

GROUP #1
RAPS Workshop October 1997
Work group Summaries

Group #1

1. Issue/problem: Small applicant pool.

WHAT: There are very few applicants that are referred by the ERCs to the selecting official to fill the available RAPS positions in various Federal work sites.

WHO: School, counselors, and departments, *Indian/Tribal Officials, BLM, City Council and Mayors, Governors, Job Service, BIA, FS, Students, mentors, previous RAPS students.*

WHEN: Recruit year-round.

HOW: Canvas colleges (hire year round), *training managers, mentors, school counselors, "National RAPS Awareness Day." Develop a localized video for Wyoming RAPS, update the present brochure, use displays, posters (develop poster), take previous RAPSters to job fairs. Managers should encourage employees to take the plunge; get your manager to wear a RAPS T-Shirt.*

WHY: Students who apply to the local ERC for summer jobs (i.e., Summer Youth under JTPA Title IIb) do not always return a completed application. Parents don't understand the paperwork, what is available/offered to the students (RAPS, wages). There may be a possible "stigma" associated with low income job/work experience programs.

2. Issue/Problem: Too much paperwork is required for RAPS.

WHAT: - Maturity evaluations - Under JTPA Title IIb and the Summer Youth Program (RAPS for Wyoming Federal Partners) evaluations are required at the end of each month by the program guidelines. These tend to be redundant when supervisors are evaluating the RAPS participants every day and **have regular evaluations when needed.**

- Weekly time sheets - Completion of a Time Sheet at the end of each week is more time consuming than completing them every two weeks as for Federal employees.

- Third party agency duplicating - agencies seem to repeating what another is doing as in paperwork (applications for ERC and Olsten, I-9, W-4, etc.). Mentors as well as ERC personnel have to work with several program contacts including the State RAPS Administrator, ERC personnel, and Olsten.

WHO: Wyoming RAPS Administrator, ERCs, and mentors.

WHEN: Before field season/fire season.

HOW: - Should limit number of evaluations to no more than two (beginning and end of summer).
- Time sheets should be done every other week.
- Mentors should have only one contact regarding paperwork requirements not all three including the ERC, Olsten and the RAPS Administrator.

WHY: - Paperwork is too time consuming.
- Paperwork is continuous and repetitious.
- Redundant - duplication between everyone involved.
- Worse during the summer when time is limited and there is much to do.

3. Issue/Problem: Restrictive labor standards for youth under 18 years of age.

WHAT: Students underage 18 can't drive government vehicles.

WHO: ERC, and Wyoming RAPS Administrator.

WHEN: 1998.

HOW: Don't hire under age 18 years of age if position is field going. Underage applicants for field positions should not be referred by ERCs. The RAPS Administrator should inform Federal work sites about the restriction applicable to applicants under 18 years of age.

WHY: Decreases efficiency of employees when special provisions have to be made for underage RAPS participants on the work site.

4. Issues/Problems: Remedial Training Schedule.

WHAT: Students who are required to attend remedial classes (math and reading) during the work week were scheduled to attend class two days instead of one day during the week. This limits the amount of time available to schedule for field work.

WHO: ERCs establish the training schedule.

WHEN: By next year.

HOW: Keep workshops (send mentors at least one from each office) so everyone knows rules and expectations. Make sure mentors are familiar with all the handbooks. Work out scheduling problems for remedial classes with mentors and ERC personnel at these workshops.

WHY: Interrupts work schedule. Unclear to participants (rules, regulations, changes).

5. Issues/Problems: Use of RAPS participants as backup firefighters.

WHAT: Federal agency priorities and goals may require the consideration of RAPS participants to provide support (transporting materials and equipment/personnel to the fire camps) to the fire program while participating in RAPS. Otherwise, the same participants, if qualified, can be hired as firefighters when they are no longer a RAPS participant.

WHO: Federal work site.

WHEN: Summer season.

HOW: Basic fire training should be provided to RAPS participants by Federal work sites through orientation training.

WHY: RAPS students are qualified or become qualified (18 years old) to be hired later in the summer as firefighter summer seasonals.

GROUP #2
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Identified good and bad elements with the program:

Good -

- Opportunities to learn about work world
- Wages good
- Opportunity to learn about government agency
- Good work environment
- Working with educated professionals
- Opportunity to get to know each other - BLM/RAPS

Bad -

- Timeframe restrictions
- Difficult to recruit mentors
 - Workload
 - Not sure of program
 - Need time to prepare to mentor, supervise, and

train

- Afraid unable to mentor/supervise full time
- Lack of exposure
 - publicize program more to schools/colleges

(assemblies, job fairs, talk with school counselors

Hired out of commuting area

Need better explanation and purpose of position hired into - currently

appears

to be lacking.

Recruiting not sufficient

- recruit earlier
- screen more thoroughly for positions
- ERC/agencies need to promote program way before

funding is received.

Be able to retain student after RAPS season is

over as in during the school year (1240 hrs. allowed work experience).

1. Issues/Problems: Timeframe problem during the hiring period.

WHAT: As the ERCs refer applicants to the Federal work sites for interviews, the timeframe to consider applicants for the available positions is shortened/squeezed together, thereby, resulting in insufficient time for the interview and hiring processes to work properly. RAPS participants only allowed to work X hours.

WHO: ERC personnel refer the applicants; Federal agency staff interview and hire the applicants.

WHEN: Begin promoting and advertising the program, and applicant referral earlier.

WHERE: School assemblies, school counselors, job fairs/career fairs, better training information to staff members.

HOW: Develop pre-screening process.

WHY: Obtain better match for positions and for career potential.

2. Issues/Problems: Recruitment of mentors.

WHAT: Difficult to recruit mentors for RAPS due to the unknown time commitment for mentoring a RAPS participant.

WHO: Host agencies.

WHEN: Begin as soon as this year's RAPS program ends with planning, preparing, promotion of program for next year.

WHERE: On site recruiting at the local level.

HOW: Promote program - give honest assessments to prospective mentors, continue the mentor's workshops, obtain better management support to help recruit mentors.

WHY: Lack of understanding and motivation for the program and limited management support.

3. Issues/Problems: Understanding the position requirements.

WHAT: Lack of understanding on the part of the mentor/supervisor and the RAPS participant and purpose of RAPS position. Do not always get good matches between mentor and student.

WHO: ERC personnel, Federal host agency, and RAPS participant.

WHEN: Throughout the up-coming year, begin when this year ends.

WHERE: Local ERC and/or job site, job fairs/career days

HOW: - Special RAPS orientation for student/mentor/supervisor and ERC case managers-ALL at the same meeting. The ERD with ERCs meet during the middle of October each year.

- Recruit earlier.
- Develop screening tool. This may help screen out students that won't meet income guidelines or job skills/career goals criteria.
- Job descriptions/explains work environment, job skills needed, experience/education required, prepared by host agency. ERC will try to get better matches of students with RAPS position descriptions (no karate students) and candidates interested in the work not just salary.

WHY: To obtain better matches/avoid crunch at last minute/seek career oriented students. Get a larger and better qualified applicant pool.

GROUP #3
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1. Issue/Problem: Education - Internal and external knowledge of the program is limited. RAPS is unknown by the very groups we try to recruit. Information about the program is not widely distributed. Management is not visibly supportive of RAPS and mentors/coordinators.

WHAT: Education about the RAPS program through every available tool: local newspaper, Wyo. Horizons, brochures, radio, TV, previous RAPS students testimonials, PLW, T-Shirts, job fairs, clubs/organizations, libraries (school and local), posters (internal--"Be a RAPS Mentor" and external--"Be a RAPSter"), displays, videos, DFS, group homes. Management needs to visibly support RAPS, and RAPS mentors/coordinators; maybe take on a RAPSter themselves. Every year at budget time, projects are presented as well as associated costs. Many field projects are done in the summer, which is an ideal time for RAPSters.

WHO: Everyone, Indian/Tribal Officials, Managers (BLM, School/Counselors, City Council and Mayors, Governors, Job Service, BIA, FS, Students, mentors, previous RAPS students, WSO public affairs (video and poster design).

WHEN: Year-round, emphasis in March, April, and May. Support should be given before, during, and after the summer program ends.

HOW: Follow-up to "What" you did; training managers, mentors, school counselors, "National RAPS Awareness Day." Develop a localized video for Wyoming RAPS, update the present brochure, develop posters to use at job/career fairs (high schools, colleges), take previous RAPSters to job fairs. Managers should encourage employees to take the plunge; get your manager to wear a RAPS T-Shirt. Managers, being the most knowledgeable of the budget and positions needed, need to encourage use of the RAPS program whenever and wherever possible. Management needs to take a closer look at proposed field projects to see if they could be accomplished using one or more RAPS students. This is imperative given tight budgets and lack of personnel to accomplish the work.

WHY: Long-Term investment in communities, potential future employees, saves money, contributes to mission. Informality breeds better relationships (still maintain and educate about worker and employer relationships). In many offices, the average age of employees is 40±. BLM needs to use every possible avenue to recruit younger people into BLM as early as possible. The RAPS program is another avenue that we can use for recruitment as we do with HBCU, HACU, STEP, SCEP, etc.

2. Issue/Problem: Increase Selection/Interviewees - There are usually very few applicants which are referred by ERC. Many students have a lack of skills.

WHAT: There are a greater number of unskilled students (immature workers) who are referred to the work sites. These applicants have limited skills and require a greater amount of supervision.

WHO: ERC, BLM, BIA, USFS, Schools, Mentors, RAPS Coordinators, previous RAPSters.

WHEN: See Issue #1; early prescreening - NOW.

HOW: Job Fairs, career days, visibility at community events/organizations, centers (Boys & Girls Clubs); sell, market, promote the program. To develop skills in students: be patient, become teachers, nurturers, accentuate their positives, offer more training. The Federal work sites should do a better job of identifying position requirements and expectations in the job descriptions (see Issue #1).

Federal work site and ERC personnel should get out more and talk about RAPS to prospective applicants, advertise more, and attend job fairs.

WHY: Need a larger pool of applicants; better applicants. If we learn to deal with it and are more accepting, this leads to knocking down barriers in communicating, etc.

3. Issue/Problem: Need more mentors (enthusiastic ones).

WHAT: Fully inform the prospective mentors and supervisors about RAPS and what it costs in terms of time.

WHO: Federal work sites (supervisors, other employees), ERC personnel.

WHEN: Start providing reminders now so prospective mentors think about it beforehand; splice ideas throughout the year.

HOW: Emphasize positive side of program; provide training to recruit mentors so employees know being a RAPS mentor is not a "baby-sitting" job.

WHY: Need a mentor for each RAPS participant as well as backup mentors. Diversity at the work site makes everyone's job more interesting.