Final Report
on
Focus Group Facilitation
for
Development
of
iLEAD "Economic Development Strategies Report"

Prepared for
Los Angeles Southwest College

Prepared by
USC Center for Economic Development
School of Policy, Planning, and Development
University of Southern California

November 2004

Authors

The *Final Report on Focus Group Facilitation for Development of iLEAD "Economic Development Strategies Report"* was prepared for the Los Angeles Southwest College Foundation under the auspices of Leonard Mitchell, Esq., Executive Director: USC Center for Economic Development, and Clinical Professor in Policy, Planning, and Development, School of Policy, Planning, and Development, University of Southern California.

The project manager and principal author of this study is Dion Jackson, Associate Director of the USC Center for Economic Development. Assisting her were the following Research Associates:

- Lindsey D. Moore
- Jose E. Ometeotl
- Pedro Rivera
- Kevin Rodin

The authors would like to acknowledge important research and editing help from Research Associate Soyeon Choi.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

Los Angeles Southwest College Office of Institutional Advancement – institute for Local Economic Advancement and Development (iLEAD) retained the University of Southern California Center for Economic Development to provide focus group facilitation services to collect information for development of the LASC Office of Institutional Advancement – iLEAD "Economic Development Strategies Report."

In Phase I, focus groups were conducted with 32 members of the public sector, the community and faith-based sector, and the higher education sector. Information was gathered on the trends, immediate and long-term business/service needs, the current and projected staff and workforce development needs, and perceived service gaps. The most oft-repeated trend was the reduction in funding, identified as a primary concern in all sectors during Phase I. The public sector focus group also felt that access to capital was an issue for local small businesses.

In Phase II, a joint focus group with 29 attendees from Phase I and the business sector, identified impacts and solutions to the top issues. The first discussion was on the impacts of having a college student population with low basic skills. The issue is that their writing and mathematics skills are insufficient for success in either the community college or job market. This trend puts the burden on community colleges to provide remedial classes and the business sector questions whether students requiring remedial classes can become competent employees. This in turn makes it harder to recruit businesses to the region.

The focus group also identified solutions to the top two immediate and long-term business and service needs. The top immediate need was the need for language proficiency and soft skills among workers. English as a second language classes and on-line courses were identified as tools for training. The long-term need was for team-learning. The workplace is a collaborative environment; mistakes made when learning teamwork on the job are costly to businesses. Business leaders expressed a desire to see people learning the teamwork process in an academic environment.

The top immediate staff and workforce development need was achieving basic skills. Solutions ranged from Bridges to Success at Southwest College that teaches skills useful to students re-entering school from work to wrap-around services such as providing paid working experience to students while attending school. The top long-term staff and workforce development need was for management training. Management skills were identified as a way to improve resident's job prospects. Community colleges were thought to be the ideal place for such education.

The service gap discussed in the Phase II focus group was the gap between training needed and current education. Many ideas were presented about partnerships between sectors and as well as the sharing of information to facilitate needed changes. Southwest College is advised to form such a partnership and apply for funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for a University Partnership grant.

Introduction

Los Angeles Southwest College Office of Institutional Advancement – institute for Local Economic Advancement and Development (iLEAD) retained the University of Southern California Center for Economic Development to provide focus group facilitation services to collect information for development of the LASC Office of Institutional Advancement – iLEAD "Economic Development Strategies Report."

The structure of the process was to conduct focus groups with stakeholders involved in economic development from the public sector, the community and faith-based sector, the higher education sector, and the business sector. Information was gathered on the trends within each sector, the immediate and long-term business/service needs, and the current and projected staff and workforce development needs. Information was also collected from each sector on their expectations of the other targeted sectors in order to initiate strategic partnerships between the sectors in pursuit of competitive grant funds and development of customized education and training programs by LASC iLEAD.

Following the individual sector focus groups, a final focus group was conducted with all four sectors together to identify impacts and solutions to the top issues from the initial focus groups. The objectives were to:
- Address and identify impacts of the top two trends
- Identify solutions to the top two immediate and long-term business and service needs
- Identify solutions to the top two immediate and long-term staff and workforce development needs
- Address existing and projected service gaps and potential impacts

Phase I Summary

To address and identify impacts of the top two trends in the service area, focus groups were conducted between February 23, 2004 and March 4, 2004 with members of the following groups:

(a) Public Sector - February 23, 2004
(b) Higher Education Sector – February 26, 2004
(c) Community-Based and Faith-Based Sector – March 11, 2004

Many ideas were shared during the two-hour focus group meetings. Highlights of the discussion are presented in the next three sections. Complete notes can be found in Appendix III.

Public Sector Focus Group

The Public Sector focus group was comprised of 11 representatives from local government and economic development agencies serving the area.   The cities of Gardena, Hawthorne, and Inglewood were present along with representatives from the South Bay Workforce Investment Board, the South Bay Economic Development Partnership, the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation, and the Los Angeles City Center for Economic Development.

The high priority trends observed by the public sector focus group members included the decrease in public sector funding and the rising cost of insurance for workers. They also felt that local businesses have difficulty in knowing who to talk to at City Hall to resolve their problems, saying that businesses have less information today than they used to on the authority of different city departments. Another high priority trend is the need for a culture shift in government in order to communicate with business.

The most urgent business and service needs of the region were identified as access to capital, more affordable government approvals for the redevelopment of brownfields, and language proficiency of the workforce. The focus group members felt that their cities contained many underutilized parcels of land that would attract investment if the brownfield requirements were less costly. The language skills of the local workforce was lamented as a detriment to business attraction and as a limit to income growth for the residents.

The workforce development priorities were funding, management training, increasing workforce training, and the spatial disconnect between training and jobs. It was pointed out that training programs often train for jobs that are not available in the community. The public sector recognized the need for more funding to retool outdated programs and to develop new programs addressing current needs. They also felt that training programs for training employed workers in management-level skills would serve their residents and lead to increasing their incomes.

When discussing their expectations of the other three sectors, the public sector felt that the higher education sector should exhibit a commitment to K-12 education with a strong emphasis on the 9th thru 12th grades. They expect the business sector to collaborate on developing training programs and hiring graduates of the programs and to provide entry-level positions and mentorship to youth via internships. From the community-based and faith-based sector, the public sector had many expectations, from the provision of childcare for working families, education of the workforce about work source centers, and development of stakeholder groups, to development of partnerships with businesses for real estate development such as industrial parks.

Higher Education Focus Group
The Higher Education focus group was comprised of nine individuals from community and 4-year colleges serving the area. There were representatives from El Camino College and their Small Business Development Center, Los Angeles Southwest College, and Santa Monica College. Representatives from the University of California, Los Angeles and the University of Southern California were also present.

The highest priority trends observed by the higher education sector focus group members were that today's students have low basic skills, funding is reduced, and rapid changes in information and technology require development programs to maintain high quality faculty. The highest priority in the minds of the higher education focus group members was the problem of students entering college with insufficient education, as students who

enter college without the proper math or reading skills are at an inherent disadvantage in the classroom. Just as important is the cumulative effect of entire groups of unprepared incoming students on course curricula.

The most urgent business and service needs of the region were identified as computer skills, team learning, cultural awareness, and training for trainers. Successful business sectors rely on the skills and education of the workforce. Leadership and communication skills create successful businesses; both businesses and educational institutions are responsible for instilling these qualities in employees and potential employees.

The workforce development priorities were basic workforce skills, employees with written communication skills, verbal communication and presentation skills, and acceptance of other cultures. The focus group felt that many of these priorities can be associated with the theme of "lifelong learning." The foundation of this theme as applied to workforce development is that the workforce should not merely be educated in school, but that education should continue throughout a person's working life.

When discussing their expectations of the other three sectors, the higher education sector felt that the public sector should provide more support and should be in closer communication with all other sectors. They expected the community and faith-based organization sector to provide more access to the community and they expected the business sector to encourage employers to foster teamwork and to collaborate on developing training programs and hiring the graduates.

Community-Based and Faith-Based Organizations Focus Group
The Community and Faith-Based focus group was comprised of 12 representatives from local community-based organizations (CBOs) and faith-based organizations (FBOs) serving the area through economic development, education, and social services. The following organizations were present, Adams Westmont Business Center, Apostolic Faith Home Assembly, FAME Renaissance Center – Business Development, Glory Christian Fellowship International, Greater Bethany Economic Development Center, Lincoln Family Life Center, New Creation Christian Faith Center, Playa Vista Job Opportunities and Business Services, and S.H.A.P.E. - Student Heightening Academic Performance through Education. There was also a representative from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The highest priority trends observed by the community and faith-based sector focus group members were the reduction in funding, that there is very little interaction or cooperation between CBOs, FBOs, and the higher education sector, and there is a lack of affordable housing. One of the effects of the reduction in funding is that CBOs and FBOs find themselves competing with the Public Sector for grant funding.

The most urgent business and service needs of the region were identified as a workforce that can utilize 21st century and emerging technologies, sustainable funding sources, and partnership building among and within community-based and faith-based organizations. One sustainable funding source suggested was to offer fee-based services.

The workforce development priorities were access to capital and funding for economic development and social services, increased private and industrial development throughout the community, and increased contracting opportunities for small businesses with large businesses. These workforce development priorities would create incentives for business development in the community. One key public service that could be improved to increase the efficiency of the workforce would be public transportation, according to the focus group.

When discussing their expectations of the other three sectors, the community and faith-based sector felt that the education sector should reach out to CBOs and FBOs, giving them up-to-date knowledge on the current status of career ladders and the potential for professional advancement. From the public sector, the community and faith-based sector requested help in finding and applying for grants and help in understanding relevant legislation. The community and faith-based sector felt that creating a resourceful community network would be the most positive interaction with the business sector.

Business Focus Group
Due to the sensitive time constraints of representatives from major businesses in the Southwest College service area, Businesses were invited to either attend the final focus group or to be available for one-on-one meetings with focus group administrators. This allowed local businesses to participate while only having to attend one session.

Phase II Outcomes
The final focus group was conducted on March 25, 2004 to bring the four sectors together. 30 participants attended, six from the public sector, ten from three institutions of higher education, ten from community organizations, and three from business and one undeclared.

Impacts on the Local Business, Public, Community and Faith-Based, and Higher Education Sectors of the Current Trend: Today's Students Have Low Basic Skills

The focus group determined that the top current trend is that today's students have low basic skills, that their writing and mathematic skills are not sufficient for success in the community college or university setting. They also said that the low basic skills of students entering the community college system are insufficient for success in the job market. In fact, 85% of students entering Southwest College require some remedial math and/or English coursework.

The trend of lacking skills among college students requires the higher education sector to remediate the current situation. Rather than making the K-12 system more effective, higher education has had to bring about corrections to the basic skill deficiencies of current college students. As a result, transfer students from community college are often better prepared for 4-year college than those entering from high school. However, the

process of remediation takes resources away from other programs run by the higher education sector.

The business sector participants questioned whether high school graduates requiring remedial learning can learn and become competent employees. They explained that even entry-level applicants have to have some basic skills—for example reading skills—and that they can't afford to take on that type of training. The public sector participants pointed out that the low skill level of high school graduates makes it harder to recruit businesses to the area and community organization participants added that they require more supportive services when they attend college because they are older and often have children.

Solutions to the Top Two Immediate and Long-Term Business and Service Needs of Local Business, Public, Community and Faith-Based, and Higher Education Sectors

Immediate Need for Language Proficiency and Soft Skills
Communication skills are critical to success; language skills are necessary to compete in the high-tech job market and English is the language of written policies and procedures. The focus group participants agreed that non-native speakers must have a basic understanding of English and that for native speakers, reading comprehension is a must. An important reason for language proficiency is that when workers understand the whole picture, they are able to make more informed decisions. The business sector wants employees to have sufficient competence in English so that they clearly understand their supervisors; they also want employees with sharpened soft skills in fundamental business etiquette.

In an effort to design ways to respond to the immediate needs highlighted by all sectors, participants suggested a number of solutions. Solutions offered ranged from existing language courses in colleges to developing customized soft skill training that could be facilitated by the nonprofit sector.

The higher education sector identified classes in English as a Second Language at Los Angeles Southwest College and Technical English classes at Cerritos College as resources for improving non-native worker's understanding of English. Los Angeles Southwest College is also interested in partnering with business and nonprofits to identify grant funding to address the needs not met by current programs and resources. The college is developing on-line courses through its Distance Learning program, which currently offers sixteen classes. Companies can have equipment installed on-site to make classes available to employees at lunch or after work.

Other programs provide training in soft skills. A 5-week program was developed by a community-based organization through a grant from the Department of Labor to help people in low-wage jobs learn topics in business operating procedures, business etiquette, and useful living skills particularly in applying for job. It was operated on a fee-based system.

The Mathematics, Engineering, and Science Achievement (MESA) program is designed to motivate students to attend college by connecting education with application to engage students in learning so they are motivated to attend college. This provides an incentive for the students to acquire needed language skills.

An intensive language training program can address the wide-spread language issues existing at a company. The training is offered at a job site for an hour during or after work. The goal is to provide the language skills to be functional in their job. It was used successfully to help small business owners maintain and grow their businesses by developing a common language training program.

Long-Term Business and Service Need for Team Learning
Team work was recognized by the participants as a long-term necessity for new entrants to business and services. The workplace is a collaborative environment that is very different from the individual approach to doing assignments that is traditional in academic settings. Mistakes made when learning teamwork on the job are costly to businesses, and business leaders would like to see students learning the teamwork process in an academic environment.

The community college could adapt existing programs to teach the students about working as a team. There are many examples of how teamwork is used in the service area between the different sectors, such as foster parents and social workers, and their cooperation would benefit the youth they serve. Teamwork also strengthens bonds between small businesses in the community, as small businesses that were taught how to work together to bid for contracts as a team have been more competitive.

Team learning at the community college can be approached from various perspectives. Any courses offered at the college can teach teamwork by having students work on assignments. The students then learn how to teach and learn together as a team. More importantly, students can learn how to teach and learn together as a team by assigning the work to the best matching member and by helping each other to complete the work. Adapting team-teaching methods in the classroom does not require further resources; it only requires that faculty adapt their methods to the realities of the workplace.

Solutions to the Top Two Immediate and Long-Term Staff and Workforce Development Needs of the Local Business, Public, Community and Faith-Based, and Higher Education Sectors

Immediate Staff and Workforce Development Need: Achieving Basic Skills
In today's society, people are increasingly more likely to engage in more than one career in their lives due to the pace of change in technology and business. As a result, people will need to continually learn new skills as they progress up the career ladder. An immediate and pressing need remains with the segment of the workforce that still needs to obtain basic skills in order to even gain a foothold on a career path that could support a family. A number of programs are provided at the local level for those who need to achieve basic skills.

Bridges to Success, a citizenship center at Southwest College, teaches skills useful to everyone such as how to transition into credited programs or classes. The center offers review discussion sessions in major class subjects as well as supportive areas such as academic counseling. The program offers its services to all people 18 or older, regardless of educational attainment level. The program administrators plan to improve the program by creating a database of services and resources that students can utilize to help themselves focus on their studies.

Wrap-around services are support services such as providing paid working experience while attending school for a certain. The community college would administer and design the program with a grant and a partnership that would provide wages, child care, tutoring, books, and transportation.

Program for Adult College Education (PACE) is a training program for participants from the business world. The classes meet on weeknights and Saturdays. Its effectiveness comes from the participants' acknowledge of the value in team learning. The participants form study groups through where they learn from each other.

The community college also stretches its efforts to further development of programs that can provide the youth with essential resources for basic skills. A new series of three credit-based classes was developed in computer assisted office technology for web site design. In addition, the college offers to create a class onsite if an organization has 25 students or more. When any of the classes offered is well matched with the need of a student, the resulting certification of trainees could reduce the risk for businesses in hiring new employees since the employees enter with more basic skills.

This sort of partnership between the college and businesses needs support from the business world in reaching out to the classroom to spark student interest. The visits of business people to relevant general study classes held at the community college will connect students with the business world. Students will be encouraged to respond to what employers want them to learn by sharpening their skills and knowledge through their learning experiences at the college.

Long-Term Staff and Workforce Development Need: Management Training
Traditionally, management training took place either on the job or in MBA programs. In small businesses, however, on-the-job training does not provide enough time for employees to learn management. Employees also perceive MBA programs as too expensive and time-consuming. Community colleges can develop management training programs aimed at such needs of small and medium-sized businesses. And they need to examine what kind of modification to the traditional programs is necessary in order to be more responsive and effective.

Community colleges can assist businesses by creating training programs for current employees with either missing basic skills or management skills development. Programs that strengthen basic skills will help businesses reduce inherent risk in hiring new

employees. Trainees will benefit by having more chances to be promoted from within their company. The suggested cost by colleges is as low as a hundred dollars per course, which is reasonable for both businesses and the employees. Management training also encourages current employees to gain management skills before positions become available—up to two years in advance so they can properly position themselves for opportunity. Students can also learn about new careers through job shadowing through which they observe someone at work for a day and gain a realistic picture of the job.

Existing and Projected Service Gaps and Potential Impacts on the Local Business, Public, Community and Faith-Based, and Higher Education Sectors

Solutions to Training and Education Gaps
Trends in education and business sectors display a wide gap between required training and current education. The education sector does not have a clear understanding about recent trends in emerging markets. Students are seeking their career goals without knowing what their future employers want from them, or where their skills can best be applied. Employers in the business field look for certain capacity and skills from their potential employees of which both the educators and students are not aware. The knowledge gap needs to be bridged in order for colleges to provide proper training for business owners.

Impact on Business Sector and Potential Solutions
The impact of the knowledge gap on the business sector is further impacted by the view of business owners that the acquisition of basic skills is the individual's responsibility and a sign of motivation, thus a lack of skills may be an indicator of a lack of motivation and thus a poor employee. Their experience with unmotivated and unskilled employees makes them reluctant in assisting their employees with reimbursement for courses. Business owners want employees who have enough motivation to spend their time and obtain necessary skills when they offer to send them to community college for training. However, the reality is that many unskilled workers must juggle multiple commitments, and traditional academic courses may not fit their schedule.

The business sector also faces difficulties in utilizing available matching funds provided by the state and federal government when they want to create their own training program. For some businesses, training at community colleges is too slow and cumbersome and they need to train their employees fast. However, matching government funds often have higher and more expensive requirements for creation of a new program. The mismatch would result in underutilization of available funds while adding financial pressure on local businesses. Flexibility will be required by both businesses and community colleges to accommodate the need for training. Continued dialogue will provide solutions in some areas. Clearly, the business sector expects employees to have acquired basic skills in reading comprehension and math. Those expectations need to be made clear to high school and college students.

Impact on Public Sector and Potential Solutions
The impact on the Public Sector is that it is harder to attract businesses if overall educational attainment is low, which in turn affects the quality of life in the service area as well as depresses tax revenue relative to more well educated communities. Participants outlined their developmental strategies for small business, workforce, and community that will create a business-friendly environment.

Small business development initiatives will identify resources within the community-based and public sectors that address business needs, either for local businesses or local residents starting business. Business education will assist businesses to expand and become more successful. Workforce development initiatives will focus on educating workers and on discovering the current needs of businesses and residents, particularly in emerging and high-tech industries. Community development initiatives for business and worker education will be developed that assist local community and faith-based organizations to collaborate with the public and private sectors.

Another solution proposed by the public sector is marketing, developing a marketing tool kit. The aim would be to attract new businesses and encourage businesses to partner with the community. The first step is to identify resources in the region and to identify incentives to encourage more involvement from businesses.

Impact on Community and Faith-Based Sectors and Potential Solutions
The impact of extended job training on the Community and Faith-Based sector is that more people are requiring support services while pursuing higher education because they tend to be older and are likely to have their own families.

This sector provides volunteer-led programs and volunteer experiences as a solution to bridge the knowledge gap. Volunteer work at community and faith-based organizations can help to develop soft skills required by employees and to build a resume for job advancement. Some organizations also offer training programs run by volunteers to those who are already in the work force. The training focuses on developing technical skills and leadership. Customized training sessions in topic areas might be another project if funding becomes available for development. Some faith-based organizations are currently offering academic enrichment program for youth starting in 2nd and 3rd grade in order to strengthen the foundation of learning ability at an earlier age.

Impact on Higher Education Sector and Potential Solutions
The higher education sector only sees the people who have already realized the importance of education, usually at a later age (28 to 29 on average). The higher education sector must be willing to establish interactive networks with businesses, community, and non-profit organizations to reach out to people at a younger age so that they are prepared for higher-paying jobs sooner.

The business sector wants to collaborate with the education sector in delivering the message of the importance of education to employees. The higher education sector could craft a message to be disseminated to workers through their place of employment.

Southwest College could make its courses available at business facilities so students do not spend time traveling. The higher education sector also recognizes the opportunity to have interactive relationships with community and faith-based organizations and wants to hear from the community what they want from education.

The higher education sector can also prepare grant applications to programs that support partnerships between colleges and the community, such as the Community Outreach Partnership Center (COPC) program. In addition, Southwest College qualifies for the Hispanic Serving Institutions Assisting Communities (HSIAC) grant administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.   Participating in these programs will enhance the partnership between the college and community and address their real needs.

Appendices

USC CENTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
SCHOOL OF POLICY, PLANNING, AND DEVELOPMENT
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

14

Appendix I: Phase I Agenda

Community Organizations Focus Group
Development of iLEAD "Economic Development Strategies Report"
Thursday, March 11, 2004

Goals

1. Identify trends both positive and negative for Community Organizations
2. Identify the business and service needs of the region
3. Identify the staff and workforce development needs of the region
4. Identify what this focus group expects of the other groups

Schedule

12:00–1:00   Lunch

1:00 – 1:10   Introductions/Expectations

1:10 – 1:25   (1) Identify trends both positive and negative (current and projected)
1:25 – 1:35   Prioritize trends – High, Medium & Low

1:35 – 1:50   (2) Identify the business and service needs of the region
1:50 – 2:00   Prioritize needs – High, Medium & Low

2:00 – 2:15   (3) Identify staff and workforce development needs of the region
2:15 – 2:25   Prioritize needs – High, Medium & Low

2:25 – 2:40   (4) Identify what this focus group expects of the others
2:40 – 2:50   Rank expectations

2:50 – 3:00   Conclusion/ Closing remarks

Appendix II: Phase I Presentation

Public Sector Focus Group

A Collaborative Project Between
LA Southwest College and USC
Center for Economic Development

Introduction

- Institute for Local and Economic Development at LA Southwest College (iLEAD)
- USC Center for Economic Development (CED)

LASC Service Area

Focus Groups

- **Public Sector**
- Higher Education
- Community Organizations
  - Nonprofits
  - Community Advocacy Groups
  - Religious Organizations
- Business

Agenda

- **Public Sector Trends**
  - Positive and negative
- **Needs of the region**
  - Business, service, and public sector
- **Workforce development needs**
- **Your Expectations of other Sectors**

Next Steps

- Further community research
- Expansion of programs at LASC to meet requirements determined from focus groups

Conclusion

Thank you!

Appendix III: Phase I Meeting Notes

USC CENTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
SCHOOL OF POLICY, PLANNING, AND DEVELOPMENT
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

17

Notes from Phase One Focus Groups

Public Sector Focus Group Meeting
February 23, 2004

Higher Education Focus Group
February 26, 2004

Community and Faith Based Organizations Focus Group
March 11, 2004

Public Sector Focus Group Meeting
February 23, 2004

Attendees: Robert Mejia   South Bay Workforce Investment Board
  Yvonne Mallory   City of Gardena
  Harold Roth   City of Hawthorne
  Helen Ramirez   City of Hawthorne
  Hilda Kennedy   City of Inglewood
  Aldra Allison   City of Inglewood
  Joe Aro   South Bay Economic Development Partnership
  Dwayne Gathers   Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation
  Barbra Levine   Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation
  Tod Sword   South Bay Economic Development Partnership
  Joe Rouzan   LA City Center for Economic Development
  Richard Galope   Los Angeles Southwest College

I. Positive and/or Negative Trends for the Public Sector

A. High Priority
   a. Reduction in funding available from government sources
   At this time government does not provide direct access to resources to the private
   sector. There is a need for government to facilitate procurement lists. This will guide
   those businesses who need to become familiarized with procurement procedure.

   **b. At the moment tax structure works as a disincentive for non-retail business
   development**
   Cash strapped local and city governments seek taxes generated from retail, thus
   overlooking the potential benefits of attracting manufacturers.

   c. Retail businesses usually outbid on manufacturers on land

   **d. Rising workers compensation and family insurance costs acts as a
   disincentive for companies to hire more employees**

   **e. Companies pay current workers overtime to avoid any additional family
   insurance and workers compensation costs**

   **f. Small businesses are not aware of the types of government services that are
   available to them**

   g. Local governments are lacking relationships with businesses

   **h. Relationship building between local government and businesses needs to
   occur so that local business stays in the community**

      i. There is a definite need to educate elected officials on revenue generating businesses and utilization of departments within the city government

B. Medium Priority
    a. Community developers are making no effort to engage with the community
    b. Businesses need to respond to community concerns
    c. Local governments need to focus on infrastructure that attracts businesses
    d. There is a disconnect between the public sector and private sector
    e. Businesses and local governments should build on the technical assistance that already exists to improve communication

C. Low Priority
    a. Term limits have caused politicians initiate short-term projects that will bring short-term prosperity
    b. Politicians need to create long-term projects that will create long term benefits
    c. Politicians need to build relationships with businesses to keep them in the community
    d. Businesses are not communicating enough to optimize mutual business prosperity.

II. Staff and Workforce Development Needs of the Region

A. High Priority
    a. Financial education is needed for small businesses
    b. Different size loans
    c. Micro loan vs. Macro loan
    d. Affordable government-approved brownfields are demanded by local businesses
    e. Improvement in educational attainment and workforce skills are needed in the area
    f. Bilingual skills
    g. Language proficiency
    h. Cultural awareness
    i. Support of education/science
    j. Cultural conflict resolution

B. Medium Priority
    a. Skill sets development among the unemployed workforce is needed
    b. Workforce retaining for those who will be laid-off is necessary
    c. Education on what services are available to businesses is vital to business improvements
    d. It is imperative that businesses assess themselves to identify areas where they can improve

III. Business and Service Needs of the Region

    A. High Priority
   a. Training and workforce development institutions must focus on training workers in the following areas:
   b. Retraining workforce laid off workforce
   c. Customer service skills
   d. Language proficiency
   e. Work ethic
   f. Organization culture
   g. Workforce development organizations need to professionalize their workforce and services
   h. On going training is essential for workers who want to keep up with dynamic work environment
   i. Managers must be retrained to inspire the workforce
   j. The creation of a system that connects employees to available jobs in the area is needed

    B. Medium Priority
   a. Interview training for companies is necessary for businesses who want to select the most qualified candidate
   b. Interview training for work seekers and students is pivotal for job attainment
   c. There is an apparent lack of foundational skills among the workforce
   d. A lack of mutual commitment
   e. Underdeveloped workforce
   f. Loyal between businesses and employees is eroding
   g. Job shadowing and internships are imperative to workforce and career development
   h. New and flexible ways to provide technical job training are needed
   i. Business must utilize different sources for training employees
   j. On the job training services
   k. Outsource training if companies cannot afford training
   l. Community college ought to focus on technical training for students

IV. What This Focus Group Expects of the Other Groups?

    A. Education

Educational institutions must create outreach programs that promote career development through education. Educational institutions should also invite alumni to present career opportunities to high schools and community colleges.

B. Nonprofit/Faith Based Sector

Nonprofits/faith based sector should educate workforce center about resource that they provide such as childcare and after school programs for children. Nonprofits can also assist in the development of industrial parks so that the burden is not all placed on businesses. Finally this sector could assist in the development of a professional workforce through the creation of internships.

C. Business

Business must assist in the development of their workforce through paid training and workforce development activities. Credible nonprofits can develop and train workforce to ensure that proper training has taken place. Business can also participate in workforce development through the initiation of internship programs that provide young people with real work experience.

February 26, 2004

Attendees: Linda Hagedorn   University of Southern California
                 Sachit Sinha   SBDC-El Camino College – Small Business Development
                                         Center
                 John Means   El Camino College
                 Leige Henderson   Southwest Los Angeles College
                 Leticia Barajas   Southwest Los Angeles College
                 Nouha Toure   Southwest Los Angeles College
                 Reggie Morris   Southwest Los Angeles College
                 F.I. Cajayon   Santa Monica College
                 Derrick Mins   University of California, Los Angeles

I. Positive and/or Negative Trends for the Higher Education Sector

A. High Priority

a. Today's students have low basic skills

The current college students have low basic skills. Writing and mathematic skills are not sufficient for preparation for success in the junior college or university setting. The low basic skills of students entering the community college system are also insufficient for success in the job market.

b. Faculty development is lacking with pace of technology

There is a definite need for faculty development. Colleges need to find ways of attracting better qualified faculty. Also, there should be ongoing in-house training of faculty members at the community colleges. Professional training of faculty members throughout the academic year is important to insure faculty intellectual growth and improvement.

c. Education is evolving rapidly

Currently, accelerated learning has been successful in educating a certain pool of students. Classroom learning should be balanced by off campus "real world" experience to insure student academic success and growth.

d. Today's students are not being adequately tracked

Students are not well tracked if at all while within the community college setting or after they leave. Colleges should track students within the school setting to help students in need of academic assistance and to provide appropriate counseling. Community colleges should track students after graduation to insure their academic and community programs are working to enhance student success in the work world.

e. Funding sources of community colleges are dwindling

There is an apparent lack of adequate funding of academic and community programs and other activities within community colleges. Instead, there has been an increased

reliance on non-traditional funding sources in order to ensure that all of the programs survive within community colleges. Community colleges have the ability to sell their resources and programs to students, community members, and businesses to receive other forms of funding.

f. Community relations are strained as budgets shrink

Within community colleges, there is a lack of flexibility to respond to the needs of the community. The community and the colleges should work together more. Often times, collaboration is driven by need.

B. Medium Priority

a. Economic development is becoming a priority

Economic development between large and small businesses has begun to emphasize technology. It is important for economic development to be linked to educational institutions. Bridging the gap between the academic setting and business within the community is important.

b. Skills of incoming students have declined rapidly

In college, the individuals with the lowest skill level need the most support, academically. For all students, there is a need for money management skills and other skills important in the "real world".

c. Alumni organizations are becoming influential

There is a lack of strong alumni organizations within the community colleges. More networking events and mixers should be established in order to create ties between alumni and current students.

d. Student capacities are declining with budgets

Unfortunately, there is not a place for every student in the community college system and universities in California. There are not enough resources or space. We need to realize that many students in community colleges are not young people. Many have been out of high school for ten years or more and have families. Today, more people of every age group are attending college and should receive adequate attention.

C. Low Priority

a. Local workers cannot find local jobs

The service area of many community colleges includes not only community members, but local workers. Many times, students chose a college based on proximity to their job.

b. Tenure is becoming less relevant

The question remains as to whether tenure is really necessary for community college faculty members.

II. Staff and Workforce Development Needs of the Region

A. High Priority

a. Life-long learning

Life long learning is important to insure that workers ascend the professional ladder and lead successful lives. Life long learning is also important to insure that workers learn new and upcoming technology. Students also need more basic and intermediate computer skills in order to stay competitive in the job market. More networking and distance learning options are necessary to appeal to all potential students. More classes should be introduced that provide training for students who have families and full-time jobs or those who have limited time to take classes. Team learning between students and faculty members is important. Students also need to learn time management skills in order to become successful in school and in life. Students also need to learn more about cultural diversity within the classroom setting.

b. Define target population

Community colleges need to define their target population.

c. Upgrade skills of faculty and staff

Community colleges need to also practice the idea of training the trainer to insure student and faculty success.

d. Share best practices

Colleges also need to collaborate amongst each other and share best practices. Success and failure stories should be passed amongst the different schools.

B. Medium Priority

a. Redefine purpose and role

Community colleges need to redefine their sense of purpose and role within the community. Community colleges need to define their goals for their students.

III. Business and Service Needs of the Region

A. High Priority

a. Basic workforce skills
b. Computers skills
c. Customer service skills
d. Accounting services
e. How to start a business
f. English as a second language (vocational)
g. Reading and writing skills
h. Ability to follow instructions
i. Ability to ask when you do not know
j. Being able to come back and say when you are done
k. Being accepting of other cultures

l. Presentation
m. Written skills

Business should share the skills needed for a particular job. Students should realize that communication is important to be successful. Individuals should also continue to strive to be above and beyond. Teamwork and feeling part of a team are important for a positive workplace environment. Students should be able to accept constructive criticism in order to grow professional. Students should be taught to understand hierarchies within an organization. Individuals should also understand that leadership helps when striving to move up career ladders.

B. Medium Priority

There should be outside certification to signal those who can perform the job specified. There should also be more classes aimed at enhancing technology and other hard skills.

IV.   What This Focus Group Expects of the Other Groups?

A. Education

The focus groups expect the expectations and performance of high school graduates to increase. More students should graduate with the basic skills needed to live a productive life and enter the college setting. The educational community also needs to define the role of the community colleges and their goals for entering and exiting students. This information should be properly conveyed to the community. There should be a computerized database which shows the community based organizations and other services in the area. Community colleges should continue to market themselves and illuminate the strengths within their schools.

B. Public Sector

a. High Priority
The public sector should be the lead agency in defining the needs of the Higher Education sector. The public sector contains information about businesses, community based organizations, and colleges that they should share to all entities. The public sector should control the workforce direction. There is a current belief that there is a lack of public sector support, which is necessary to understand the service area. There should be more discussions between the public sector and other sectors within the community.

b. Medium Priority
Contracting with the public sector is still important.

C. Business

Successful small businesses are important and should be established to stimulate the local economy. All businesses need to understand how to contract. There should be a commitment of businesses to collaborate and hire community members. There should be a more flexible hiring process and more paid internships should be provided for students to help enhance their "real world" skills. There should also be a commitment to helping alleviating the costs of tuition for students and funds should be established to help contribute to local colleges. Businesses should continue to build a relationship with educational institutions. Networks should be established with the Chamber of Commerce. Businesses should continue to create and train in regards to diversity. Honesty and ethical behavior should exist within businesses.

D. Nonprofit

Nonprofit organizations should continue to work with stakeholder groups. They should also work with work source centers and determine what programs they offer for the community. There should also be more collaboration between nonprofits and schools to develop programs for young people. They should maintain a relationship with businesses and the workforce and should offer internships for the community. Nonprofits should help with the childcare issues of community members, some of which attend classes at the local colleges. Non profits should also work together to develop the community areas.

Community and Faith Based Organizations Focus Group
March 11, 2004

Attendees:	Davida Moore Blackwell	New Creation Christian Faith Center
	Stephen Clark	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
	Walter Clark	Glory Christian Fellowship International
	Viveca Finley	Lincoln Family Life Center
	Jullien Gordon	S.H.A.P.E. - Student Heightening Academic Performance through Education
	Audrey Levy	Glory Christian Fellowship International
	Mary Madison	Greater Bethany Economic Development Center
	E. Lonii Prevost	Adams Westmont Business Center
	Ernest Roberts	Playa Vista Job Opportunities and Business Services
	Robert Ruben	Greater Bethany Economic Development Center
	Linda Smith	FAME Renaissance Center – Business Development
	Charles Tolbert	Apostolic Faith Home Assembly

I.   Positive and/or Negative Trends for the Organizations Sector

A. High Priority

a. The budget crisis has caused reduced funding to local community organizations

Funds are not filtering through government agencies to Community Based Organizations(CBOs) and Faith Based Organizations(FBOs) in the manner and rate they have previously been. CBOs and FBOs are now competing with the public sector for grant funding

b. Increased need for the expansion of capacity building within CBOs and FBOs

CBOs and FBOs are increasingly finding themselves unable to fulfill the requirements of grant funding agencies. Funding programs are now basing decisions on the CBO/FBOs performance ability. Increased competition between CBOs and FBOs is limiting the sharing of best practices.

c. Declining community resources for the promotion of health

There is a lack of supermarkets and food retailers offering healthy foods and alternatives with the region. Rising numbers of uninsured persons within the region continue unchecked. The high rate of obesity within the region, in particular that of the black community is also of critical concern.

d. Employment opportunities within the region are not increasing
Within the region there is more uncertainty in the job market as compared to the rest of the City of Los Angeles. There is an apparent growth in the outsourcing of jobs for the region. This region suffers from a higher unemployment rate than the rest of the City of Los Angeles and suffers from a lack of high quality job opportunities within the region. Many employed persons in the region are not earning a living wage and are living paycheck to paycheck and these numbers are increasing. Government agencies are now involving themselves with private organizations by offering inducements to locate in certain areas, i.e. Wal-Mart.

e. As clientele becomes more diverse, there is a lack of resources to meet all their needs
The region does not have the services or infrastructure to meet the multiple and multi-varied needs of the population.

f. Lack of affordable housing within the region
The housing market in Southern California has become increasingly volatile. The price of homes in the region has doubled over the past 7 years. This coupled with the low interest rates have left little, if any affordable housing within the region.

g. FBOs are not accepted as community based organizations that provide valuable social services
Although recognized nationally and included within the Presidents initiative, FBOs continue to meet resistance when undertaking efforts to obtain funding normally reserved for CBOs and government agencies.

h. Lack of cooperation and collaboration between CBOs, Higher Educational Institutions and FBOs although they serve much of the same clientele.
CBO/FBO's do not meet regularly to share best practices. Additionally these organizations do not work collaboratively to remedy issues. In many cases, their services and service areas overlap.

i. CBO/FBOs are increasingly addressing issues that government has failed to address.
With the declining economy and shrinking of government programs, CBOs and FBOs are working to meet those service gaps.

j. Lack of funding available from foundations and charities
Due to the recent economic decline, foundations and charities have lowered their funding levels. Although the economy is beginning to progress, it is expected that these foundations and charities will require a substantially longer period to recover.

k. Increased number of working poor within the region

B. Medium Priority

    a. Lack of dining alternatives beyond fast-food within the region
The region has very little alternatives for dining out. Sit down restaurants include Denny's, Mexican Restaurants and various other "greasy spoons."

    b. Technical assistance provided to CBOs and FBOs is inadequate
CBO/FBOs require additional assistance in meeting funding requirements. As they are "community agencies," they lack many of the technical skills required to meet the requirements of these funding agencies.

II. Staff and Workforce Development Needs of the Region

A. High Priority

    a. Improved public transportation system to meet the needs of the community
    b. Additional outreach and incentives to promote business development in the region
    c. Access to capital and funding streams for economic development and social services
    d. Entrepreneurial training and business management courses for local and prospective business owners
    e. Improved and expanded youth programs
    f. More highly educated and skilled workforce to include computer skills
    g. Improved educational resources for children, in particular those in grade school
    h. Improved safety and sense of safety throughout the region
    i. Entertainment venues, recreational resources and quality hotels
    j. Increased private and industrial development throughout the community
    k. Increased contracting opportunities for small business with large businesses in the region

B. Medium Priority

    a. Alternative energy sources; in particular an alternative to gasoline
    b. Better quality and variety of supermarkets and restaurants
    c. Better quality and variety of commercial businesses
    d. Improved safety at recreational areas
    e. Large parcels of land to encourage and recruit big box development
    f. To promote the region as an attractive venue for business development

III. Business and Service Needs of the Region

A. High Priority

    a. Workforce that can utilize 21st century and emerging technologies

    b. A more educated and skilled workforce

    c. A workforce trained in construction methods, materials and policies
These skills are to include knowledge of the tools of the trade. Additionally the workforce should understand the benefits of unionization, their rights and responsibilities as employees and the fees associated with various types of work.

    d. Affordable housing

IIIa. Business and Service Needs within the CBO and FBO organizational structure

A. High Priority

    a. Sustainable funding sources
CBO/FBOs should look to a fee based structure for services. Additionally, these agencies should look for multi-year funding opportunities.

    b. Non-profit organizational development and management training

    c. Employees with basic office skills

    d. How to develop and maintain a budget

    e. Partnership building among and within CBOs and FBOs

    f. Access to best practices of the field
CBO/FBOs should work to create a resource and data bank for the sharing of these practices.

    g. Employees with soft skills
It is expected that employees be equipped with the following: Strong work ethics; conflict resolution skills; customer service/interpersonal skills and finally patience.

IV. What This Focus Group Expects of the Other Groups?

A. Education

a. High Priority
It is expected that the educational sector be more efficient outreach to the community and CBO/FBOs. Higher Education institutions should streamline the process for program development and implementation. Administration and educators should be knowledgeable in the current career ladders of their discipline. Commitment to K-12 education with emphasis on those students in the 9th-12th grades is also expected. Student research opportunities with CBOs and FBOs should also be pursued. Local institutions should also modify admissions criteria so as not to exclude students within the region. Effective internship programs and linkages with CBOs and FBOs is also a much need link with the higher education sector. The process of offering a non credit course should be streamlined and local institutions should collaborate with CBOs and FBOs on funding opportunities.

b. Medium Priority
Institutions should conduct strategic planning to identify what needs are not being met and develop a plan to meet those needs. Additional technical assistance should also be provided for those who were enrolled in a course or certificate program post completion of program or course.

B. Public Sector

a. High Priority
It is expected that the public sector be supportive of the efforts of CBOs and FBOs in legislative and funding aspects. The sector should also provide education regarding available funding and how specific legislation will affect CBOs and FBOs. Along those similar lines, CBOs and FBOs expect some form of grant administration and technical assistance. Increased coordination, streamlining of government agencies and of the structure for grant funding and administration would also be of benefit. The public sector should also be active to improve their responsiveness to the needs of the region. It should also be noted that needed assistance may be outside of funding assistance.

C. Business

a. High Priority
It is expected that the business community be willing to engage with the CBOs and FBOs of the region. The sector should be open to attending a networking event with other businesses, community members and CBO/FBOs. Additionally, it is expected that this sector provide entry level positions and mentorship to the youth in the community and have a willingness to sponsor programs or events.

Appendix IV: Phase I Outcomes

Phase I Outcomes

The top trends identified within each sector were:
- Public Sector
  - Funding is reduced
  - Cost of insurance for workers is rising
  - Businesses have less information on different city departments
  - Culture shift needed in government in order to communicate with business
- Higher Education Sector
  - Today's students have low basic skills
  - Rapid changes in information and technology require development programs to maintain high quality faculty
  - Funding is reduced
- Community Organizations
  - Funding is reduced
  - Lack of cooperation between community organizations and higher education
  - Lack of affordable housing

The top immediate and long-term business/service needs expressed by each sector were:
- Public Sector
  - Access to capital
  - Brownfields - affordable government approval
  - Language proficiency
- Higher Education Sector
  - Computer skills
  - Team learning
  - Cultural awareness
  - Training for trainers
- Community Organizations
  - Workforce that can utilize 21st century and emerging technologies
  - Sustainable funding services
  - Partnership building among and within CBOs and FBOs

The top workforce development needs expressed by each sector were:
- Public
  - Funding
  - Management training
  - Workforce training
  - Training and jobs are in different places
- Higher Education
  - Basic workforce skills
  - Employees with written communication skills
  - Communication/Presentation skills
  - Acceptance of other cultures

- Community Organizations
  - Access to capital and funding for economic development and social services
  - Increased private and industrial development throughout community
  - Increased contracting opportunities for small businesses w/large businesses

The top service gaps in each sector were determined from the expectations on that sector expressed by the other sectors. The letter in parentheses denotes which sector observed the expectation or service gap. E = Education, C = Community, P = Public.

- Public Sector
  - More public sector support (E)
  - To be in communication with other sectors (E)
  - Share info on new companies (E)
  - Support efforts of CBOs and FBOs in legislative and funding efforts (C)
  - Streamlining structure for grant funding and administration (C)
  - Grant administration and technical assistance (C)
- Higher Education Sector
  - More efficient outreach to community and CBO/FBOs (C)
  - Commitment to K-12 education w/emphasis on 9-12th grades (C)(P)
  - Collaborate w/local CBO/FBOs on funding opportunities (C)
  - Provide access to the community (C)
- Business Sector
  - Employers should foster teamwork (E)
  - Collaborate on developing training programs and hiring grads (E)(P)
  - Willingness to engage w/local CBO/FBOs (C)
  - Be open to attending a networking event w/other businesses, community members, CBOs (C)
  - Provide entry-level positions and mentorship to youth in community (C) internships (P)
- Community Organizations
  - Provision of childcare for working families (P)
  - Educate workforce about work source centers (P)
  - Development of stakeholder groups (P)
  - Partnerships with businesses for development e.g. industrial parks (P)

Appendix V: Phase II Agenda

Final Focus Group
Development of iLEAD "Economic Development Strategies Report"
Thursday, March 25, 2004

Goals

1. Identify impacts of the top two trends
2. Identify solutions to the top two business and service needs of the region
3. Identify solutions to the top two staff and workforce development needs of the region
4. Identify solutions to the top two service gaps of each sector

Schedule

12:00–1:00 Lunch

1:00 – 1:15   Introductions/Expectations

1:15 – 1:35   Identify impacts of the top two trends
              1)
              2)

1:35 – 2:00   Identify solutions to the top two business and service needs of the region
              1)
              2)

2:00 – 2:25   Identify solutions to the top two staff and workforce development needs of the region
              1)
              2)

2:25 – 2:50   Identify solutions to the top two service gaps of each sector
              1)
              2)

2:50 – 3:00   Conclusion/ Closing remarks

Appendix VI: Phase II Presentation

Colloboration Focus Group

A Collaborative Project Between
LA Southwest College and USC
Center for Economic Development

Introduction

- Institute for Local and Economic Development at LA Southwest College (iLEAD)

- USC Center for Economic Development (CED)

LASC Service Area

Agenda

- Review top trends; business/service needs; workforce development needs; service gaps within each sector

- Identify impacts of the top two trends

- Identify solutions to the top two business/service needs of the region

- Identify solutions to the top two workforce development needs

- Identify solutions to the top two service gaps of each sector

Top Trends within each Sector

- Public
  - Funding is reduced
  - Cost of insurance for workers is rising
  - Businesses have less information on different city departments
  - Culture shift needed in gov't in order to communicate with bus.
- Higher Education
  - Today's students have low basic skills
  - Rapid changes in information and technology require development programs to maintain high quality faculty
  - Funding is reduced
- Community Organizations
  - Reduced funding
  - Lack of cooperation between CBOs and Higher Education
  - Lack of Affordable Housing

Top Business/Service Needs

- Public
  - Access to capital
  - Brownfields - affordable government approval
  - Language proficiency
- Higher Education
  - Computer Skills
  - Team Learning
  - Cultural Awareness
  - Training for trainers
- Community Organizations
  - Workforce that can utilize 21st century and emerging technologies
  - Sustainable funding services
  - Partnership building among and within CBOs and FBOs

Top Workforce Development Needs

- Public
  - Funding
  - Management Training
  - Workforce training
  - Training and jobs are in different places
- Higher Education
  - Basic workforce skills
  - Employees with written communication skills
  - Communication/Presentation skills
  - Acceptance of other cultures
- Community Organizations
  - Access to capital and funding for eco. dev. and social services
  - Increased private and industrial dev. throughout community
  - Increased contracting opportunities for sm. Businesses w/large businesses

Top Service Gaps of each Sector

- Public
  - More public sector support (E)
  - To be in communication with other sectors (E)
  - Share info on new companies (E)
  - Support efforts of CBOs and FBOs in legislative and funding efforts (C)
  - Streamlining structure for grant funding and administration (C)
  - Grant administration and technical assistance (C)
- Higher Education
  - More efficient outreach to community and CBO/FBOs (C)
  - Commitment to K012 education w/emphasis on 9-12th grades (C)(P)
  - Collaborate w/local CBO/FBOs on funding opportunities (C)
  - Community Organizations
  - Provide access to the community (E)
- Business
  - Employers should foster teamwork (E)
  - Collaborate on developing training programs and hiring grads (E)(P)
  - Willingness to engage w/local CBO/FBOs (C)
  - Be open to attending a networking event w/other businesses, community members, CBOs (C)
  - Provide entry-level positions and mentorship to youth in community (C) internships (P)
- Nonprofit
  - Provision of childcare for working families (P)
  - Educate workforce about work source centers (P)
  - Development of stakeholder groups (P)
  - Partnerships with businesses for development e.g. industrial parks (P)

Next Steps

- Further community research
- Expansion of programs at LASC to meet requirements determined from focus groups

Appendix VII: Phase II Meeting Notes

Phase II Focus Group Meeting
March 25, 2004

Attendees:

Maribel Aldana	City of Gardena
Aldra Allison	City of Inglewood
Leticia Barajas	Los Angeles Southwest College
Bruce Baron	Los Angeles Southwest College
Davida M. Blackwell	New Creation Christian Faith Center
Douglas Campbell	Los Angeles Southwest College
Ms. Cleveland	Athens Westmont Business Center, Los Angeles County
Joni Collins	Los Angeles Southwest College
Delma Dixon	Youth Opportunities Unlimited, Inc.
Thelma Eaton	Coalition of 100 Black Women
Viveca Finley	Lincoln Family Life Center
Sheila Gray	Scribe Technical Grant Proposals-501c3 Incorporations
Paul Graven	Microcosm
Clarence Griffin	Asia Jerome Honfun
Linda S. Hagedorn	Los Angeles Southwest College
Royce Harris	National Community Reinvestment Coalition
Leige Henderson	Los Angelse Southwest College
Philipp Huber	Los Angeles Southwest College
Noreen Jackson	Touched By An Angel Child Care
Brandy Jones	
Denese Lewis	Glory Christian Fellowship
Ceola McDonald	Create-A-Kid
Volia Orozco	County of Los Angeles
Lonii Prevost	Athens Westmont Business Center, Los Angeles County
Joseph Rouzan	Los Angeles City Community Development Department
Robert Rubin	Los Angeles Southwest College
Mirian Ruane	Los Angeles Southwest College
Sachit Sinha	El Camino College
Warren Telting	Youth Opportunities Unlimited, Inc.
Thomas Wilson	Working Together For Solutions Inc.

Impacts on the Local Business, Public, Community- and Faith-Based, and Higher Education Sectors of the current trend: Today's students have low basic skills

Current college students have low basic skills. Writing and mathematic skills are not sufficient for success in the junior college or university setting. The low basic skills of students entering the community college system are also insufficient for success in the job market.

Fact: 85% of students entering Southwest College require some remedial math and or English, the average age is 28-29.

1. **Impacts on Higher Education**
   a. Remediation takes resources away from other programs
   b. Higher education system has been forced to correct deficiencies rather than making the K-12 system more effective
   c. Transfer students from community college are better prepared for a 4-year college than those entering from high school.
2. **Impacts on Business**
   a. Business sector questions whether high school graduates requiring remedial learning can learn and become competent employees
   b. Certain businesses can no longer hire new high school graduates; they don't have the math skills they once did
   c. Business sector isn't sure risk (of training) is worth it
   d. The cost in time and money of training a minimum wage worker beyond a short on-the-job training (of how to perform the tasks associated with the job) is prohibitive for many small business owners especially when they must be the one to conduct the training. Even entry-level applicants have to have some basic skills – reading etc.
   e. Even when a training program is designed, businesses aren't confident that the students will be ready when they need them
   f. How do you know you picked the right person, they might not be trainable up to the right level
   g. Small technology company reported that they recruit Masters students to get students with enough knowledge and only from a few select schools
   h. Business owner said he can't take on basic skills training, he needs the education system to do so because he has enough to take care of in running his company. He takes complete responsibility for training in procedures, new technology, etc.
3. **Impact on Public Sector**
   a. Harder to attract businesses to area
   b. Youth with lower basic skills are more susceptible to employers that offer low-wage jobs (WalMart) and end up using more social services
   c. Business needs to know how to access training dollars so they can hire an individual with less risk because government carries the cost.
4. **Impact on Community- and Faith-Based Organizations**
   a. Youth with lower basic skills require more supportive services when they return to school

Solutions to the top two immediate and long-term Business and Service Needs of Local Business, Public, Community- and Faith-Based, and Higher Education Sectors.

Immediate Business and Service Need for Language Proficiency and Soft Skills
Communication is key to being successful. Language skills are necessary to compete in the high-tech job market. English is the language of written policies and procedures. For non-native speakers, a basic understanding is needed, for native speakers, reading comprehension is a must. It's about understanding the whole picture – ex: health codes at restaurants, the why as well as the how so that they can make informed decisions. The business sector wants employees to have sufficient competence in English so that they clearly understand their supervisors; they also want employees who are well-versed in business etiquette, appropriate manners, being polite, and answering the phone.

1. English as a Second Language classes at Los Angeles Southwest College
2. Technical English classes at Cerritos College
3. Community- and Faith-Based could train their volunteers in soft skills which would translate into job skills
4. Community- and Faith-Based organizations could provide customized training but need funding to develop modules
5. A course exists that was developed via a Department of Labor grant:
   1. Business operating procedures, how to shake someone's hand , etc.
   2. Living skills, how to interview, fill out application, - funded to earmark certain populations – fee-based 5-week course – payback period – low-wage job
6. The Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement (MESA) program connects education with application to engage students in learning so they are motivated to attend college. This provides an incentive for the student to acquire needed language skills.
7. If a wide-spread language issue exists at a company it can be addressed through a very focused language training program: 1 hour during or after work at job site. The goal is to provide the language skills to be functional in their job. It was used successfully to help small business owners maintain and grow their businesses by developing a common language training program.
8. Southwest College will partner with business and non-profits to identify grant funding to address needs.
   - Distance Learning: equipment is placed at company and employees view course after work handling the issue of accessibility
   - Developing on-line courses – have 16 thus far (174 enrolled in on-line Algebra course)

Long-Term Business and Service Need for Team Learning
Team work hasn't been recognized fully as a need in the business world, but it is very important. The workplace isn't about individuals getting homework done like in school. The skill needed is to figure out whose skills to deploy on which part of a project to get it

done most efficiently. Mistakes made when learning this skill on the job are costly to business, they would prefer to have it learned academically.

1. Could adapt an existing program for teaching about teamwork but it would require development dollars and teaching dollars
    3. Team teaching foster parents and social workers - they tend to clash so we teach them how to work together for the sake of the kids (social worker = professional vs. foster parent = babysitter)
2. Team teaching can be used as the foundation for establishing partnerships – Small businesses were taught how to work together to bid for contracts as a team in order to be more competitive.
3. Learn by example model – team teaching w/business person, demonstrating working as a team
4. The community college wants to figure out how to approach team learning within the various sectors
    4. Any course can teach team work by requiring students to work together as a team on assignments. The students then learn how to teach and learn together as a team. That releases teacher from doing it all one-on-one. Students learn how to split up work to those who do it best and come back together to bring others up to speed.

Solutions to the top two immediate and long-term Staff and Workforce Development Needs of the Local Business, Public, Community- and Faith-Based, and Higher Education Sectors.

Immediate Staff and Workforce Development Need: Achieving Basic Skills
In today's society, most people will have more than one career due to the pace of change in technology and business. As a result, people will need to continue to learn new skills. There is one group, however, that still needs to obtain basic skills in order to participate in the changing economy at a family-supporting level.

1. College has a citizenship center – Bridges to Success. They teach skills useful to everyone such as how to become active participants and assist with transitioning into credit classes. They offer review discussion sessions in math, English workshops, academic counseling, and encourage and support them to get ready to enter credit classes. No diploma is needed, just 18 years of age or older. They would like to create a database of services/resources to refer students to for childcare, tutoring, etc.
2. Wrap-a-round services – work and be paid to get experience while going to school, for a short – six month or so program.
    a. With a grant and a partnership, the administration of the program would be the community college, designing the program and paying wages for training from the grant, as well as child care, tutoring, books, and transportation
3. PACE – Program for Adult College Education – this program is effective because the participants come from the business world. They have study groups that provide each other support. They already know that they learn

better from each other. The classes meet one or two nights a week and all day Saturday.
4. Certification of trainees could reduce the risk in hiring new employees
5. The community college needs people from the business world to come and talk to students in Business 1 or even English 1 and explain what employers really want them to do. This will give students role models and connections with the business world. When students find out what employers want them to learn they respond. Educators are in another world and in the dark about it.
    a. A businessman offered his experience of speaking to a high school class where everyone was cutting up and he wasn't sure if he wanted to stay. Once he was introduced they straightened up so fast you could hear a pin drop. They said Mr., please etc. They knew he had something to offer – a job. It was rewarding and he's added speaking at schools to his sales calls as a means of checking in on the next crop of employees.   He has had reports that the tone of that class has changed permanently.
6. A new series of classes was developed in computer assisted office technology for web site design, 3 classes of 4 units each.
7. If an organization has 25 students a class can be offered onsite.

Long-Term Staff and Workforce Development Need: Management Training
Traditionally, management training took place either on the job or in MBA programs. In small businesses, there is less time for on-the-job training and employees see MBA programs as too expensive and time-consuming.   Community colleges can develop programs aimed at needs of small and medium-sized businesses but they need to know what they can do differently in order to be more responsive, more effective.

1. Community Colleges can assist businesses in training current employees with missing skills so they can be promoted from within – reducing risk inherent in new employees – at $100/course it's a bargain.
2. Management Training – encourage current employees to gain management training before positions become available – even 2 years – so they can position themselves for opportunity.
3. Job shadowing is a way for current students to learn about new careers.

Existing and Projected Service Gaps and Potential Impacts on the Local Business, Public, Community- and Faith-Based, and Higher Education Sectors and Potential Solutions.

Impact and Potential Solutions to Training and Education Gaps
The college doesn't understand what the emerging markets are, hence the training that will pay off. Students are asking "What shall I do with the rest of my life?" Employer knows what they want in an employee but students don't. The educators at the college don't either so there is a knowledge gap to bridge in order to provide proper training for business owners.

1. **Impact on Business Sector and Potential Solutions**
    a. The impact is that the business owner fears that if they didn't learn it in school the first time around are they really willing to put in the effort to achieve the second time around? They question why they should take over the individual's responsibility to obtain basic skills? They want employees who were motivated enough to obtain those skills.
    b. Training is needed, so one business owner offers to pay for courses, 50% take advantage, some of them don't finish. The business owner feels that it's the individual's responsibility to achieve.
    c. If basic skills are there, we promote from within and we'll send individuals to community college to obtain advanced training if they'll spend the time. Unfortunately, the motivation isn't always there to take the time out of their life to get ahead.
    d. One business owner has a training department because they need employees trained fast. Sometimes that means training from 10pm – 3am. The community college would be too slow and cumbersome. There are strings attached for matching funds from the state and federal government. Those strings were too expensive when he investigated it; he said he could do it cheaper himself.
    e. Businesses tend to be shortsighted about training and it's the first thing to go in a down-cycle.
       • Best way to show it's important is to show it. Lead by doing.
       • Take two hours on Thursday out of my time to learn.
       • Need to find balance. Specific training is generally supported, general training – i.e. management, not.
       • Maybe it needs to be 50:50 between employer and employee on both hours and tuition
2. **Impact on Public Sector and Potential Solutions**
    a. The impact on the Public Sector is that it is harder to attract businesses if educational attainment is low.
    b. Small business development initiatives – business education
       • Identify resources within the community. Identify business needs, either for local businesses or local residents starting business. Assist business to expand and become successful.
    c. Workforce development initiatives – worker education
       • Identify needs of business community and residents. Identify emerging industries and high-tech companies. Develop training program to match residents with local companies. (Workforce Investment Board)
    d. Community development initiatives for business and worker education
       • Assist local Community- and Faith-based organizations to collaborate with public and private sectors.
    e. Get involved with marketing.

- Develop marketing tool kit. Identify resources. What incentives are available for business to partner with community? And vice versa for community.

3. Impact on Community- and Faith-Based and Potential Solutions

   a. The impact on the Community- and Faith-Based Sector is that more people require support services while pursuing higher education because they tend to be older and may no longer live at home and often have families.

   b. Faith-based organizations are offering academic enrichment starting with 2nd and 3rd grade.

   c. Training is provided to people who are already in work force on technical skills and leadership. Programs are run by volunteers.

   d. Volunteer work at community- and faith-based organizations can provide skills and help to build a resume.

4. Impact on Higher Education Sector and Potential Solutions

   a. The impact on the Higher Education Sector is that they only see the people who have already realized that education is important and the average age of students is 28-29.

   b. The businessman wants the message of the importance of education delivered to his employees, perhaps the high education sector could craft a message that would appeal to workers through collaboration with businesses.

   c. Los Angeles South West College is available to teach classes at business facilities so students don't spend their time traveling. This requires a larger group of interested students.

   d. Ask the community what they want from education. Partnerships between the community and non-profit organizations are important. Leveraging resources based on an organization's interest in the need of community.

   e. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has a program that supports partnerships between colleges and the community, the Community Outreach Partnership Center grant program. In addition, there is a program that Los Angeles South West College (LASC) qualifies for, the Hispanic-serving Institutions Assisting Communities (HSIAC) Grant program. This series of focus groups is also designed to gather information for LASC to prepare an application to that program to enhance the partnership between the college and the community and address real needs.

   f. Establish good networks.