this grant, project administrators, staff, and implementers were interviewed and asked to share their thoughts about key lessons learned in the course of implementing their grant projects. In addition, each project director submitted quarterly reports for review and the evaluation team attended various leadership and planning meetings.

Model of WIA Grant Initiatives



Map of Demonstration Sites
11 throughout the San Joaquin Valley



Deliverable 1
Sector-Based Articulation



Deliverable 1
Sector-Based Articulation

The Central Valley Educational Leadership Institute (CVELI), housed in the Kremen School of Education and Human Development at California State University, Fresno, coordinated the Sector-Based Articulation project. The purpose of this deliverable was to demonstrate best practices in sector-based articulation for high school career and technical education (CTE) programs in high priority career education areas and address the following goals:

- Develop and implement three demonstration projects of fully articulated academic training programs, from high school through colleges and universities, covering each of the five target industry clusters in at least one of the three demonstration projects. Implementation will include direct service delivery to clients in each of these three demonstration projects.
- Assure that the demonstration projects are geographically distributed, one each in the

northern, central and southern subregion of the San Joaquin Valley.

The intent of this project was to enhance the CTE program for WIA-eligible students to provide them with workforce-ready job skills augmenting their opportunities for employment in higher-wage jobs and alleviating workforce shortages in the high priority areas, and as an early intervention that would ultimately reduce the demand on local WIBs. Additionally, the project sought to enhance the respective programs at each site, developing demonstration projects that would serve as models for new or fledgling programs.

The project was designed to be a fully coordinated academic and training program – from high schools through colleges and universities – to provide a curricular program with the rigor and relevance needed to yield qualified employees with immediate value for targeted industry sectors. At all of the project sites, new capstone courses were developed; at some sites existing courses were enhanced to create a pathway to the newly developed capstone courses. Programs that addressed all but one (water technology) of the industry clusters were established and the sites were geographically distributed, as indicated in Table 2. (below)

One site was initially identified to augment an existing water technology program; however, competing initiatives and priorities resulted in the site withdrawing from the project due to insufficient resources.

Table 2. Sector-Based Articulation Sites

Project Site	County	Industry Cluster(s)	Courses Developed
Corcoran High School	Kings	Alternative Energy Manufacturing	Renewable Energy Ag Manufacturing
Patterson High School	Stanislaus	Logistics/Distribution	Marketing Essentials Logistics & Supply Chain Management
Sanger High School	Fresno	Biotechnology Manufacturing	Biotechnology Ag Engineering and Manufacturing
Waterford High School	Stanislaus	Manufacturing	Ag Engineering and Manufacturing



Major results and outcomes of the project include:

1. Six new courses that expose high school students to emerging career areas were added at four high school campuses. Other courses in the sequences were enhanced to incorporate new material relevant to the new courses. With an average of 30 students per course, approximately 380 students per year now have the opportunity to gain new material in those fields.
2. 392 Valley high school students received instruction related to priority industry sectors (manufacturing, biotechnology, logistics and distribution) over the course of the project.
3. 68 high school WIA-eligible youth received instruction related to priority industry sectors.
4. One community college (Modesto Junior College) is planning to start a course or courses related to Transportation, Supply Chain Management and Logistics.

5. Local industry representatives and business/community partners are serving on advisory committees at each high school.
6. All teachers involved in this project now have lists of community and business members willing to speak in their class, allow field trips, and provide job shadow and mentor opportunities for students.
7. 29 field trips taken in 18 months took 392 students out of the classroom and into the world of work and exposed them to the skills necessary for success.
8. 33 guest speakers from industry went into the program classrooms over the last 18 months to talk to students about work ethic, interviewing skills, planning for the future, as well as targeted information related to the high priority industries.

The Sector-Based Articulation projects of Valley Legacy have positively impacted Valley schools, teachers, students, and communities. The efforts established

and improved relationships between representatives in the high priority industries and the schools, teachers and students at all sites and vice versa. With help and support of local WIBS and industry representatives, new courses and programs were developed in the high schools that were not previously in existence. The courses exposed students to the industries, skill, and knowledge needed to enter the workforce in each industry. While the implementation time was inadequate to fully establish articulation agreements with higher education institutions and the participating students have not yet entered college, these courses informed students of the educational paths leading towards employment in the related industries and exposed them to potential job opportunities.

Based on case study research conducted by Fresno State researchers several concluding themes emerged from the project:

- Schools that had similar offerings prior to the demonstration project more efficiently established the specialized industry courses (e.g., agricultural manufacturing was able to extend from existing welding courses). Other industry areas (e.g., renewable energy) used teachers already employed by the school who were not necessarily specialists to teach courses. Teachers often were developing course materials and expertise simultaneously with students.
- The industry cluster courses offered were frequently overshadowed by the schools' foci on state and federal accountability measures.
- Temporal constraints restricted the development of a program that was fully coordinated and articulated with postsecondary institutions. The two-year project was generally sufficient to develop and implement a high school course, yet not sufficient to formally begin the articulation process with local community colleges.
- The support of the project coordinator provided expertise and resources that directly contributed to the quality of the technical programs offered by the demonstration sites. That support resulted in more in-the-field experiences for students and enhanced curriculum development. While local school resources may be sufficient to establish a

sector-based course or pathway, these programs are greatly enhanced by the expertise of a technical program expert.

- This project and the associated funding required participants to meet specific criteria to be considered "eligible" participants. The geographically diverse nature of the participating sites required coordination with several Workforce Investment Board (WIB) offices, which are regionally designated. The criteria and processes at these regional offices were variable, making it difficult to establish prescreening processes project wide. In addition, getting participants to provide sensitive financial and personal records was also a challenge. Local WIB offices provided extensive support to participating school sites. Early coordination (during the grant proposal phase) with the local WIB, or other agency, office is essential when participant vetting is required.
- Garnering industry support and meeting their perceived needs resulted in participating industry leveraging significant funds and resources, which greatly enhanced the anticipated sustainability of programs at demonstration sites.



Deliverable 2 Basic Education Proficiency

2.1 English Language Learners 2.2 Digital Literacy



Deliverable 2.1
Basic Education Proficiency -
English Language Learners

The purpose of this program was to demonstrate best practices in English language development for English Learners through English Learner Institutes (ELI) in two high schools and one adult school in multiple Central Valley counties. The intent of each ELI was to enhance the academic program for English Learners to better prepare them for the workforce and/or higher education, with each site potentially serving as a “demonstration project” for other schools.

The goal of this deliverable and resulting English Learner Institutes has been to support both educators and their English Language Learner (ELL) students in select high schools and adult school settings. Demonstration sites were established at Ceres Adult School, Pacheco High School, and Waterford High School.

Due to the range of interventions and supports provided at the three sites, there were many impacts resulting from this project. Impacts ranged from student academic success and influences on their families and communities to impacts on the schools and educators as well as impacts on the WIB representatives and their work.

Impacts on Students, Families and Communities

ELL students have profited from this work in multiple areas including: new and different classroom experiences leading to successful learning; creation of an inclusive learning culture on their campuses; ownership of their own learning practices in school; exposure to work and college/university opportunities; and participating in leadership opportunities. ELL students profited from the partnership between the schools and the local WIB offices through the experiences and resources related to career exploration and employment preparation, and now have a better understanding of future employment opportunities and the relevance of their current education.

While there were, minimally, 30 WIB-enrolled ELL students on each campus, all ELL students (over 300) on the three campuses were impacted by the project. Because services were not only offered to the WIB-enrolled cohort of

students, many English-speaking students on each campus also benefited from the project and have more opportunities because their teachers and administrators better understand their instructional work.

As a result of this work, ELL parents are more knowledgeable about how they can provide academic support to their children as well as how to guide them to prepare for college/university experiences or work training. The involvement of parents and families in some of the activities also led to an impact on the greater community. Local employers, especially in the Ceres community, have a better-prepared pool of bilingual job applicants and employees.

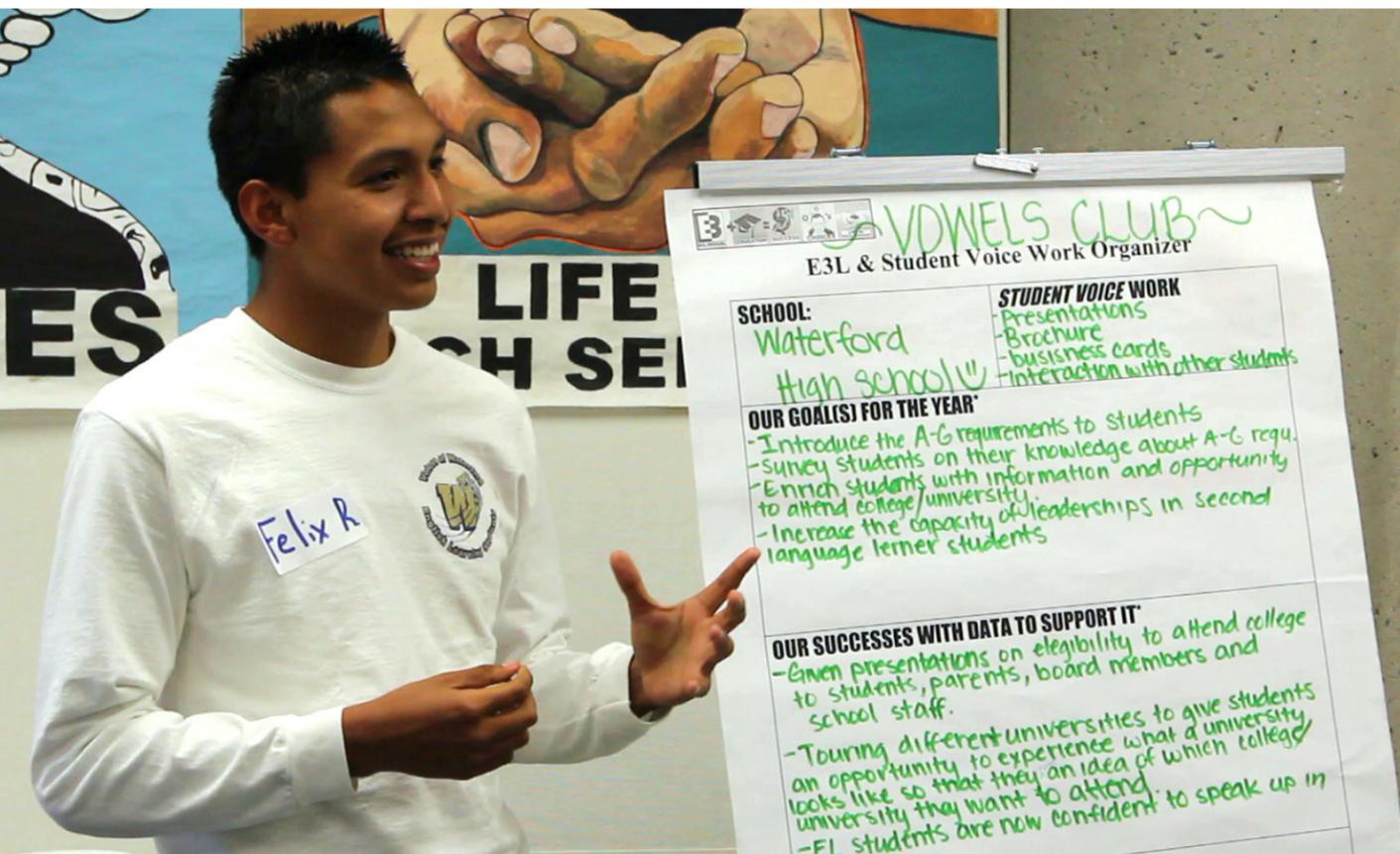
Impacts on Educators and Schools

Prior to joint work, each participating school subscribed to ELL strategies that were dominated by “hoping” for favorable outcomes. While educators generally knew how many ELL students were enrolled on their campuses, they only knew how to maintain current practices; they were unsure of the

types of systems or instructional work that needed to be implemented, and the work was not focused, strategic, and intentional. Today, leaders at these schools have begun to build their knowledge about how to improve their systems and instructional practices to better support ELL students. It is anticipated that many of the systems established or improved according to research-based best practices implemented through this project, will continue in the future to impact many more students.

Impacts on Local WIB Offices and Professionals

While school leaders, teachers, and ELL students have begun to develop their knowledge about effective practices, local WIB personnel also have developed a better understanding about how the schools in their communities address the academic needs of their ELL students and how the WIB can better support these endeavors through college/university and work awareness. It is anticipated that what the participating WIB staff learned through the project will be applied to future efforts involving English Learners and the schools.



Deliverable 2.2
Basic Education Proficiency -
Digital Literacy

Great Valley Center (GVC) designated its Digital Literacy Training Program as “Valley Connect” to reflect its Valley Legacy deliverable, which was to increase the knowledge and use of computers and the Internet through the utilization of technology. The Internet and high-speed technology are important and effective tools for economic development. Each can be used to increase life-long learning and improve economic status and the general quality of life. In most companies, the use of the Internet for e-commerce has increased significantly during the past decade; the use of email, Microsoft Office programs such as Excel and Word, and the Internet are necessary skills at almost every level.

Valley Legacy targeted communities that have few opportunities to learn these technical skills; this limitation can serve as a barrier to employment opportunities, including advancement in their current positions. GVC staff found that even when technology is available, many choose not use it because they lack the skills to complete job-related tasks and, furthermore, do not engage the use of technology in their personal lives because they lack basic computer knowledge, do not have access to computers or the Internet, and even because they fear falling victim to identify theft.

As a result, opportunities for continuing education, access to social media, online business training, online banking, and other opportunities provided by the Internet and other telecommunications are severely limited. Small businesses, especially minority-owned businesses, are ill-informed of the benefits of incorporating technology into their business plans or even the steps necessary to create a business plan.

These barriers consequently result in unemployed and underemployed individuals to be lacking in the technical skills necessary to obtain gainful employment or advance within their current employment.

Valley Connect worked to engage community members in technology and help expand small business by offering free technology training. Bilingual staff provided outreach and training to community members participating in the program. The program’s mission was to increase the

knowledge and use of computers and the Internet in the communities of Pixley, Delano, and Stockton, ultimately developing the following demonstration sites:

- Morning Side Elementary
Delano Unified School District
- Stockton Adult School
Stockton Unified School District
- Pixley Adult School,
Pixley Unified School District

Valley Connect was designed to create a replicable model that would demonstrate the value and viability of high-speed wireless Internet in lower-use rural communities. The program was designed based on best practices from Pixley Connect, the GVC digital literacy program that took place from 2006 through 2009 made possible by a grant from the AT&T Foundation. Pixley Connect successfully increased the number of households owning and operating computers and positively impacted the employment opportunities for adults in southern Tulare County.

The 16-week program promoted computer literacy to a largely Hispanic, low-income or unemployed people. In the 16-week program, which was taught in Spanish and English, the basics of operating a computer were taught in an adult school setting. Students who mastered the curriculum received a refurbished computer, monitor, printer, and a suite of software.

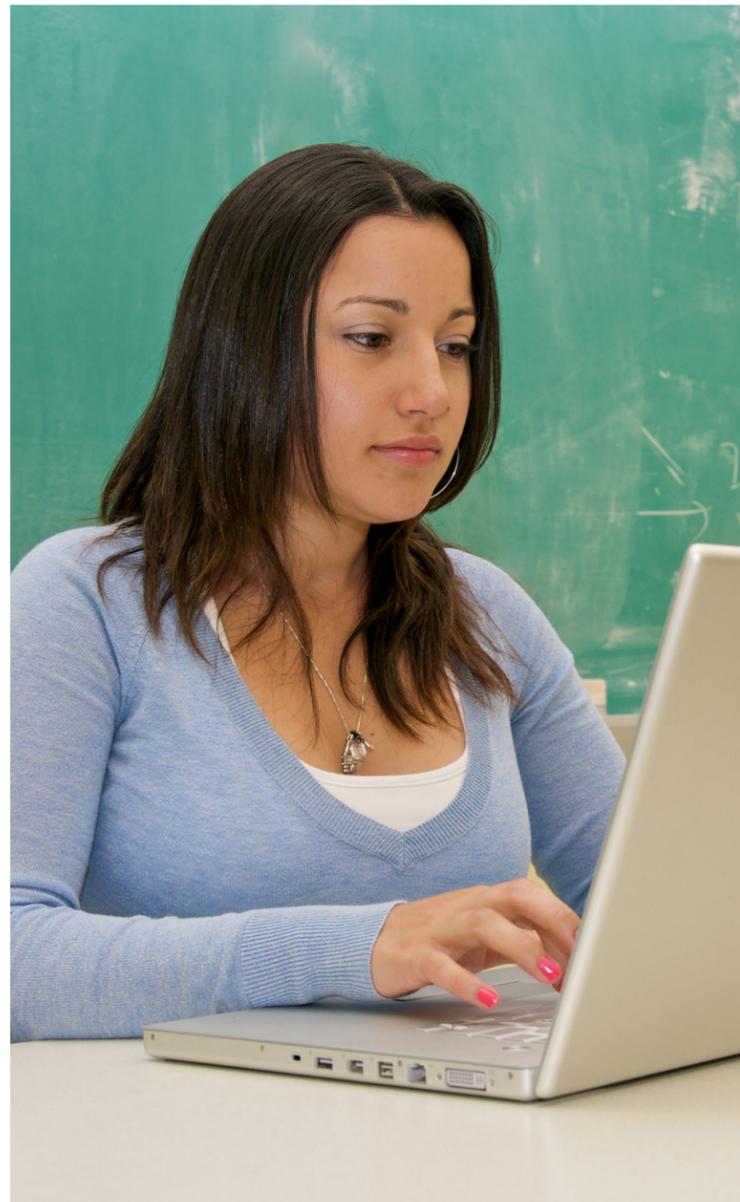
There are 650 households in Pixley. As a result of Pixley Connect, 84 received free computers by completing the basic computer training program. An additional 40 households purchased low-cost, refurbished computers without attending classes. The program also trained 18 Digital Connectors, local teenagers designated to provide technical support in the community. They received instruction in leadership development, technology training, and community service.

Program staff working in partnership with One Economy completed the development of the training curriculum and program outline for the Digital Connectors. A five-month training program, specifically customized for the Pixley community, was the result of several months of planning and working meetings. The Digital Connectors program provided the Pixley teenagers three months of technology training, consisting of 72 hours of training on multimedia, communication skills development, and academic planning.

At completion, the newly designated Digital Connectors received a refurbished notebook and a stipend for their participation and successful program completion. To ensure

participants had an opportunity to put their skills into practice, the program incorporated a two-month community service component. The Digital Connectors provide information technology (IT) support and computer repair services to the community, free of charge.

Pixley's Digital Connectors provide troubleshooting and repair at community events. Pixley residents also may take their computer to the training lab for repair or request repair assistance. Most of the residents who have benefited from the free computer repair service were former graduates of Pixley Connect's Computer Literacy Program.



Deliverable 3 Business Incubation & Entrepreneurship Development

Deliverable 3

Business Incubation & Entrepreneurship Development

The Lyles Center's work with the Entrepreneurial Pathway and Valley community colleges provided a natural succession for developing E-Centers on the two site campuses to grow a culture of entrepreneurship. Since community colleges are accessible and open to the community, and located in demographically diverse areas, they are uniquely positioned to become the E-Centers of entrepreneurship information for their communities. Other communities which have E-Centers have experienced unusual economic success when compared with other districts nationwide.

E-Centers are designed to be small business development organizations dedicated to helping students on community college campuses and adult residents of the surrounding communities, and who traditionally lack access to resources and information to achieve financial self-sufficiency through entrepreneurship.

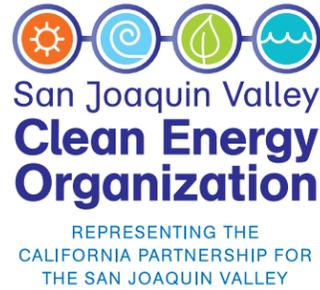
The E-Center provides training, support services, resources, and networks for business owners at early stages of business development, from idea feasibility through startup. The E-Center initially conducted various workshops offered to the community. In the future, it will include a physical location which will have office spaces, for business instructors, attached to a meeting area and resource library as well as a handful of computer work stations.

The E-Center was modeled after a small business office and provides a space for meetings, mentoring, and consulting. Ideally, there should be ample collaboration/development space so that students from the Collegiate Entrepreneur Organization (CEO) have an area to coordinate activities and projects. Adjacent classroom spaces will be used for workshops and informational sessions, if needed.

E-Center sites were established at Reedley College and Bakersfield College. During the course of the grant the centers were established, curriculum developed with attention to the local context of the program and needs of participants, and 27 workshops were offered. The E-Center staff also compiled a database of entrepreneurship activities and disseminated this information to participants and other interested parties. Participants reported that their entrepreneurial skills had significantly improved as a result of their participation in the workshops.

Deliverable 4 Green Economy & Workforce





Deliverable 4 Green Economy & Workforce

The San Joaquin Valley Clean Energy Organization (SJVCEO) spearheaded a collaborative effort to create a centralized repository of information related to new occupational opportunities for the green economy in the Valley. The primary product of this effort was a website, <http://www.wiasjvceo.com/>, as a dissemination point and repository for green economy-related information and educational materials. The website includes several primary components including: the Clean Energy News Blog, which had 104 posts in the 15 months of operation; document files, which contain 208 lesson plans and reports; and

The Team collected green energy-related curriculum that can be used, or sampled, by teachers interested in helping their students become equipped to take on one of the fastest growing sectors of the economy. This information was collected and posted on www.wiasjvceo.com to ensure this repository of information is available after the life of the grant has ended.

SJVCEO staff continues to update the website with the latest reports and information. It's a resource that 1) may be shared with all schools in the Valley and 2) teachers may continue to use. Teachers are encouraged to contribute their new lesson plans on clean energy to the website as well. The Team's list of experts, which continues to be maintained, provides a source of speakers who specialize in wind power, solar energy, water conservation, geothermal, hydro and other sectors.

The model has been created to allow for replication in any region and on any scale. For this model to be successful, a committed team of volunteers from the clean energy industry and members of the work group needs to be in place. In a short amount of time, however, a web presence can be established to begin outreach. The material that has been collected and posted on www.wiasjvceo.com is made available to be used, and the format is meant to be copied.



Implementation Experiences *and* Lessons

Project Impacts *and* Achievements

Sustainability

Implementation Experiences and Lessons

Valley Legacy involved a significant collaborative effort that involved educational, nonprofit, and for profit organizations. Each project involved a large number of collaborators and contributors, which resulted in multi-faceted and rich programs which were established in geographically diverse locations across the Valley. Several lessons were evident through the implementation of the project. First, that establishing and maintaining partnerships was critical to the success and sustainability of these projects. Second, that successful startup, development, and design was largely based on the identification of the “right people” and the utilization of existing, although perhaps underutilized, resources. Finally, nearly all of the project directors indicated that understanding the eligibility and reporting requirements was critical to implementation.

Establishing and Maintaining Partnerships

Each of these projects included a lengthy list of partners that collaborated to serve local participants and to create programs and resources to support workforce development around the targeted industry clusters. In many cases, this involved bringing together various levels of the education system, nonprofit, and for profit organizations. In the case of the Sector-Based Articulation project, existing linkages between the high school’s technical education programs and local industry were well established in agricultural related areas; however, other potential partnerships had gone undeveloped. It became apparent that both high schools and post-secondary institutions lacked adequate programs to support the high-growth, targeted industry clusters. Partnerships became critical in this venture as high school teachers worked with local industry to understand the workforce needs, build capacity of their staff, and offer relevant programs to students. These employer partnerships were especially important to ensure that the workforce challenges were accurately defined and the strategies selected met the current and immediate needs of the sector. Direct input from employers on curriculum, pedagogy, and equipment specifications ensured that instruction was relevant and current.

The power of these partnerships was most evident when Patterson High School established an advisory committee with representatives from local distribution centers to create a logistics career pathway. Industry partners were very active in identifying what skills they desired applicants to have, which became the basis of the curriculum and courses that were developed as part of a career technical education pathway. Furthermore, these industry partners were enthusiastic about contributing resources, such as money, equipment, and expertise, to establish quality training programs in

their area. Local WIBs have been challenged to work with community colleges and adult education programs to expand the availability and accessible, short-term training programs (Campbell, Lemp, & Treiber, 2006). This project was visionary in that it attempted to better connect these organizations that have similar missions and work with the same clientele, but have rarely collaborated on projects that focus on the human capital aspects of workforce development.

All of the projects implemented by the grant found that attending to context and local needs was paramount to success. While creating projects that were replicable was a goal, local context and need greatly impacted the focus of each project. For example, in the ELI project, external pressures on each school campus, local school culture, and teacher capacity impacted the extent to which the ELIs could be implemented and informed the training content that was presented to teachers. While the programs at each campus were similar in nature and intent, the content often had to be specifically adjusted to “meet participants where they were.”

The attention to local context was also prominent in the development of the curriculum for the entrepreneurial centers. Each campus implemented a similar curriculum, however, after the initial implementation it was critical to reflect on how it met the needs of the local participants and adjust the curriculum to better serve those needs.

One strategy adopted across several of the deliverables was to identify and utilize existing, underutilized resources. This was evident in procurement of facilities, development of curriculum, and the creation of advisory committees. All of the projects sought to identify underutilized facilities as a way of bringing efficiency to this project and community resources. An example is the digital literacy project’s investigation into identifying existing computer labs on school campuses that could be used for adult classes in the evening. Several of the schools that participated in the Sector-Based Articulation project identified facilities that were currently being used as storage that could be turned into shop or training areas. Using existing community resources in a way that holistically creates efficiency in the community is a benefit to all stakeholders.

Several of the projects engaged in curriculum development where “don’t reinvent the wheel” was the motto. Teachers and project staff worked to identify learning objectives then work with project support staff, consultants, and the SJVCEO collaborative to identify existing resources that could be imported into the curriculum. In many cases, off-the-shelf curriculum was not available, so efficiency in creating relevant and appropriate curriculum was critical to developing these new programs.

Overall, Valley Legacy activities helped partnering organizations to better understand the resources and capabilities of other partnering organizations. Several administrators involved in these projects had not collaborated in the past with the workforce investment system, and noted that they had gained tremendous understanding about how the workforce investment system operates, its capacity, and how to better connect with that system. Overall, there was a greater awareness of the targeted industry sectors and how to better prepare works for jobs in these sectors.

Project Startup, Development, and Design

The extensive partnerships required by this project made evident the need to involve all stakeholders early and often. The secretariat, Office of Economic and Community Development, and the director of each project deliverable worked to arrange regular coordination meetings which were vital to keeping the projects connected and coordinated. Organizations learn as they implement, modify systems and procedures based on their experiences, and continuously improve operations. Successful collaboration required regular discussions and agreement regarding respective roles and responsibilities of each organization and the specifics of how staff will collaborate and share information.

Regardless of these coordination efforts, there was some attrition of project sites within individual deliverables, primarily due to competing initiatives and external pressures. Identification of alternate sites and discussions with these sites could be incorporated into the planning process.

At sites where there were enthusiastic and committed personnel at the site level, there tended to be a higher level of commitment to program implementation. The importance “getting the right people on the bus” (Collins, 2001), particularly teachers, was critical in the development and implementation of project components such as new courses developed in the Sector-Based Articulation project. These teachers were often charged with developing course curriculum from scratch, recruiting for the courses, and maintaining connections with local industry. In these cases courses were developed and offered to students within one year, a significant reduction of the typical two-year timeframe. The need to recruit and retain staff with the necessary occupation-specific skills has been a common challenge in workforce investment projects (Trutko, O’Brien, Holcomb, & Nightingale, 2007). This is further complicated by maintaining access to keeping these occupation-specific skills up-to-date in these rapidly evolving industries. As the individual projects were initiated and identification of WIA-eligible participants was underway, coordination between the project site and the local WIB-office was critical. The geographically diverse nature of this project required

coordination with several differed WIBs, each maintaining practices unique to their region. While standardization of the WIB enrollment process across all project sites was not possible, the local WIBs provided resources in support of the eligibility and enrollment process which also resulted in the availability of a variety of additional resources to participants. It also became evident through this process that the academic, fiscal, and project year calendars rarely coincided and that project planning should include attention to the differences in these cycles.

The previously discussed partnerships between the project teams and local industry was critical to the development of



local projects as it informed curriculum development and often resulted in additional resources being leveraged in favor of the developing programs. Furthermore, engaging other local organizations in the planning and design phase allowed project teams to capitalize on established resources already accessible to the community, such as the digital literacy projects use of existing computer labs. This required project staff to initially identify and schedule the use of these facilities; however, this interaction also better connected the project to existing community organizations and resources.

A surprising finding during the design phase was related to the Sector-Based Articulation project. Regardless of the identification of the targeted industry clusters as having high-growth potential, few technical education programs have been established in these areas at the secondary or post-secondary level. Building capacity in these areas was primarily self-directed by the teachers themselves and even when there were opportunities for outside professional development opportunities, teachers did not participate due to lack of

time and attention to the other demands their multifaceted positions required. This challenge was not resolved during this project.

Targeting *and* Reaching Participants

Each of the projects recruited and attempted to reach participants in a variety of ways. High-school based projects made effective use of teachers and counselors to promote new technical education programs. The digital literacy program was successful in reaching participants through a word-of-mouth recruitment strategy. When serving disadvantaged populations, participants may require additional supportive services, which are often available through the established project partnerships. For instance, WIA-eligible high school students that participated in the technical education programs also had access to the greater job-finding resources of the local WIB which can be facilitated by explicitly identifying these connections and opportunities.

Project Management *and* Reporting Requirements

Any project, particularly those providing direct services such as job training, must have management procedures and systems in place to track activities, tasks, spending, participants, and outcomes. The project director of each deliverable had considerable responsibility in gathering information related to implementation and progress from each project site in order to compile required quarterly and annual reports. It was also at the project director level where expenditures were tracked. Without the coordination efforts of the project directors, these management and reporting requirements would have diminished program activities that directly impacted participants.

Project directors and coordinators also served to connect project sites and share best practices. This network resulted in better efficiency and coordinated programs. The project level staff also served as experts that were able to identify resources required at the site level and to assist in making connections with community and industry partners. In the case of the Sector-Based Articulation project, this was particularly important for teachers that spent most of the day in the classroom with students. The project coordinator was able to facilitate guest speaker and fieldtrips by coordinating with industry partners and acting as a liaison. The project level staff was essential to the rapid development and implementation of the technical education programs that were developed as part of this project.

Project Impacts *and* Achievements

Valley Legacy, although short in tenure, did leave behind a legacy in the Valley. Not only did over 1,200 individuals participate in program-developed opportunities, the capacity building that was a result of the grant activities, particularly in the area of the ELIs and Sector-Based Articulation projects have changed how the participating organizations previously saw the role and potential of their English Language Learners and the Technical Education Programs, respectively. This project embodied the ideal of human-capital-driven community development that were the recommendations of previous WIA evaluators (Campbell, Lemp, & Treiber, 2006). This project went well beyond the simple matching of clients with careers and build capacity within systems, such as the high school system, to better articulate their programs with both community colleges and local industry. These were linkages that were nonexistent or tenuous in many cases.

Valley Connect has provided previously inaccessible computer skills and the resources provided by the Internet to several disenfranchised communities in the Valley. The

planned continuation of these programs and local capacity building with the training of the Digital Connectors provides local youth skills and experience not readily available in their community. They received training to support their local community and perpetuate the use of computer skills among their community members.

The E-Center workshops have resulted in several participants creating their own businesses, many of whom have reported increased monthly earnings. This, at a fundamental level, is a key success for the project. E-Center participants reported increased knowledge and ability to create their own businesses and have local resources to support those efforts.

SJVCEO created an online repository that contains considerable information related to supporting those that educate the future workers in the targeted industry clusters. Teachers in the Sector-Based Articulation project reported utilizing these resources extensively. There was a great need for this type of repository, which was verified when sector-based articulation teachers first attempted to locate resources to build their courses. The symbiotic relationship between these two projects was confirming and affirming.

All of the projects touched individual participants on at a personal level, improving the lives of those that took part in each of the projects offered. The project exceeded the projected number of WIA-eligible participants, as well as serving a significant number of ineligible participants. Participants walked away with skills that exceeded basic job hunting and resume building skills typically taught in workforce development programs. While critical, participants had the opportunity to build skills that would serve them for the long term, such as the Digital Literacy project's goal to give participants access to the Internet by both building practical skills (e.g., online banking, job searching), providing avenues to access the required equipment, and training local community members to provide troubleshooting and technical support services.

All of the programs that were established by Valley Legacy have established sufficient infrastructure, developed capacity, or secured additional funds and/or support to continue to serve participants at the current rate. Each of the projects exceeded the WIA-eligible participant targets, indicating there is a great need for the services that were augmented or developed as a result of these projects. Furthermore, many of these project sites were developed in areas where resources are scarce and need is high. Now that these programs are established, the allocation of additional resources would augment existing programs and expand offerings to more participants.



Sustainability

It is important to begin to focus on post-grant sustainability well before grant funds are exhausted. In general, project funds were used to develop capacity and build infrastructure, and as such a majority of these programs will continue beyond the conclusion of the grant.

In the Sector-Based Articulation program, courses were created, curriculum developed, and connections with industry were developed. The developed courses were created as part of targeted industry cluster career pathways, or a series of courses. The local sites maintain interest in articulating these pathways with coinciding pathways at their local community colleges as do their industry partners. The project also demonstrated that industry partners are eager to provide feedback and leverage resources to augment and continue training programs that are current and relevant.

Sustainability also continues in the form of a transformed culture. Student Voice projects were created as part of the ELLs have shown English Language Learners (students whose

primary language is other than English) can have a voice in their schools and can direct their educational endeavors. These students join together to vocalize their educational needs and work with school staff to devise solutions and ensure adequate access to the college-track curriculum. The ELLs also train school staff to have high expectations of ELL students and to scaffold and encourage their development of English language skills. This type of school culture is critical to student success.

GVC secured additional funding to continue Valley Connect, which will continue to build capacity in underserved communities to provide digital literacy skills and access to the Internet -- an increasingly critical factor for participation in the workforce.

The two E-Centers established through this project will continue operations using additional operational funding. The curriculum that was developed can continue to be used in entrepreneurial development programs.

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