

MISSISSIPPI COMMUNITY COLLEGE FOUNDATION
NEIGHBORHOOD INITIATIVE GRANT
B-06-NI-MS-0030

Final Project Report, June 30, 2011

The Mississippi Community College Foundation received the \$198,000 Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Neighborhood Initiative Grant in late 2007 accomplish the strategic purpose of the Mississippi Entrepreneur Alliance (MEA): “To enhance communities’ capacities to use entrepreneurship development – particularly in small, distressed, and rural communities – as a strategy to stimulate investment, economic diversification, and community revitalization.” More specifically, the funds were designated to provide support to The Montgomery Institute to extend the *MyBiz* entrepreneur development program throughout Mississippi. (*MyBiz* was developed by the Institute and East Central Community College, East Mississippi Community College, Jones County Junior College, and Meridian Community College to pilot MEA activities as a key strategy of the West Alabama – East Mississippi Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development Initiative – WAEM WIRED.)

Since the last report, the Institute and the Mississippi Association of Community and Junior Colleges (MACJC) completed the \$289,000 entrepreneur training grant from American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds provided by the Mississippi Department of Employment Security. A total of 261 dislocated and adult workers and pre-release prisoners received entrepreneur training. Total funds leveraged by the HUDNI grant were \$1.416 million (\$627,000 in CDBG funds provided by the Mississippi Development Authority (MDA); \$500,000 in WIA funds provided by the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES); and the \$289,000 in ARRA/MDES funds).

The HUD Neighborhood Initiative Grant funds also provided resources for the Institute to provide technical assistance in the form of program management, training, and Internet based resources to the 15 colleges.

The following accomplishments were achieved:

1. The www.MyBiz.ms website was developed and includes 213 service providers, serves 3,979 registered users, and has expanded information on niche entrepreneur development and how to finance businesses.

2. Entrepreneur instructors were trained at the 15 colleges bringing the total to 62. Instructors are trained in the innovative *Southern Entrepreneurship Program* (SEP) developed by Dr. Brent Hales at the Trent Lott National Center of Excellence for Economic Development and Entrepreneurship at the University of Southern Mississippi. Additionally, Dr. Hales has provided recommended curriculum to adapt the program to for-credit programs.
3. Through grant activities, Small Business Development Centers, WIN Job Centers, and colleges are working in tandem to better connect unemployed and dislocated workers with small business development and entrepreneur training services.
4. Staff at Mississippi WIN Job Centers were trained on MyBiz services.
5. As of June 30, 2011, a total of 261 individuals entered training with 235 completing for a 90% completion rate.
6. 16 agencies and organizations supporting entrepreneur development jointly prepared a set of policy recommendations for the state that, if implemented, will significantly upgrade support for entrepreneur development.