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YOUTH SERVICES PROPOSALS SELECTED

Amidst a struggling local economy, The Southwest Ohio Regional Workforce Investment Board will offer job training and other employment services to 30 percent more local young people over the next two years.

The board's new strategic plan led it to focus funding on programs that serve more youth at lower costs and target at-risk youth: drop outs, those in danger of dropping out and court-involved youth. Partnering with Hamilton County's Department of Job and Family Services, the Board expects to enroll 30 percent more than the 319 it enrolled last year.

"It is nice to be able to focus our funding for job training at a time when this area really needs it," said Sherry Kelley Marshall, President of the board. "Even in a stagnating economy, we want young people to still have hope. This is a step to a brighter future."

All of the organizations funded -- Connect2Success, Literacy Center West, Easter Seals Work Resource Center, Lighthouse Youth Services, and Jobs for Cincinnati Graduates -- serve a population of young people at risk of falling through the cracks and leading a life of poverty, Marshall said.

Aligning with the priorities identified in the strategic plan, the board undertook a bidding process and selected providers based on criteria that included program quality, the number of youth who could be served, system goals achieved, and the cost for serving each youth.

"The RFP process was very strong and culminated in an equally strong evaluation process with team members from the county, city, and SWORWIB staff, as well as, volunteers of the SWORWIB and the Emerging Workforce Council who generously donated considerable amounts of time to read the proposals and offer their fresh perspectives on the merits of those proposals," said Marshall. "We were pleased to receive many stellar proposals from a variety of strong organizations successful in providing quality services related to education, training, employment and support services for youth," added Marshall.

WIA youth funding for FY 2009-2010 is \$1.8 million dollars. Given the financial realities of the local, state and federal governments at this time, the SWORWIB does not anticipate large increases in WIA dollars for FY 2010-2011. Marshall did note that the SWORWIB is looking with interest at other possible funding opportunities, such as those that result from future stimulus bills or those negotiated by the National Governors Association with the president-elect for summer youth dollars. #

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