



JULY 31, 1996

OIG REPORT 96-51(H)

MEMORANDUM FOR: TERRY CULLIFER, SUPERINTENDENT, WHITFIELD COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION, DALTON, GEORGIA

SUBJECT: Memorandum Survey Report--Whitfield County Apprenticeship Program, ARC Grant No. GA-11487-94-I-302-0125 (Contract 94-73)

PURPOSE

The purposes of our review were (1) to determine the allowability of the costs claimed under the ARC grant, (2) to determine if the grant objectives were met, and (3) to determine the current status of the project.

SCOPE

Our review included procedures to review costs incurred and claimed for reimbursement under the grant as well as costs claimed as matching funds. The period of performance was July 1, 1994 through June 30, 1996. We reviewed the grantee's reports, examined records, and held discussions with grantee officials June 3, 4 and 10, 1996. As a basis for determining allowable costs and compliance requirements, we used the provisions of the grant agreement, Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circulars A-87, A-102, and the ARC Code.

BACKGROUND

ARC Grant No. GA-11487-94-I-302-0125 was awarded to the Whitfield County Board of Education to implement an apprenticeship program to serve 15 Phoenix High School students. The program was to integrate core academics, occupational education and work study elements to enable non-traditional students to return to school for a high school diploma rather than a GED. The grant was for the lesser of \$48,000 or 80 percent of actual, reasonable and eligible project costs. Local funds of \$12,000 were to be provided by the grantee.

The grant agreement was subsequently amended to provide an additional \$46,800 to allow the grantee to serve an additional twenty students and to extend the grant period by one year. The grantee was to provide additional matching funds of \$12,000. Total project funds to be contributed by ARC and the grantee were \$96,800 (79.8 percent) and \$24,000 (20.2 percent), respectively.

Specific tasks to be accomplished by the grant were as follows:

A. Phase I

- 1) Hire a program coordinator;
- 2) Recruit new industries to participate in the program;
- 3) Select ten to fifteen students and place them in an apprenticeship position based on their needs and interests;
- 4) Provide participants with classroom instruction by a certified teacher and job-site training by the job supervisor; and
- 5) Evaluate the program.

B. Phase II

- 1) Prepare, encourage, and monitor apprentices;
- 2) Incorporate the EIE's findings into the curriculum, transitioning students from school to work without interruption and with specific skills and knowledge;
- 3) Further the collaboration/coordination of the apprenticeship programs at Dalton High, Southeast Whitfield, Northwest Whitfield, and Phoenix;
- 4) Have a program in place that will qualify for state vocational funding in ensuing years; and
- 5) Involve the community and Georgia Equivalency Diploma (GED) students in using the career center housed at Phoenix.

At the time of our visit, the grantee had claimed grant expenditures of \$47,973.38 and \$46,826.62 remained in the ARC grant account.

RESULTS

Financial Records

We reviewed a sample of expenditures charged to the ARC grant to determine if they were allowable and properly documented. We noted several discrepancies that appear to be the result of oversight. We questioned the allocation of costs to the ARC grant for program materials and consultant fees that were to be shared by Phoenix High School and Whitfield County Schools. Subsequent to our visit, the grantee advised us that \$250 of the costs charged to ARC should have been paid for by the county. We also questioned a travel expense for \$101.50 that the grantee indicated should have been shared with Whitfield County Schools. Subsequent to our visit, they provided documentation indicating \$50.75 was deducted from the ARC account.

We also noted a couple of minor discrepancies with the accounting records, i.e., the budget for local match was not updated in accordance with an approved revision, and ARC expenses for the career lab were erroneously posted to a different account. Subsequent to our visit, the grantee provided documentation indicating they made appropriate corrections during the grant period.

Although the grant period had not ended at the time of our visit, the grantee subsequently provided documentation indicating that total grant and local costs would exceed the \$118,800 required by the grant agreement.

Recommendation: We recommend that the \$250 overcharged the ARC project for expenses shared with Whitfield County Schools be deducted from total project expenditures. We also recommend that the grantee ensure that shared costs are properly allocated if they receive future ARC grants.

Program Review


The grantee completed the work required by the grant agreement. The Apprenticeship Program coordinator funded by the ARC grant recruited businesses to participate in the program and reported that community support for the project was good. Twenty-five students participated in the program during the first year and 22 the second year, although some of them dropped out. Ten to 12 students have been in the program from the beginning and 16 completed the recent term. The program coordinator monitors and evaluates the apprenticeship students and will have a new group when school starts in the fall.

Speakers were brought in to meet with the students and discuss a variety of topics such as job and life skills and to conduct mock job interviews with the students. The students also participated in a ropes course that involved problem solving, decision making, and team effort and attended a workshop where they learned about attitudes, working with people, and communications and listening skills.

Computers and a variety of software and other materials are available in the career lab for use by the apprenticeship students.

Project Status

The Apprenticeship Program at Phoenix High School will continue after the ARC funding ends, but at the time of our review, officials did not know the exact amount of funding for the next school year. The coordinator indicated that the level of funding to continue the program would not be as great as it was to start a new program.


Hubert N. Sparks
Inspector General