

FINAL REPORT
ARRA High Growth and Emerging Industries (HGEI) Grants
Health Care

Grantees must submit their quarterly progress reports to both their Federal Project Officer and the green.jobs@dol.gov mailbox.

General Grant Information

SGA Type: SGA/DFA PY-09-01

Grantee Name: Montgomery Institute, The

Project Name: Building Health Care Ladder Opportunities for Unemployed and Dislocated Workers in East Central Mississippi

Grant Number: GJ-20039-10-60-A-28

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Program Contact Information: Hank Garner, The Montgomery Institute, P O Box 1889, Meridian, MS 601-483-2661, tmihank@bellsouth.net

For brevity, the following references are used in this report: TMI – The Montgomery Institute; DOL – U.S. Dept. of Labor; ETA – DOL Employment Training Administration; ECCC – East Central Community College; EMCC – East Central Community College; MCC – Meridian Community College; JCJC – Jones County Junior College; ARMC- Anderson Regional Medical Center; ESMH – East Mississippi State Hospital; NCGH – Neshoba County General Hospital; NMC – Noxubee Medical Complex; RHS – Rush Health Systems; MDES – Mississippi Department of Employment Security; ECMHN – East Central Mississippi Health Network; CNA – Certified Nurse Aide/Assistant; CRC – Career Readiness Certificate; WET Funds – Mississippi Workforce Enhancement Training Funds.

A. Summary of Grant Activities

This report encompasses the thirteenth quarter of the grant. This is the final report for this grant.

The main objectives of this Nursing Career Lattice Program, after approved changes to the scope of work, were: 1) to provide unemployed and dislocated workers access to Certified Nurse Aide careers in the health care field; and 2) to provide career advancement opportunities for low-wage health care workers employed in the region.

Objective #1 was substantially accomplished. Overall, 1,241 participants completed CNA training out of a participant pool of 1,383, an excellent 90% completion rate (the target rate was 82%). This represents an attainment rate of 117% of the 1,061 completion target.

WIN Job Centers referred unemployed individuals and dislocated workers to community college partners for training. Of the 1,020 individuals beginning Certified Nurse Aide training at the three community colleges, 766 were unemployed individuals (75%) and 254 were dislocated workers (25%). A total of 896 of these individuals completed the college CNA programs, a completion rate of 88%. Another 363 low-wage employees began CNA training at East Mississippi State Hospital (360) and Neshoba General Hospital (3) with 345 completing training, a completion rate of 96%.

Through June 30, 2013, a total of 879 completers were placed into unsubsidized employment, a placement rate of 71%. Of these, 739 were placed into training related health care jobs, a placement rate

of 60%. These placement rates are inaccurate, however, given the two quarter lag between training completion and access to participant placement data through the Mississippi Department of Employment Security data system. A better number is the comparison of total placements through June 30, 2013, to the completion number through December 31, 2012. That shows completion rates of 86% and 73% respectively (there were 221 completers in the final two quarters). The targeted placement rates were 95% and 90% respectively.

Objective #2 was accomplished in part. A total of 222 incumbent, low-wage health care workers received upgrade skill training at partner health care facilities, an attainment rate of 36% of the targeted 612 total. (Note: As reported in previous quarters, two factors impacted these numbers: 1) the Alliance Health Center dropped out of the project during the first year and Rush cancelled its grant funded CNA II program at the end of 2012; and 2) many potential participants received upgrade skills training at Rush and EMSH that was paid for by State of Mississippi Workforce Enhancement Training Funds rather than grant funds.)

The pilot Nurse Residency Program at Rush Health Systems was of limited success, training 36 participants. Although RHS administrators were pleased with the results of the pilot program, they made a decision to cancel it during the fourth quarter of 2012. The rationale provided was that budget tightening limited nursing capacity and caused floor nursing supervisors to resist letting newly hired nurses attend training. Rush had an excellent 100% completion rate for this program. All participants received a pay raise upon completion.

A total of 1,612 participants received grant-funded services compared to the target of 1,992, an attainment rate of 81%. (Note: 1,383 CNA participants, 222 upgrade training participants, and 36 nurse residency participants do not add to 1,612 because some of the upgrade training participants were first CNA participants.)

This statement from Ryan Smith, project navigator at East Mississippi State Hospital, well describes the impact of the grant from a health care provider perspective:

“Thanks to the ARRA grant, we have developed a skilled and knowledgeable staff of CNAs who have already contributed immensely to the hospital. Many of these CNAs would not have had the opportunity to pursue this field without the grant. In addition, the grant has helped us to maintain and enhance the skills of our LPN workforce. Many of our LPNs are now on the path to progress to ADNs which will benefit our hospital. Overall, the ARRA grant has greatly benefited East Mississippi State Hospital and its employees by providing the means to provide skill-based training to previously untrained workers and has upgraded the skills of our existing staff.”

Roger Whitlock, Dean for Workforce and Education and Development at East Central Community College provided a college perspective on the grant’s accomplishments:

“This grant provided much-needed funding support for innovative approaches to educate and train the health care workforce. The development of these creative pathways is imperative if the health care industry is to effectively manage increased demand for services while also reducing costs and improving quality. The ARRA Healthcare/CNA grant generated many innovative strategies for identifying potential employees (dislocated workers or unemployed individuals) and creatively transitioning those folks toward qualifications for contributing within a demanding occupation. These grant dollars provided East Central Community College capacity to interweave traditional workforce training with ‘navigating/hand-holding services’ for anxious individuals who may have become lost in the system. The idea of a staffer dedicating a personal focus toward a participant's goals, abilities, interests, training, and placement is

generally a foreign concept in traditional workforce development training programs, but that 'personal, supported guidance' contributed invaluable to the successful results this grant produced.

“The grant not only helped to increase the number of qualified Certified Nursing Assistants in the district, it also helped to build communication and trust between the college, affiliated professional groups, and health care employers in this area. Many related entities are now more collaboratively working toward common goals for overcoming common challenges.”

Wayne LaGrone, project navigator at Meridian Community College, pointed to the benefits this program provided to participants:

“As for the college, we already have a good reputation in the community, but this grant helped to build relationships with some of the nursing homes where the students did their clinical training. In addition we were able to have success stories where people drastically improved their economic status with our help. They’ll not soon forget that.

“The benefits for the students were more profound. As they came closer to completion they became more excited and determined. For many of them this was the first time in their lives that they have been successful at anything. Many had been taught to quit and we were able to change the mindset of quite a few people who now see that they can do better. Many are working in the health care field and others have other jobs. The point is many are now contributing where that was not the case before.”

The following sequence shows the diligence of project navigators in supporting participants.

Marcus Jones enrolled in the CNA training program at MCC in 2011. He was unable to complete the course because of extenuating circumstances; he walks everywhere he goes and is raising his younger siblings. MCC let Marcus audit the next class. He was once again unable to complete the training. MCC allowed him to do his clinicals with the next class in an effort to be able to take his exam. In early 2012, Marcus was scheduled to complete clinicals between April 20 and 27. He called MCC about once every two weeks to say that he was still practicing and plans to “ace the exam.” By the summer of 2012 Marcus had completed his clinicals, taken the exam and passed with flying colors. He was offered a job at Anderson Regional Medical Center and was scheduled to begin 7/2/12. Marcus also took parenting classes and has been given custody of his younger brother. In September 2012, Marcus was working and seemed to have gotten control of many of the issues in his life. Maturity on his part is a major factor. By December 2012, Marcus was able to adopt his younger brother and had volunteered to address the first session of MCC’s next CNA classes. At the end of March, 2013, Marcus was still employed at Anderson’s and “is liked by everyone.” The father of a college employee was recently hospitalized and Marcus was one of the CNAs who took care of him. At grant’s end, June 30, 2013, Marcus visited MCC to get information about getting into the RN program. His job is going well. His adopted family is getting ready for the new school year, and Marcus is planning to get back into school with the next goal of becoming an ADN.

The story of Marcus Jones was more typical than unique among the partners providing training in this grant.

For the entire grant period, TMI drew down \$4,214,252.49 or 93.2% of the \$4,519,625.00 grant award.

Two items accounted for most of the \$305,372.51 in unspent funds. A balance of \$194,273.59 remained unspent from the scholarship budget. Though strongly encouraged, most participants did not avail themselves of scholarship opportunities. Navigators reported one reason for poor participant was that

scholarship funds would not be available for the duration of additional education because the grant would end before they could complete. A balance of \$78,533.11 remained unspent from the \$3,554,853 contractual services budget.

TMI used its allowed budget discretion to move \$2,272.38 from the line item “Other” to the line item “Supplies.” This represented a 16% increase over the \$14,666 Supplies budget and a less than 1% decrease in the \$368,855 Other budget. TMI spent \$347,562.55 for administrative costs compared to the budget amount of \$351,148.86. Administrative costs averaged 8.2% of actual expenditures compared to the projected rate of 7.8%.

Below are some highlights for the final quarter:

- MCC had three CNA classes totaling 42 students to begin in April. Of that number, 38 completed the class in June. Since the end of the quarter, 38 students have passed their exam.
- ECCC completed four ongoing CNA classes that had begun in the prior quarter, and started and completed four additional CNA training sessions during the quarter. Of these classes, 38 participants completed the training sessions and achieved a certificate, a 90% completion rate.
- During this quarter, ECCC’s Philadelphia training site received final approval for CNA training. Three of the training programs completed this quarter were held at this site. It will continue to be a great training location for ECCC’s district.
- Due to high demand for CNA training programs, ECCC was creative in offering alternate options for classes to accommodate as many participants as possible before the grant period expired.
- EMSH conducted CNA classes in May and June to train new employees and provide upgrade training for existing direct care workers. In total, 15 participants completed CNA classroom training.
- EMCC conducted CNA classes in April and May at the Mayhew campus and the Scooba campus. Twenty-four students received certification.
- NMC held three upgrade classes for CNAs and LPNs at Noxubee Medical Complex. A total of 47 employees were trained on subjects that apply directly to their employment such as Re-Habilitation Techniques, patient transfers, use of gait belt and back safety, and CPR.
- NCGH held three upgrade classes for CNAs and LPNs at Neshoba County General Hospital. A total of 27 employees have received certification for classes in IV Certification and IV Re-Certification.
- ARMC, our newest health care provider partner, began training in late March. ARMC was able to hold four upgrade training classes and provide upgrade skills training for 90 employees.
- Nine EMSH employees participated in grant scholarship program in the Fall of 2012 and Spring of 2013. Seven were pursuing upgrades from LPN to ADN and the other two were looking to go from CNA to LPN. Of those nine employees, the grant assisted with 12 total semesters and the participants successfully passed all semesters.

Status Update on Leveraged Resources

As previously reported, the Leveraged Resources and Match Reporting Form require the sub-recipients to report the amount of leveraged resources expended for the quarter, a brief description of the expenditure, and the source. Sub-recipients must also note if the source is from federal funds. This form must be signed by the sub-recipient's chief financial officer, who certifies the expenditures were grant-related and not reimbursed by the grant.

Partners provided more than double the Leveraged Funds projected in the grant application. Total Leveraged Funds reported were \$1,037,533.92 compared to the grant target of \$475,512. The Leveraged Funds breakdown by partner for the grant period is as follows:

- ECCC reported leveraged funds of \$306,737.60.
- MCC reported leveraged funds of \$185,750.75.
- EMCC reported leveraged funds of \$377,979.64.
- EMSH reported leveraged funds of \$103,184.73.
- NCGH reported leveraged funds of \$17,844.69.
- NMC reported leveraged funds of \$1,482.66.
- Rush reported leveraged funds of \$44,553.85.

B. Status Update on Strategic Partnership Activities

As noted by partner comments, the partnerships between the community colleges and the health care providers were strengthened by the project. These strategic partnerships, formed before the grant and continuing hereafter, are a best practice in that the colleges work closely to meet the needs of the providers while the providers work hard to provide the clinical spaces and other resources needed by the colleges. Through this project, colleges were able to establish new relationships with providers, particularly nursing homes.

College partnerships with the state workforce system, as represented by the Mississippi Department of Employment Security and the WIN Job Centers, were also strengthened. The WIN Job Centers provided excellent services to the colleges in recruiting, qualifying, and helping place participants.

C. Timeline for Grant Activities and Deliverables

DOL approved a no-cost extension of the grant through June 30, 2013.

D. Status of Deliverables

Total Participants Beginning CNA Education/Training Activities in Community Colleges: Total Grant Goal – 570; Grant to Date – 1,020. Rate of Attainment: 179%. Commentary: As a result of the approvals received to expand the service region, the community colleges were able to add training sites and greatly exceeded their original CNA training goals.

Total Participants Completing CNA Education/Training Activities at Community Colleges (85%): Total Grant Goal – 485; Grant to Date – 896. Rate of Attainment: 185%. Commentary: Using navigators helped the colleges achieve an 87% completion rate, exceeding the target 85% rate.

Total Participants Beginning CNA Education/Training Activities at Partner Health Care Institutions: Total Grant Goal – 720; Grant to Date – 363. Rate of Attainment, 50%. Commentary: As mentioned in

previous quarterly reports, only one health care partner, EMSH provided regular in-house CNA training after Alliance Health System dropped out of the grant and Rush elected to use MCC for training rather than train in-house. Neshoba General provided one CNA class for three participants.

Total Participants Completing CNA Education/Training Activities at Partner Health Care Institutions: (80%): Total Grant Goal – 576; Grant to Date – 345. Rate of Attainment: 60%. Commentary: EMSH achieved a very high completion rate of 96%, well exceeding the target completion rate of 80%. This past quarter, EMSH trained 15 eligible participants, with all 15 completing the training. We attribute the continued high completion rates to both aggressive navigator support and EMSH’s policy of paying its participants a salary while they are in CNA training. One of the three Neshoba General participants completed.

Total Participants Completing Education/Training Activities That Receive a Degree or Certificate (90%): Total Grant Goal – 945; Grant to Date: 657. Rate of Attainment: 70% of goal. Commentary: Of the 1,241 individuals who completed CNA education/training, approximately 75% had taken the state certification examination and received scores by June 30, 2013. More than 100 were awaiting test and re-test opportunities. However, a significant number of completers chose not to take the exam. Through grant end, 67% of those taking the test had passed. 100% of the 1,241 who completed CNA training obtained CPR and other certifications (Career Readiness Certificate, college completion certificate, or CNA certification).

Total Participants Completing Education/Training Activities That Are Placed Into Unsubsidized Employment (95%): Total Grant Goal – 998; Grant to Date: 879; Rate of Attainment: 88% of goal. Commentary: Through June 30, 2013, 71% of the 1,241 completers were placed into unsubsidized employment. This technical placement rate, however, is inaccurate given the two quarter lag between completion and access to placement data through the Mississippi Department of Employment Security data system. A better number is the comparison of total placements to the completion number through December 31, 2012. That adjusted comparison shows a placement rate of 86% (there were 221 completers in the final two quarters).

Total Participants Completing Education/Training Activities That Are Placed Into Training-Related Unsubsidized Employment (90%): Total Grant Goal – 945; Grant to Date: 739; Rate of Attainment: 78% of goal. Commentary: The commentary above applies to this metric as well. The technical placement rate was 60%. The placement rate using the adjusted comparison between the number placed into training-related jobs and the number of completers through December 31, 2012, was 73%.

Total Incumbent Workers Beginning Advanced Health Care Skills Upgrade Training Beyond CNA: Total Grant Goal – 612; Grant to Date: 222; Rate of Attainment: 36%. Commentary: Incumbent worker training fell far short of the initial estimates. As stated at the beginning of this report, this is not solely due to hospitals electing not to participate or provide training programs, but rather because grant funds were not used to supplant the funds the state provides for this type of training.

Total Incumbent Workers Completing Health Care Training That Receive a Wage Increase (80%): Total Grant Goal – 490; Grant to Date – 298. Rate of Attainment: 61%. Commentary: EMSH reported 247 of its newly hired CNAs received wage increases. (Note: EMSH hired CNA trainees before initiating training.) Rush reported all 36 of its nurse residency participants and 9 CNA II upgrade training participants received wage increases. Noxubee General reported 6 participants received wage increases. No other wage increase information was reported.

Total Participants Beginning the Nurse Mentor and Retention Program: Total Grant Goal – 90; Grant to Date: 36; Rate of Attainment: 40%. Commentary: Although RHS was pleased with the results of the pilot Nurse Residency program, the administration made a decision to cancel the program. Due to budget tightening, floor supervisors began to resist letting newly hired nurses attend training.

Total Participants Completing the Nurse Mentor and Retention Program (85%): Total Grant Goal – 76; Grant to Date – 36; Rate of Attainment: 47%. Commentary: Although the attainment of goal percentage was low, RHS achieve a 100% completion rate for participants. RHS officials reported excellent placement and retention results from the program. All participants received wage increases upon completing the program.

E. Key Issues and Technical Assistance Needs

As mentioned in previous quarterly reports, a key issue has been reconciling the RAD system to the data requirements of the grant. RAD does not post the Common Performance Measures for the Entered Employment Rate and Employment Retention, even though these are data inputs in the RAD participant files. Because we cannot query the RAD to get these common measures, we were unable to report on these measures. TMI does not have access to wage records in order to track Average Earnings. Also, RAD does not distinguish between different types of training and credentials.

TMI and the East Central Mississippi Health Network worked closely with the colleges and health care providers to make sure data entered into RAD was accurate. Even with this oversight and support, consistency and accuracy in data entry was difficult. This final report represents the best reconciliation we could achieve between RAD data, self-reported data from the college and health care provider partners, and audits of prior quarterly reports.

F. Best Practices and Success Stories

A best practice reported by MCC helped improve student success rates on the state CNA certification exam. In early 2012 the navigator reported that many students were not taking the certification test seriously. For the second quarter of 2012, MCC instituted a special class session to emphasize the important of skills practice. MCC reported in July 2012 that test results indicated the special session had little impact. During the third quarter, MCC repeated the special session but also had the navigator emphasize skills practices throughout the training program. By year-end, MCC saw improvement. The fourth quarter pass rate for those tested was 85%. At the end of March 2013, MCC reported its success rate remained high. MCC will continue this practice for its CNA classes after the grant ends.

In addition, MCC took steps to aid students who had to wait lengthy periods of time for state testing to be offered. The college opened its labs allowing completers to practice for tests at all times when classes were not in session. The college reported this also helped maintain its high success rates.

EMSH highlights Stacey Malone and Lenora Perry as success stories. A DCW Supervisor, Stacey has been in the field of direct care work at East Mississippi State Hospital for several years. Thanks to the grant she was able to participate in the grant funded CNA classes and attain her CNA license. “I am very thankful for the opportunity the grant provided me to continue progressing and developing in my field,” she said. As a supervisor, Stacey has also seen the positive impact the grant has made on the hospital. “Thanks to the grant, we have gained well-trained employees who have proven to be valuable workers.”

Lenora began her career at East Mississippi State Hospital as a dietary worker at R.P. White Nursing Home. She spoke with CNA floor supervisor Dorothy Burge, then enrolled in the grant-sponsored CNA

class in February 2012 and received her CNA license in April 2012. After working on the floor as a CNA for nearly a year, Lenora was promoted to work as a CNA in the Therapeutic Program at RPW. This duty is only given to the highest caliber CNAs as they organize activities and escort the nursing home residents to off-grounds events. As supervisor Dorothy Burge said, “We are very proud of Lenora. She has been a true success story for East Mississippi State Hospital.”

Here’s the story of Brandi Holifield, a student at ECCC. A single mother of three Brandi contacted an ECCC navigator to inquire about the CNA training program. After determined eligible by the WIN Job Center in Neshoba County, she contacted the ECCC staff two to three times per week until gaining entry into the CNA training program. During training, she impressed the instructors with her dedication, excellent skills demonstrations, and organizational abilities. She managed to complete the training program without tardiness or absences, despite having to arrange for childcare during class when two of her children became ill. The ECCC navigator reported “Ms. Holifield was always prepared to help a fellow classmate with skills or workbook lessons. During the clinical instruction, her potential was recognized by staff members of the nursing home where she demonstrated gentle and empathetic care to the residents while maintaining a positive professional demeanor with a focus on safety and meeting personal needs.” After gaining confidence as a caregiver in an entry-level position, Brandi applied for and was accepted into the Practical Nursing Program at neighboring Meridian Community College. She began the nursing program in January 2011. During a recent follow-up phone call, Brandi stated that she found employment as a nursing assistant and plans to work part time while achieving her long term goal as a nurse. She said, “East Central (Community College) enabled me to take a step forward on the nursing ladder.”

Another ECCC success story is Jalisa McDaniel. Jalisa discovered ECCC’s program through the TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) program in Winston County. She was participating in their work program and assisted Shelley Thomas, the Louisville Career Advancement Center Coordinator, by working 30 hours each week. Her goal was to achieve the same rewarding success of her mother who was a well-respected nursing assistant prior to her death. After Jalisa’s mother passed away, she assumed the role of rearing of her siblings and was forced to quit high school. She enrolled in the CNA program, completed the program in November 2012, and passed the exam in February 2013. She began working with the Winston Medical Center in Louisville. She was challenged to continue to support her family on minimum wages without the benefit of TANF support. A solution was reached to assist the employer with additional funds to support Jalisa until she adjusted to the demands of the workforce and the added expenses of childcare and transportation. Jalisa overcame multiple life challenges and exemplifies the true meaning of laddering participants to a brighter future.

Roderick Alexander is a single father of two small girls and has a history of working in low-paying, menial jobs. Last fall, after becoming unemployed again, Roderick was recruited by the WIN One-stop Center to enter the CNA training program and entered ECCC’s CNA training program. Unfortunately, Roderick had to withdraw from the program due to family issues out-of-town. Several months later, Roderick contacted his Navigator at ECCC to ask if he could come back and complete the program. He re-entered the program at ECCC, successfully completed his training in late June, and is awaiting his certification test. His Navigator reported that during his clinical training at the NCGH Nursing Home (a new grant partner), “he made a positive impression on the staff and the residents.” Roderick is now employed at Pioneer Hospital in Newton.

NCGH highlights Alexis Burnside as a success story. Alexis enrolled in U.S. Air Force basic training to help finance her dream of becoming a registered nurse in the healthcare field. This is a family tradition as her grandmother, mother and two aunts are all nurses. After a medical discharge, her dreams seemed to come to an end. Through the CNA program she was able to continue her education, receive a CNA

certificate, and is currently enrolled in the bridge program to become an LPN. As Neshoba County General Hospital is currently under construction of a new facility, Alexis hopes to continue her education to become an RN and possibly work as a labor and delivery nurse at the hospital.

EMCC highlights Teresa Campbell as a success story. Teresa took advantage of the CNA training program on the college's Scooba Campus. She enrolled in October 2012 and completed the program on December 2012. Dora Moore, CNA Instructor, described Teresa as a "very good student with exceptional skills." Teresa set a goal for herself and "hoped this will open the door for me to be the best Certified Nursing Assistant in the next 10 to 20 years to come." Teresa gained employment as a Certified Nursing Assistant at Rush Hospital on March 25, 2013, one of the grant's provider partners.

EMSH also highlights Traci Alexander, who is currently working as an LPN at the JTC Nursing Home at the hospital. The ARRA grant has assisted her in getting her IV Therapy Recertification. Thanks to the grant, she is now pursuing her ADN degree at Meridian Community College in hopes of attaining her RN license. "The grant has been instrumental in allowing me to pursue my goal of becoming a Registered Nurse," said Traci. She is currently in her first semester of the ADN program.

RHS Nurse Residency completers have reported being more confident in their nursing skills and greatly appreciate the experience gained through the program. A few of the nurse residents have already been assigned leadership roles (charge nurses) in their perspective units. This is very rare for relatively new nurses to occupy that role. Student nurses get extremely valuable hands on experience outside the minimal amount offered through the nursing program itself. Rush believes this will have a positive impact on employee retention.

The success story that ECCC wishes to highlight this quarter is the addition of an approved training site in Philadelphia. The navigators have been working diligently to get the site approved since fall of 2012. It was finally approved by the state on March 29, 2013. ECCC has two classes currently meeting there. The location of the lab is an asset to ECCC. It is centered between Decatur and Louisville, the other approved sites. This allowed ECCC to expand its capacity to serve more individuals with less travel expense on their part. This additional site will help lower the costs of training for future students after the grant concludes. The training lab is located in the Philadelphia Neshoba County Career Tech Center. This training lab has many advantages. Being located in the Career Tech Center will provide continuity to the students who are enrolled in the Allied Health program. These students will be able to graduate and enroll in the CNA program immediately with no gaps in the learning process.

G. Additional Information

There is nothing new to report.