

Quarterly Narrative Progress 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

Report Quarter Ending: 9/30/2011

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Program Contact Information: Ken Dupre, Vice President, The Montgomery Institute, P O Box 1889, Meridian, MS 601-483-2661, tmiken@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; AHC- Alliance Health Center Acute Care Hospital; EMSH – East Mississippi State Hospital; NCGH – Neshoba County General Hospital; NMC - - Noxubee Medical Complex; RHS – Rush Health Systems; MDES – Mississippi Department of Employment Security; CNA – Certified Nurse Aide/Assistant; CRC – Career Readiness Certificate

A. Summary of Grant Activities

This report encompasses the seventh quarter of the grant, with five quarters of grant activity remaining. To date, we have served 732 active participants, most of which were entered into CNA training. For the period reported (October 1, 2011 to December 31, 2011), 115 eligible participants began CNA training classes presented by our college and health care partners.

All three community college partners are reporting consistently high interest and participation rates in the CNA training throughout the quarter. East Mississippi Community College (EMCC), which has had difficulty populating their classes with eligible participants at their Scooba campus location, has tripled their quarterly participation numbers with the addition of classes at their Mayhew campus – a result of the Statement of Work Modification submitted in the sixth grant quarter and approved by the BRG. Last quarter, the Scooba campus was

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able to populate the class with five eligible participants, while the Mayhew classes enrolled 16 eligible participants. The Mayhew numbers are expected to double next quarter. The other two community college partners are also reporting expected enrollments at full capacity next quarter.

Below are some of the highlights of this quarter:

- **EMCC participation numbers increase following geographic area modification (approved effective September 15, 2011).** The Statement of Work modification that allowed for the geographic area to expand to include residents of Clay, Lowndes, and Oktibbeha counties in our pool of potential participants has allowed EMCC to increase their number of participants served exponentially. In this 4th quarter, 16 eligible participants were trained in the new expansion area while five were trained from the previous area. For the classes beginning the 1st quarter of 2012, the Scooba campus – which is located in and serves participants in the original geographic area – has eight students enrolled. Comparatively, the Mayhew campus – which is located in and serves participants in the newly expanded geographic area – has already enrolled 34 eligible participants for their classes beginning in January, 2012.
- **WIN Job Center, Mississippi Department of Employment Services assists TMI with updating accurate job placement information.** Our training partner Navigators have expressed a great deal of frustration in trying to contact participants after they complete their training. Phone calls are not answered, not returned, or the phones have been disconnected. Other means of communication, such as letters and e-mails, are not returned. As a result, we felt very strongly that our placement numbers were much higher than reported, but we had no way to verify placement and retention other than direct contact with the participant – until now. Our workforce investment partner, The WIN Job Center, has agreed to periodically track our participants using the national employment service database to ascertain whether our participants have found a job and they are providing basic information back to us regarding the type of employment (whether the participant is employed in the health care field) and the consecutive quarters of employment. Even this system is not without minor concerns. Citing client privacy, the WIN Center does not provide us with the name of the participants' employer or the participants' rate of pay. Also, the data are lagged by one quarter. That is, wages earned by a grant participant in any quarter are not required to be posted by employers until the end of the following quarter. Therefore, we may not find out whether a participant may have found a job in the 4th calendar quarter (October – December) until the following April. Still, we now have much more accurate figures regarding our placement rates and retention rates.
- **Job Placement figures are much higher than previously reported,**

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with 459 participants placed in unsubsidized employment to date.

After reviewing the information from the WIN Job Center, which brought our total RAD reported number of participants entering employment to 191, and after reviewing the requested feedback on incumbent workers highlighted in the January edition of *The Leaflet* (ARRA Digest), we can also report 268 jobs retained as a result of the training at East Mississippi State Hospital. EMSH is our largest health care partner and the only health care partner who is state-certified to train CNAs. As a result of this Department of Labor grant, EMSH has adopted a policy that all new hires must complete this CNA training and pass the certification exam or else they will be terminated. Because EMSH pays its new hires to attend the CNA training, we have treated these participants as incumbent workers and have not counted them as entering employment. As addressed in *The Leaflet* article, we will work closely with the new Navigator at EMSH to determine which of these incumbent workers have entered new positions or received an increase in pay, so that we may reflect this in the next RAD report.

- **RHS CNA II training graduates a second class; Nurse Residency graduates a third class.** Rush continues to provide skills upgrades through the CNA II, which graduated five more completers in December. These new CNA II completers also received a \$1.00 per hour increase in pay for their new skills and expanded duties. Also, the third group of Nurse Residents completed their programs on December 5, with 14 of the original group of 15 completing the residency requirements. Twelve of the 14 completers remain employed at Rush in permanent, full-time positions, one left for a job closer to her home, and the final completer left to continue his education. Rush has already selected its participants for the fourth Nurse Residency class, which will begin on January 9, 2012. The next CNA II training class begins January 30, 2012.
- **Navigators at our sub recipient partners are now Case Managers in the RAD system.** As mentioned in the last quarterly report, we have trained our Navigators as Case Managers in the Recovery Act Data (RAD) system and promised to report on this new data procedure this quarter. We are pleased to announce nearly all of the Navigators have caught on to most of the nuances of the system and are providing more real-time information on the participants. The RAD administrators at TMI have spent a great deal of time recently to review most of the 732 participant files as we have been updating the job placement information provided by the WIN Job Center. This has provided the Grant Manager with key information on areas which of the Navigators need further training and the Navigators who need more emphasis on timely reporting of their participants' progress.
- **EMSH's reimbursement records are nearly up-to-date after lagging for nearly one year.** As previously reported, our largest health care partner, East Mississippi State Hospital, has been training large numbers of CNAs but has not done a very good job of submitting reimbursements for these participants. After TMI met with EMSH officials regarding this problem, EMSH accepted the suggestion to move the Navigator function out of the training division and hiring a full-time, independent Navigator. Since the new Navigator has been hired, he has worked on getting the necessary records up-to-date and has recently submitted for six months of reimbursements through December, 2012. The TMI staff has been poring over these and other reimbursements to ensure all documents meet the financial standards required by the Department of Labor, and we will be drawing down substantial reimbursements in the next quarter. Now that the financial documentation has been resolved, EMSH will now focus on getting its participant files up to date in the RAD system.

B. Status Update on Leveraged Resources

As previously reported, the Leveraged Resources and Match Reporting Form requires the sub-recipients to report the amount of leveraged resources expended

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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.

This quarter, a total of \$79,994.17 was documented as leveraged funds for this grant. \$64,887.20 came from State and Local funding sources and \$15,106.97 came from Federal funding sources. Total Leveraged Funds for the grant to date are \$332,515.30. Of this total, \$260,530.15 are from State and Local sources and \$71,979.15 are from Federal sources.

The Leveraged Funds breakdowns for this quarter are as follows:

- ECCC reported \$11,032.32 in additional navigator salaries came from local college funds and \$3,978.74 for instructor salaries came from state workforce training funds. ECCC's leveraged funds contribution for the grant period to date is \$115,861.14.
- EMCC reported \$19,846.25 in leveraged resources for instructor salaries paid with state workforce training funds. EMCC's leveraged funds contribution for the grant period to date is \$59,595.25.
- MCC reported \$26,360.87 in leveraged resources for instructor salaries and classroom supplies paid for from state workforce funds. MCC's leveraged funds contribution for the grant period to date is \$74,700.03.
- NCGH reported \$3,669.02 in leveraged funds for navigator salaries, supplies, and overhead paid for with local funds. NCGH's leveraged funds contribution for the grant period to date is \$10,373.73.
- MDES reported \$15,106.97 in leveraged funds for staff salaries, benefits, supplies, and overhead paid for with federal funds. MDES' leveraged funds contribution for grant period to date is \$71,979.15.
- All other partners have reported zero (0) on their leveraged funds for this quarter.

C. Status Update on Strategic Partnership Activities

As previously reported earlier in this document, our strong partner relationship with the Mississippi Department of Employment Services (MDES) has led to an agreement to provide TMI with employment information regarding our grant participants. This information has allowed us to update our RAD files to more accurately reflect the number of jobs attained by our grant participants as well as provide information on job retention.

D. Timeline for Grant Activities and Deliverables

The majority of tasks listed in the Project Work Plan are on schedule, with Community College CNA training running ahead of schedule. For the upcoming

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quarter, our health care training partners will focus more on skills upgrade training and our community college partners will focus on RAD timeliness and accuracy as well as job placement for their CNA graduates.

E. Status of Deliverables

Total Participants Beginning CNA Education/Training Activities in Community Colleges: Total Grant Goal – 570; Grant to Date – 427. Rate of Attainment: 74.9 per cent with 42 per cent of grant remaining. Commentary: CNA training at the community college partners remain strong. With the SOW change allowing additional participants and classes for EMCC, we expect to far exceed this grant goal.

Total Participants Completing CNA Education/Training Activities at Community Colleges (85%): Total Grant Goal – 485; Grant to Date – 343. Rate of Attainment: 70.7 per cent with 42 per cent of grant remaining. Commentary: This number is tied to number beginning training posted above. The current lagging completion rate is 68 percent -- this number does not include participants who are scheduled to complete their class and clinical work in the following quarter. Even with this lag, our total number of completers is on target with our goals. With the expected increases as stated above, we expect to far exceed this grant goal as well.

Total Participants Beginning CNA Education/Training Activities at Partner Health Care Institutions: Total Grant Goal – 720; Grant to Date – 279. Rate of Attainment: 38.8 per cent with 42 per cent of grant remaining. Commentary: As mentioned in previous quarterly reports, only one health care partner (EMSH) is providing in-house training. However, EMSH has increased their training as they have adopted a policy of hiring only CNAs for their open health care worker positions. This past quarter, EMSH trained 70 eligible participants. At this current rate, we will achieve 90 per cent of this goal. When combined with the expected training through the community colleges (stated above), the overall total number of CNAs trained through this grant will exceed the overall grant goal.

Total Participants Completing CNA Education/Training Activities at Partner Health Care Institutions (80%): Total Grant Goal – 576; Grant to Date – 268. Rate of Attainment: 46.5 per cent with 42 per cent of the grant remaining. Commentary: EMSH continues to enjoy a very high completion rate of 96 per cent, well exceeding the target completion rate of 80 per cent. We attribute this to EMSH's policy of paying its participants a salary while they are in CNA training.

Total Participants Completing Education/Training Activities That Receive a Degree or Certificate (90%): Total Grant Goal – 945; Grant to Date: 390. Rate of Attainment: 41.3 per cent with 42 per cent of the grant remaining. Commentary: Reporting for this metric has changed from previous reports. Because our CNA classes are designed to provide participants with multiple stackable credentials

(CPR Certification, NCRC), our completers will nearly always receive at least one industry-recognized certificate by the time they complete their training. For the grant to date, 100 per cent of our completers have attained at least one certificate. However, that number would not clearly reflect the targeted certification of a CNA. Our current pass rate for the CNA exam remains at less than 65 per cent, which is lower than we expected. To increase this number, all community college Navigators have: 1) scheduled class end dates within two weeks of exam dates; 2) created “refresher” sessions prior to the exam; and 3) called in re-testers to discuss where they fell short and included them in refresher classes and one-on-one sessions.

Total Participants Completing Education/Training Activities That Are Placed Into Unsubsidized Employment (95%): Total Grant Goal – 998; Grant to Date: 459; Rate of Attainment: 46.0 per cent with 42 per cent of the grant remaining. Commentary: These numbers are based on required quarterly feedback from the Navigators and, to date, do not match with the RAD numbers. As stated previously in this report, the Navigators are now working to update all participant information in the RAD system and, beginning next quarter, we will require all Navigator reports to match what is in RAD. Also, we have discussed using the Mississippi Department of Employment Security data system to check on both employment and retention data for the participants. We have an unwritten agreement for our local WIN Center representative to do this on an “as time will allow” basis. However, this information will lag at least one calendar quarter in their tracking system.

Total Participants Completing Education/Training Activities That Are Placed Into Training-Related Unsubsidized Employment (90%): Total Grant Goal – 945; Grant to Date: 383; Rate of Attainment: 40.5 per cent with 42 per cent of the grant remaining. Commentary: See above.

Total Participants Beginning the Nurse Mentor and Retention Program: Total Grant Goal – 90; Grant to Date: 25; Rate of Attainment: 27.8 per cent with 42 percent of the grant remaining. Commentary: RHS will begin interviewing for their fourth Nurse Resident class in November and the class will begin in January, 2012.

Total Participants Completing the Nurse Mentor and Retention Program (85%): Total Grant Goal – 76; Grant to Date – 24; Rate of Attainment: 6.6 per cent. Commentary: The second class of Nurse Residents completed their programs and four of the five are employed at Rush. The other completer accepted a job at another hospital, citing location as her deciding factor. The third class of Nurse Residents had one nurse drop, leaving 14 participants progressing satisfactorily and scheduled to finish December 5, 2011.

F. Key Issues and Technical Assistance Needs

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Why doesn't the RAD report post the Common Performance Measures for the Entered Employment Rate and Employment Retention, as these are data inputs in the RAD participant files? We cannot query the RAD to get the retention numbers – we would have to look at each participant file, which would be very time consuming.

G. Best Practices and Success Stories

In keeping with efforts to increase the pass rate for CNA testing, EMSH has added an extra day of training to the CNA classes starting in December. On this extra class day, the CNA class is broken down into small groups and rotated between three instructors. Each instructor runs the class through a different set of skills and refreshers. EMSH will report on the results of this added day of training in the next quarterly report.

The Rush Nurse Resident participants were trained in and received certifications in Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS), Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS), and the Trauma Nursing Core Course (TNCC) before leaving the Nurse Residency Program. These certifications are required to work in certain high-skills critical care areas, and they are also very beneficial in other staff nursing areas as well.

H. Additional Information

None at this time.