

## Career Pathways for Youth

### Marléna Talking Points

- The WDC of Seattle-King County is a nonprofit workforce “think tank” and grant-making organization whose mission is to support a strong economy and ensure the ability of each person to achieve self-sufficiency.
- We are the Workforce Investment Board for Seattle-King County, serving under the Mayor of Seattle and the King County Executive.
- Facts about King County:
  - Population: 1.9 million+ (14th most populous county in the nation)
  - Geographic size: 2,134 square miles –nearly twice the size of Rhode Island
  - Number of cities: 39
  - Number of school districts: 20
  - Total unemployed as of March 2010: 90,810 (8.1% unemployment)
  - Top industries: Services, Trade, Professional Services, Education, Manufacturing, Government
- In a given year, the WDC usually oversees about \$2.5 million to provide Workforce Investment Act youth services to approximately 400 youth each year.
- Last year, that was doubled with our allocation of \$2.8 million from the Recovery Act for summer jobs in 2009. We were able to put 900 young people to work over the summer in six-week internships and some skill-building programs.
- In addition, we serve roughly 200 youth offenders each year through a competitive DOL youth-offender grant. Another 50 court-involved youth participate in our Minority Business and Youth Alliance, in which they work in paid internships and are mentored by a minority business person.

- Despite the fact that we have been successful in competing for funds in addition to our allocation, we are keenly aware that we are only serving a small fraction of the young people in need in our community.
- By some estimates, there are close to 23,000 young people in King County aged 18 to 24 who are neither working nor in school and have no degree beyond high school—and perhaps 10,000 aged 16 to 19 who are neither in school nor working.
- Because we know we can't serve all the need in our area, we look for other low-expense, "low-touch" ways to reach as many youth as possible.
- Our highly engaged board continues dialogues all the time about school to work, dropout prevention, remediation, retrieval, in-school youth, out-of-school youth, disconnected youth etc etc....
- We wanted to move beyond "meaningful dialogue and conversation" to action, all the while knowing our resource limitations and the scope of having 20 k-12 districts in our WDA.
- So, I want to share with you today one of our tools for doing this.
- Map Your Careers shows career pathways in five key industries in our area: Health Care, Construction, Manufacturing, Life Sciences/Biotech and Information Technology.
- We use these for adult jobseekers as well, but a key audience is young people and their parents and career counselors.
- We sent these to career/guidance counselors in high schools all over King County. We gain lots of benefits from this, one of which is marketing the WIB to school districts who otherwise may miss our tangible value to them. We have had excellent response that we are filling a niche that is needed in terms of timely career, training and wage information.