

OFFICE OF COMMUNITY SERVICES



Hō'ola No'io

MEO HOSTS SUCCESSFUL TRAINING



(Participants at the Lead Safe Workplace Training)



(Mike Vogel instructs on-site LSW Training)

Mahalo to Maui Economic Opportunity, Inc. (MEO) staff for generously hosting the Weatherization Assistance Program's (WAP) required Lead Safe Workplace (LSW) training, and sharing their experiences. Completion of the training was necessary for certification required by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for WAP programs. This successful collaborative team-building event was well-coordinated and gave WAP specialists from around the South Pacific and Hawaii the opportunity to build relationships. Hawaii County Economic Opportunity Council (HCEOC), Honolulu Community Action Program, Inc. (HCAP), Guam, Saipan, America Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), and OCS were some of the agencies and

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MEO CSBG ARRA PROGRAMS HELPING IN THE COMMUNITY

Daryl "Moses" Hobbs had been an electrician for 29 years before he decided he needed to retrain himself as an energy auditor.

It wasn't easy trying to learn another trade, especially after so long, but it was either that or find a way to survive in an industry that kept on letting its veterans go.

"A lot of electricians are unemployed. I've met guys with 20 to 30 years of experience whose careers just came to an abrupt end," Hobbs said. "But this is a brand new field, it's wide open."

Hobbs is just one of the many people across the nation taking advantage of money put aside for the green jobs training by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Maui Economic Opportunity officials applied for the funds as soon as they were able to last fall, in order to try and help the growing number of people left jobless by a struggling economy.

MEO estimates people needing financial assistance in Maui County increased about 100 percent this year from the year before.

"People are having problems paying for basic needs because they're unemployed," said Lyn McNeff, MEO Chief Programs Officer. "We're talking about food, rent and medicine. Some seniors just want glasses so they can go to work."

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Besides training for green jobs, MEO also uses ARRA funds to pay for training for those wanting to become nurses and preschool teachers, also known as child development associates. Like the energy auditor position, both career paths are in high demand and pay better than average wages.

“I always wanted to open my own nursery,” said Carla Mahoe, who works at MEO’s Kahi Kamalii Infant/Toddler Center while she finishes her CDA certification. “I like taking care of little ones, from newborn to two years old.”



“M a y b e one day after I get certified.”

The ARRA money has been well used by the community through MEO’s training programs. There are currently three people like Mahoe who are training to become Child Development Associates, six in the Certified Nursing Assistance program and 16 learning to install photovoltaic systems such as solar panels.

In fact the initial photovoltaic installation class was so popular that there was a waiting list of 100 people, prompting MEO to open up a second class.

Congress passed the Recovery Act on February 13, 2009 in hopes of creating new jobs and saving existing ones while also spurring economic growth. For training graduates like Hobbs, it did that and more.

He says whenever he goes into someone’s home he checks to make sure they have smoke detectors and safe wiring as well as ways for them to become more energy efficient. It’s a way to help out his Maui neighbors and earn a paycheck at the same time.

“For me that was the biggest draw, getting involved in my community,” he said. “Now I do that five or six times a week.”



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areas represented.

The training itself was very interesting and informative for participants, leaving them fired up and excited about doing lead safe weatherization. Mike Vogel and Ben Chichowski, who lead the training, covered eleven skill topics dealing with weatherization and four hands-on skills sets. Some of these topics included lead-safe work practices, the use of EPA-recognized test kits to identify lead-based paint, containment setup and cleaning, minimizing the spread of dust, and preparation of all required records. Of the five days of training, participants enjoyed on-site demonstrations at several houses throughout Maui, learning critical practices on lead paint, including containment and proper disposal. The class openly shared their hardships and past experiences with WAP and worked together to try and find solutions.

OCS congratulates MEO on a job well-done and encourages more team-building trainings like this.

OCS HELPS RAISE OVER \$171,000 IN HAWAII FOOD BANK DONATIONS

This past 2010 was truly a tight period for fundraising. Every year, OCS, as the State Coalition Coordinator, participates in the Hawaii Food Bank Drive. We were able to meet its ambitious goals, raising \$171,327 and 72,707 pounds of food.