STAFF FOCUS GROUP

INTRODUCTION - 10 minutes
(include sign-in sheet)

Welcome! My name is _____ and I will be your moderator for this focus group.

Thank you for agreeing to be a part of our focus group. Your participation today will provide us with the opportunity to gather information about broad workforce development and workforce preparation needs in _____ County.

Although some of you may know each other, we would like each of you to introduce yourselves. Please tell us your name and the name of your organization. This will help me as a moderator of the focus group and our observer _____, get to know you.

Social Policy Research Associates is in the process of developing a community asset investment portfolio for the Workforce Investment Boards of Monterey, Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties. This process involves conducting a needs assessment, an inventory of services, and a gap analysis. Your opinion is very important to us and the Board because it will help shape how career-related services are provided in this county.

As part of the needs assessment, we are conducting focus groups like this one in each county to gather feedback from workforce development professionals like yourselves to help Workforce Investment Boards understand workforce development and workforce preparation needs in the community. To do this, we have developed a list of questions addressing issues related to workforce development needs in _____ County.

During the next 90 minutes, we will give each of you time to answer all of our questions. There are no right or wrong answers. Each of you has equally valuable information and thoughts that we are very interested in hearing. I would encourage you to be as open and honest during the meeting as you possibly can.

The purpose of our observers is to record what you say. We don't want to miss any of your ideas. In addition to taking notes, we will be recording this session. I want to assure you that all the information gathered at this meeting will be kept confidential and anonymous. The tapes will not be used to identify who said what, but to record all the ideas from the discussion.

Because our time is limited during this session, my role as moderator is to make certain that all topics are covered and to move the discussion along, while ensuring that everyone has a chance to participate in the discussion. As moderator, I want to review the guidelines for participating in a focus group:

- Give priority to those who have not spoken.

- Speak briefly and often.

- Speak one at a time, not on top of each other.

- Be open and honest.

- Be specific. Talk from your own experiences.

- There are no right or wrong answers. All responses are valid.

Again, the focus group is scheduled to last approximately 90 minutes. Are there any questions about what we are going to do today or about anything that I have said? Okay, let's turn on the tape and begin our discussion.

MODERATOR'S QUESTIONS FOR
STAFF FOCUS GROUP

I. **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT NEEDS FOR YOUTH**
- What are the most critical skills for youth?

    – Workforce maturity skills?

    – Better academic preparation (basic skills)?

    – Occupational skills?

- Which of these skills are the most difficult to find?

- What services do youth need to get a job or reach their career goals?

    – Internships or work experience.

    – Job shadowing.

    – Help with academic studies.

    – Job or personal mentoring.

    – Job search assistance.

    – Classes on the basic skills needed to find and keep a job.

    – Vocational training—what kind.

- Are these services available in sufficient number?

- Are there sufficient summer job opportunities?

- What are the major barriers in serving youth?

- Are there shortages of critical supportive services?

    – Transportation?

    – Alcohol/substance abuse counseling?

    – Childcare?

    – Housing?

    – Health care?

II. **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES FOR YOUTH**
- How well is the workforce development system meeting the needs of youth?

    – Which youth are not using the system?

- How well is the education system preparing youth for careers?
  - What is the system doing well?
  - How could the system do a better job?
- Do any particular groups of youth have difficulty accessing services?
  - Limited English speakers?
  - Disabled youth?
  - Out-of-school youth?
  - Youth in foster care?
  - Pregnant or parenting youth?
  - Other "high-risk" youth?
- Is there a lack of programs to meet the needs of these specific groups of youth.

III. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT NEEDS FOR ADULTS AND DISLOCATED WORKERS

- What are the most critical skills for adults? For dislocated workers?
  - Work readiness skills?
  - Basic skills?
  - Occupational skills?
- Which of these skills are the most difficult to find?
- What do adults need to reach their job or career goals? For dislocated workers?
  - Job search assistance.
  - Interviewing classes.
  - Resume workshops.
  - Career counseling.
  - Vocational training—what kind.
  - Job placement assistance.
  - Basic skills classes (GED/ESL).
  - Computer classes.
  - Supportive services (child care, transportation, housing).
  - Job retention counseling.
- Are there factors preventing adults and dislocated workers from meeting their career aspirations in _____ County?
  - Housing costs?
  - Transportation problems?

IV.   WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES FOR ADULTS AND DISLOCATED WORKERS

- How well is the workforce development system meeting the needs of adults and dislocated workers?

  – Who is not using the system?

  – What is the system doing well?

  – How could the system do a better job?

- Is there a shortage of specific programs for particular customers?

  – Limited English speakers?

  – Disabled?

  – Illiterate people?

  – CalWORKS recipients?

- Are there shortages of critical supportive services?

  – Childcare?

  – Transportation?

  – Alcohol/substance abuse counseling?

  – Housing?

  – Health care?

- Is there a shortage of specific training programs to meet labor market needs?

- How can the workforce development system assist employers with upgrading the skills of their own workforce?

V. CONCLUSION

- Is there anything else anyone would like to add?

- Is there anything we could have done to improve this focus group?