

2003 NATIONAL CUSTOMER SERVICE AWARDS PROGRAM

Nomination Entry Form

*An electronic version of this form is available on www.WorkforceATM.org
http://www.WorkforceATM.org/subject.cfm?results_sub_id=37*

I. IDENTIFICATION INFORMATION

State Workforce Agency: California Workforce Investment Board

Name of State Contact: Dave Mar

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Name or signature of State Administrator approving the nomination:

II. GENERAL INFORMATION

Name of Program/Project Nominated: Proteus Mobile Employment Unit

Nomination Category

(Check only one. Use a separate form for each nomination entered.)

Innovation – Architect of Change

Collaboration – Pyramid

Tools and Technology – Compass

Professional Development/Capacity Building – Building a World-Class Workforce

Excellence in Serving Business – Prism

Month/Year Initiated: October, 2002

Is the nomination for: statewide program? local program?

If local, please provide the name of the locality: Fresno, Kings, Tulare, & Kern-Inyo-Mono LWIAs

III. RESOURCES

Total Start-Up Costs:	Direct: <u> N.A </u>	Fund Source(s): <u> NA </u>
	Indirect: _____	
Total On-going Annual Costs:	Direct: <u> \$344,873 </u>	Fund Source(s): <u> WIA 15% </u>
	Indirect: <u> 29,989 </u>	

If the project is receiving other non-financial support from public or private partners, please identify the organization and describe the type of support. **Employment Development Department (EDD) provides teacher-trainer for bus.**

IV. SYNOPSIS (Narrative Section)

Attach a brief synopsis (**no more than one page - 12 pt. type**) including:

- a. The basic service(s) provided by the nominated program/project.
- b. The outstanding accomplishments/successes.
- c. The reason(s) the nomination should be considered for a national award.

V. CRITERIA INFORMATION (Narrative Section)

Attach responses to each of the four criteria information requested below (V. a, b, c, and d). This section must not exceed four pages (12 pt. type) in total.

- a. Project Basis
- b. Project Operation
- c. Use of Award Funds
- d. Project Results

SYNOPSIS: PROTEUS MOBILE EMPLOYMENT UNIT

The Basic Services Provided

The Proteus Mobile Employment Unit is a 36' bus, which has been transformed as a mobile "One-Stop on Wheels," providing services to farm labor camps in underserved rural areas in the California Central Valley. Services provided include much needed classroom training, English-as-a-Second Language, and WIA Core Services including job search, labor market information and employment support. In providing services, the Proteus Mobile Unit also uses its innovative technological applications to sensitize the State overall to the isolation and poverty of the farmworker—as well as to their contributions to the State's economy. The Unit is a welcome addition to many State conferences; local area job fairs; and events such as legislative hearings. Proteus applied to the California Workforce Investment Board for Workforce Investment Act (WIA) 15% funds in Spring 2002, proposing to buy the bus and outfit it to classroom status, complete with 10 workstations; a large plasma screen for training; state-of-the art computers and software; and a satellite dish and related equipment. Bilingual employment counselors, trainers, and job developers staff the bus enabling easy communication with limited or non-English speaking clients. The bus is fully ADA accessible, and includes such accommodations as a wheel chair lift. Upgraded "Mobile Unit" technology also allows Proteus to utilize the system for data gathering and reporting on site.

The Outstanding Accomplishments and Success

The project statistically has had a number of successes as discussed in this award nomination. The poignant fact about the "Mobile Unit's" provision of over 10,000 services overall, is that it has served a number of individuals who would never have been able to access One-Stop services otherwise. The "Proteus Mobile Unit" is also a prime example of building new "cost-sharing" collaboratives under the WIA, leveraging other resources to establish the "Mobile Unit" as a valuable and permanent "office" in the farmworker communities served. California's State Employment Security Agent, the Employment Development Department (EDD) offers WIA core services "on site" as an example, and EDD staff travel with the bus. Proteus has also tapped Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funds to replicate the WIA 15% model and provide support for one of two Proteus Mobile Units. The mobile unit "office" is connected to local One-Stop systems as appropriate via telephone, fax, e-mail, and Internet hook ups.

The Reason(s) the Nomination Should be Considered

The California Workforce Investment Board nominates the Proteus Mobile Employment Center for the Compass Award as it is unique among innovative projects in using information technologies and tools in transportable and creative ways—both to provide services and to compile service data. This project is replicable for a multitude of uses both urban and rural, and potentially could serve any number of target groups. Not only is this a replicable service, but the model is useful to almost any locale and circumstance, and the California Workforce Investment Board would be proud to join NASWA in taking the idea of the Proteus Mobile Employment Center virtually "on the road." We feel every Local Workforce Investment Board in California should have one, and are certain this is an idea that other states would also find of value.

PROTEUS MOBILE EMPLOYMENT UNIT

1 (a). Project Basis (20 Points)

Customer Driven Basis/Goals and Objectives

The original, customer-driven motive for developing the Proteus Mobile Employment Center (or “Proteus Mobile Unit”) was to serve isolated, farm labor communities under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998. The intent was to mobilize employment services, since farmworkers and other residents of large rural areas in California experience extreme difficulties getting to One-Stops. Proteus would bring the One-Stop to them.

Visits to rural communities and farm labor camps in the Fresno, Tulare, Kings, and Kern-Inyo-Mono Local Workforce Investment Areas (LWIAs) were instrumental in establishing a primary goal: to help farmworkers overcome the barriers of language, geography, and transportation that confront them in seeking access to One-Stop services. The hope was that these efforts would lead to increased farmworker services under WIA; enhanced connections between farmworkers and the more traditional One-Stop centers and sites; and, especially, increased access for farmworkers to information and training, leading in turn to greater employment alternatives and an enhanced quality of life. The initial goal was to provide WIA core services to 2,000 farmworkers in over 60 isolated agricultural communities in the four-LWIA region. As ambitious as it sounds, that objective was met and surpassed in just over a year’s time. As of June 13, 2003, according to the California Job Training Information System, 10,512 services had been provided to over 5,000 farmworkers and other rural residents in the targeted area. These services were delivered by the Proteus Mobile Unit. Clearly, the California Workforce Investment Board’s original investment of \$374,862 in Governor’s 15 Percent Discretionary funding has paid-off. Ultimately, the return on this investment will be measured in increased jobs, greater career advancement in farm and non-farm work, better access to needed support services, and enhanced worker self-sufficiency.

What Customer Problem Does the Project Solve? How was it Identified?

The Proteus Mobile Employment Center was funded to positively impact WIA underservice to farmworkers; so the identification of the problem was first to articulate an irony here in California, where Agri-Business is our largest industry, and our State is among the most diverse in the nation and the recipient of “167” funds for serving migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFWs). The problem was also initially identified through Proteus’s direct work with the 60 plus agricultural communities without any One-Stop or other related services available at all. These are dreary communities where the center of commerce might be a gas station, or a corner market. Many of these rural counties are so lacking in public transportation, that even traditional transit services for non-farmworker residents are far and few between. An analysis of overall California WIA service records also showed farmworkers to be among the most underserved groups. Finally the problem was identified through direct communication with multiple programs serving

farmworkers including the “167” programs and members of the Western Association of Farmworker Advocates (WAFA). The State Board joined in a partnership with the Department of Labor and the Local Workforce Areas to hold four farmworker forums throughout the state, and at each one further input was elicited through survey documents and direct input, from farmworkers and farmworker service providers in attendance. Finally problems related to service to isolated individuals in agricultural communities, were identified through communication with representatives of the One-Stop systems who articulated the difficulties of service provision in large, sparsely populated areas, with few transportation resources. An issue specifically related to the “167” programs also existed, as these were being viewed in the One-Stops as the direction for referring farmworkers but not as a resource for co-enrollment or joint strategizing for services.

2 (b). Project Operations (25 points)

Starting with WAFA conferences during WIA start-up, members of the “MSFW 167” Community articulated a trend in terms of farmworker participation in the One-Stops, supported initially by very low MSFW statistics in the statewide WIA data base. It was explained by farmworkers and advocates that if farmworkers did go to the One-Stops, they would be initially and without any assessment, referred to the 167 operator. This could have been the means for farmworker service delivery and subsequent co-enrollment into WIA. It turned out, however, that such co-enrollment strategies were looked on with suspicion by the “mainstream” WIA program. 167 program participation in the One-Stop system was allowed but with the tenuous connections afforded to “new partners.”

Each year, Proteus holds a series of community forums in several agricultural communities throughout the four-LWIA service region as part of an on-going community needs assessment. This customer input over extended years has driven the idea and the implementation of the Proteus Mobile Unit. The development of the Mobile Unit was further encouraged by input from the actual, farmworker as a customer and particularly through direct visits to farm labor communities on the part of California Workforce Investment Board (CWIB) Staff. In rural areas, CWIB staff visits to farm labor camps, showed poor and isolated communities minus connections not only to One-Stops but also to the most fundamental of services including schools and hospitals. Without regional transit available, farmworkers explain a hodge-podge of solutions – borrowing a neighbor’s car; hitching a ride; hoofing it over incredible distances.

3 (c). Use of Award Funds (5 points)

Since using the “Proteus Mobile Unit,” farmworker services in the four-county region have gone from zero to 10,512 and the number of farmworkers has increased to 5,037. We recognize that other mobile models exist as with the famous “Big Purple Bus” of Minnesota. The “Proteus Unit” has been so successful in the rural context however, as to invite rural replication. It further has urban applications as isolation similar to that of the farmworker community occurs among most other “hard-to-serve” groups. Persons with disabilities; disabled veterans; the homeless; residents of housing project developments; and multiple limited English speaking groups including refugees come to mind. Replication of even just one mobile unit is of course not possible with \$25,000; however,

\$25,000 would cover Proteus staffing in creating the interest in replicating such mobile units in other California areas for population groups as noted. Our goal is to create a basic video and a “tool kit” manual for mobile “One-Stop” unit development for our State Board website, www.calwia.org. Per the budget attachment, the purpose would be to make these tools available to other areas both on-line and hard-copy.

4 (d). Project Results (50 points)

The Mobile Unit has aided the California Workforce Investment Board and Proteus in meeting their objective of serving underserved and isolated farmworkers. Between October 1, 2002 and June 13, 2003; a total of 10,512 services were provided to 5,037 rural, farmworker customers in isolated communities to individuals unable to attain prior services. In addition to complete WIA core and staff assisted services; the EDD partner provides Wagner-Peyser and Unemployment/Disability Insurance services. CSBG and private utility sponsored services to low-income residents are also delivered. The Unit is also equipped as classroom and provides educational and English language training.

Contribution to the Development of New Services

As a leading example of the mobilization of leading tools of technology, the Proteus Mobile Unit is contributing to California’s overall effort not only to find new vehicles for service delivery, but also to provide services in areas previously not accessible. The project provides direction on ways to provide services through technology and also how to record and report the services provided. Two local WIBs (Tulare and Fresno) further have actually designated the Mobile Unit as a satellite One-Stop within their One-Stop systems. In terms of realizing the goal of bringing nexus between farm labor communities and One-Stops, this is an acknowledgement on the part of the local areas that farmworkers are a customer—and farmworker programs a true One-Stop partner. Proteus and the CWIB also realized that the Proteus Mobile Unit was being invited to participate in local One-Stop events, conferences and job fairs so as to be accessed not just by farmworkers, but also by all customers interested in WIA. Finally, the Proteus Mobile Unit has been requested for legislative hearings, conferences, and CWIB meetings—as a learning tool related to the whole WIA system. What an effective tool for showcasing the vast services available through the overall One-Stop system.

Increasing Access to Information for Customers

For dealing with areas in California where no access to One-Stops existed, Proteus came up with a goal of reaching 2,000 customers and actually has reached over 5,000 in the contracted timeframe. Information dissemination occurs through all the technological advances possible for retrofit on this full-fledged classroom on wheels...it is hard to imagine a better example of increasing access by using technology.

Improved Efficiencies for Service Delivery

By taking services to different places and mobilizing One-Stop services, the Proteus Mobile Unit has been able act as a conduit between the One-Stops in areas targeted and the farmworkers. Computerized training and resources coupled with counseling staff and partners who care, have improved farmworker service levels at the communities targeted from zero to over 10,000. These services provide for job acquisition and change lives.

Time-Saving Automation

The Proteus Mobile Unit uses an Internet-based classroom, which can support distance-learning from Community Colleges as well as language and basic skills software. This is very time-saving and clients without transport to have to travel to One-Stop facilities.

Other Tools That Improve Customer Service

Electronic enhancements including communications facilitated through mobile Internet, have particular uses for van operation in rural settings where plug-in for high-end electronics is rare. The capacity for collecting data including customer satisfaction information on-site, allows Mobile Unit partners to select services more appropriate for a particular client or client group. In terms of customer service, it would be good to end with a story of something that happened to one, particular client, Emilia.

“Emilia” came from Mexico as a young woman and quickly found work as a farmworker. For several years, she worked in the fields, finally settling in with a particular farmworker community in Pixlie, in Tulare County. During this time, she began working on her citizenship, got married and became the mother of two little girls. She began to worry that they would follow in her footsteps and also end up living in poverty and working the fields. Emilia had some cooking experience and had an idea about getting a job as cook. This young mother visited the Proteus Mobile Unit and started looking at the opportunities in the CalJOBS listings, for which there is a Spanish version. She went through a computerized assessment, which reflected an aptitude as a cook. Proteus staff spent time preparing Emilia for her interview and taught her to do a resume. They built up Emilia’s confidence and pointed out that being a farmworker is very hard work. Emilia was selected for the cook’s job and turned out to be very good in the kitchen. She now makes twice what she did as a farmworker and has the goal of moving up from cook, to being a chef and owning her own restaurant. Because she feels she has met with such good fortune, Emilia also wants to give back to her community. Though she will continue to work on her goal of owning her own restaurant, she would also someday like to mentor other farmworker children to let them know there are many choices in this world. Emilia has commented that she loves the Proteus staff and bus. Her thoughts are very appropriate for this application, as she has commented that the Proteus Mobile Unit really is a “compass,” because it provided her with direction and she wants it to do the same for many, many others like her. A Workforce Investment Program Director in one of the areas served by the Proteus Mobile unit has also commented that “residents of this region’s smaller towns and communities typically suffer from the highest level of unemployment often exceeding 25%, and are also deficient in other services.” Another workforce expert in Tulare County commented when the idea of the Mobile Unit was first proposed, that “Local WIA partners make significant efforts daily to reach and serve these residents, but it is clearly not enough.” Emilia calls it right when she says “the Proteus Mobile Unit is a compass.” It takes new and unknown tools to the poorest of customers and offers hope and services; it provides direction where there was none before.

Proteus Mobile Employment Unit

Compass Award Nomination

Proposed Budget for Replication Technical Assistance Products

<u>ACTIVITY OR DELIVERABLE</u>	<u>COST</u>
<u>.50 FTE Proteus staff salary for development of training curriculum on 'Mobile Unit' development, creation of video and "tool kit" manual production</u>	<u>\$20,000</u>
<u>Materials and supplies for "tool kit" development (paper, notebooks, copying etc.)</u>	<u>2,000</u>
<u>Materials and supplies for video development (camera, video tapes, cd's, etc.)</u>	<u>2,000</u>
<u>Web design for video</u>	<u>500</u>
<u>Postage for mailing out "tool kits" and videos</u>	<u>500</u>
TOTAL	<u>\$25,000</u>