

**METROPOLITAN EXPOSITION-RECREATION COMMISSION**

**Resolution No. 03-33A**

**For the purpose of adopting the recommendations made as a result of the First Opportunity Target Area (FOTA) Assessment.**

WHEREAS, the Oregon Legislature, in House Bill 3075, enacted the First Opportunity Target Area employment program in 1989 to pursue a policy of providing first opportunity for available jobs to economically disadvantaged residents living in economically distressed neighborhoods in the immediate vicinity of the Oregon Convention Center ; and

WHEREAS, the economic statistics and indicators originally used to define the boundaries of the target area and to set the annual household income limit were based on data available in 1989; and,


WHEREAS, MERC contracted with Brister & Associates, Inc. to:

- 1) Compile a narrative history of the First Opportunity Target Area program;
- 2) Assess the target area boundaries and income limits using current statistical data and economic indicators;
- 3) Assess the effectiveness of the FOTA program in the employment of economically disadvantaged residents of the FOTA program during the period 1997 to Present;
- 4) Compare the FOTA to two similar programs mandated by Oregon legislation (The Enterprise Zone and the Strategic Investment Program), and
- 5) Issue conclusions and recommendations for enhancing the program;

**BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED** as follows:


The Metropolitan Exposition Recreation Commission adopts the Recommendations and Proposed Diverse Workforce Attraction Strategies as they appear in the attached Exhibit A, and MERC Administration will provide the Commission with an annual report on implementation of recommendations and strategies as approved.

Passed by the Commission on July 23, 2003.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary-Treasurer

Approved As To Form:  
Daniel B. Cooper, General Counsel

By:   
\_\_\_\_\_  
Lisa Umscheid  
Senior Assistant Counsel

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The First Opportunity Target Area employment program mandated under Oregon Legislation House Bill 3075, enacted in 1989, requires MERC to pursue a policy of providing first opportunity for available jobs to economically disadvantaged residents living in economically distressed neighborhoods in the immediate vicinity of the Oregon Convention Center. MERC is also required to work with local training and economic development agencies, to identify, solicit, assist, and if necessary, train such persons to qualify for and receive employment in operations of the Oregon Convention Center.

This report is an assessment of the MERC First Opportunity Target Area (FOTA) Program. It gives an historical timeline of significant decisions and resolutions up to 1997, and assesses and reports FOTA's performance from 1997 to 2003.

Information obtained for this report was extracted from the METRO FOTA Applicant and Employee database and research materials from local, state and federal sources for comparison.

FOTA was designed with specific geographical boundaries and income requirements to meet its target audience for the program. It targeted economically distressed neighborhoods and neighboring disadvantaged residents in the immediate vicinity of the Convention Center. North and Northeast Portland has been the FOTA target area since the program's inception. Even today it is declared a State of Oregon, economically distressed area.

From 1997 to 2003, FOTA candidates' applicant pool varied from 3% to 8% of all MERC facilities. The hiring record was significantly higher with a range from 10% to 30% FOTA. 48% of MERC's overall applicant pool and 27% of MERC overall hires were minorities. African Americans represented the largest minority group and Hispanics the second largest.

MERC and Metro's combined demographics represented 60% minority applicants, which is 31.6 % higher than the Multnomah County Minority Census report of 28.4%. Combined hires were 40% minorities, and 11.4 % greater than the Multnomah County. MERC's minority candidates in the applicant pool exceed METRO's by 36% and the hires of minorities by 14%.

The FOTA program was compared to 2 similar programs mandated through Oregon legislation. A year-to-year comparison of demographics and performances data was not available however overall assumptions and assessment were compiled. The Enterprise Zone and Strategic Investment Program (SIP) both had target areas and populations. In comparison, FOTA hires were marginal to slightly below comparable program performances with 27% minority hires. The Enterprise Zone reported performance for one year during this assessment period. In PY 1999-00 32% to 40% of the 682 hires by Enterprise Zone companies were people of color and 21% were residents of the Enterprise Zone, from the North/Northeast area of Portland. The Strategic Investment Program targeted the semiconductor industry and residents of SE Portland. SIP performance was astounding with 100% employment from the targeted population and geographical area in a three-year period.

First Opportunity Target Area outreach, advertisement and training activity was conducted as needed during this assessment period. After initial start, employment opportunities decreased therefore reducing the need for intense outreach, advertising and training activity. Employee retention was another major factor reducing the necessity of these activities. Through the FOTA

program 19 positions were identified for the Oregon Convention Center on opening day. All 19 were FOTA hires. 8 hires were promoted (42%) and 6 remain employed with MERC today (32%).

This report also includes findings & recommendations for improved program performance. Overall MERC and Metro performance is astounding given the minimal efforts in outreach and advertisement in the last few years. A more targeted plan and effort for MERC's FOTA program has the potential of hiring 30% to 35% of the Convention workforce from the target area.

# HOUSE BILL 3075

Oregon Legislative House Bill 3075, enacted in 1989, relating to lottery funds, required that the construction and operation of the Oregon Convention Center, directly and through its contractors or agents, pursue a policy of providing first opportunity for available jobs to economically disadvantaged residents living in economically distressed neighborhoods in the immediate vicinity of the convention center site. The Metropolitan Service District shall cooperate, to the maximum extent possible, with local training and economic development agencies to identify, and assist, if necessary, in the training of such persons to qualify for and receive employment in connection with the construction and operation of the Oregon Convention Center.

The MERC Commission on September 12, 1989 originally appointed the MERC Advisory Committee on Development of Economic Opportunities. Construction of the Oregon Convention Center (OCC) in Northeast Portland had just been completed. The financing provided by the State of Oregon included a requirement that the Center generate benefits to its neighbors, the residents of inner North and Northeast Portland. To meet this obligation MERC established a Target Area First Opportunity Program, the first of its kind in the Portland Metropolitan region. The Target Area First Opportunity Program provided a legal and easily administered mechanism to ensure that the Target Area shared in the economic opportunities that the facility intended to bring to the region as a whole. On its own initiative, MERC extended the Target Area First Opportunity Program to all MERC facilities: the Portland Center for the Performing Arts (PCPA), Civic Stadium, and later, the Portland Metropolitan Exposition Center (Expo Center)

House Bill 3075's employment component key concepts were to stimulate the economy in economically distressed neighborhoods in the immediate vicinity of the convention center site through:

- Jobs creation
- Economic revitalization
- Community wealth creation
- Unemployment reduction
- Development of a skilled workforce
- Cultivation of skilled workers
- Recruitment and training of unskilled residents

The Advisory Committee on Development of Economic Opportunities created the criteria in which these key concepts would be implemented, through:

- Defining geographical boundaries
- Defining "First Opportunity"
- Defining "Economically Disadvantaged"
- Identifying jobs suitable to the targeted workforce
- Assessment of employment barriers
- Creation of a policy for FOTA recruitment, training, retention and advancement.

# **FIRST OPPORTUNITY TARGET AREA HISTORICAL TIMELINE**

1. Senate Bill 964, chapter 506, 1987 Laws, July 8, 1987, BY COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, appropriating lottery funds for the convention center.
2. Advisory Committee on Economic Opportunities Mission Statement approved September 20, 1989.
3. Definition adopted by the Advisory Committee, 1989
  - "First Opportunity" Adopted 10/26/89
  - "Qualified Applicants" Adopted 10/19/89
  - "Economically Disadvantaged" Adopted 11/13/89
4. House Bill 3075, continued the appropriation of lottery funds for the Oregon Convention Center, section 23, chapter 506, Oregon Laws 1989.
5. Proposed boundary discussion at Metro/MERC Advisory Committee Meeting, February 13, 1990.
6. Boundaries discussion reviewed. Committee elected to leave boundaries as originally identified, reviewed October 8, 1990.
7. Resolution 95-4, dated January 11, 1995, amendment to MERC personnel rules, section 5.02 allowing first opportunity applicants to apply with the same status and step as current MERC employees.
8. Resolution 97-43, dated August 13, 1997, reaffirming the MERC First Opportunity Advisory Committee and appointing the members of the committee.
9. Resolution 98-24, dated April 8, 1998, MERC accepting the report of the Advisory Committee on Development of Economic Opportunities.

# ECONOMICALLY DISTRESSED & DISADVANTAGED QUALIFIERS

- Neighborhoods with 30% or more minorities
- Household incomes less than \$40,000
- Individual incomes less than \$25,000
- Neighborhoods with high unemployment rates
- Neighborhoods with 20% or more families in poverty
- Neighborhoods with 50% adults, age 25+ with high school or less education attainment

Distressed communities and disadvantaged qualifiers were derived from information attained from the Federal Government 2003 poverty guideline, the State of Oregon Economic & Community Development Department distressed area methodology formula, and the 1996 US Census American Community Survey.

In determining distressed and disadvantaged qualifiers, the State of Oregon formula was the most comprehensive and useful. The methodology uses an average of eight measures to gauge an area's distress relative to comparable statewide measures, as follows:

- Unemployment rate
- Per capita personal income
- Average pay per worker
- Population change
- Percent of population receiving unemployment insurance benefits
- Industrial diversity based on distribution of employment by industry
- Percent of families in poverty
- Employment change

The statewide distress index uses an average of the eight sub-indexes. The statewide index is 1.00. A higher index indicates greater distress. As of 2000, Multnomah County had 3 distressed areas: Lents in SE Portland, North/Northeast Portland, and Rockwood in Gresham.

Multnomah County's median household income is \$41,278 and the State of Oregon's is \$40,916. (1999 Multnomah County Quick Facts from the US Census Bureau) A living wage in Oregon is approximately \$15.00 an hour according to the State Employment Dept and worksystems inc., the city's employment and training organization.



# FOTA FACILITY COMPARISON BY APPLICANTS

By Facility, Each Year, Percentages, and Combined To Applicant Pool

PCPA	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	TOTAL
Total Applicants	223	214	398	287	484	713	2319
FOTA Applicants	2	15	18	3	27	33	98
FOTA Percentages	1%	7%	4%	1%	5%	4%	4%

OCC	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	TOTAL
Total Applicants	426	488	224	1184	541	1290	4153
FOTA Applicants	50	22	7	34	30	185	328
FOTA Percentages	11%	4%	3%	3%	5%	13%	7%

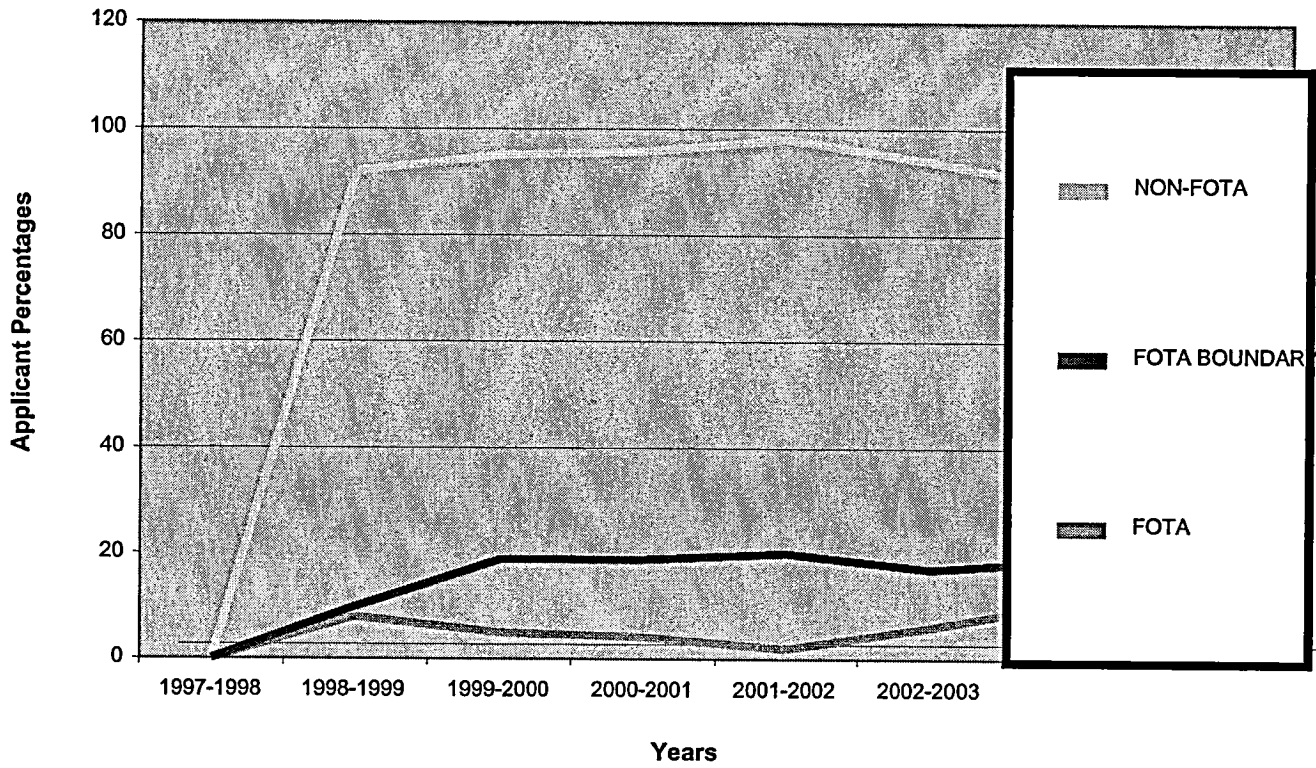
MERC	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	TOTAL
Total Applicants	88	58	52	145	287	120	750
FOTA Applicants	0	0	0	0	17	3	20
FOTA Percentages	0%	0%	0%	0%	6%	2%	3%

EXPO	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	TOTAL
Total Applicants	21	25	80	106	474	109	815
FOTA Applicants	7	1	7	1	41	15	72
FOTA Percentages	25%	4%	8%	1%	8%	12%	8%





## APPLICANTS - FOTA BOUNDARIES



1997 – 2003	NON-FOTA FOTA BOUNDARY FOTA	VARIED VARIED VARIED	89% TO 98% 10% TO 20% 2% TO 11%
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# FOTA FACILITY COMPARISON BY HIRES

By Facility, Each Year, Percentages, and Combined to Total Hires

PCPA	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	TOTAL
TOTAL HIRES	39	6	22	29	24	25	145
FOTA	2	2	3	2	6	5	20
%	5%	33%	14%	7%	25%	20%	14%

OCC	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	TOTAL
TOTAL HIRES	39	27	22	47	39	54	228
FOTA	5	9	2	10	9	14	49
%	13%	33%	9%	21%	23%	26%	21%

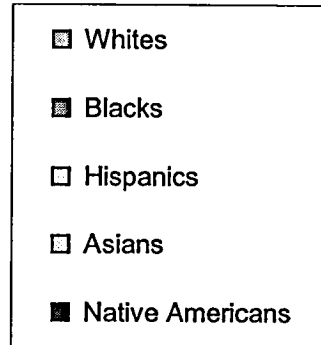
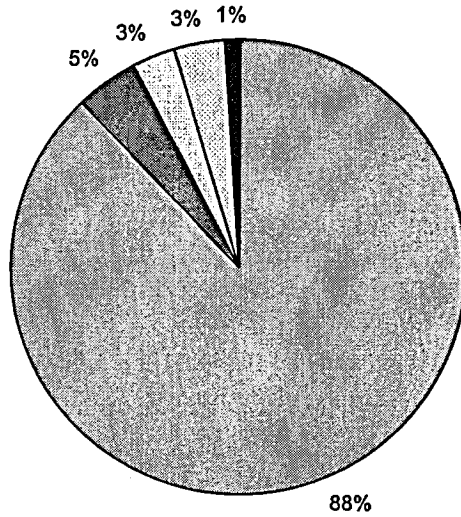
MERC	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	TOTAL
TOTAL HIRES	2	2	2	2	3	5	16
FOTA	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	20%	6%

EXPO	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	TOTAL
TOTAL HIRES	2	2	7	2	21	4	38
FOTA	1	0	3	1	9	1	15
%	50%	0%	43%	50%	43%	25%	41%



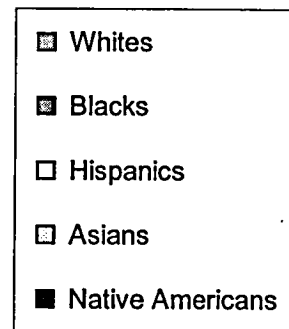
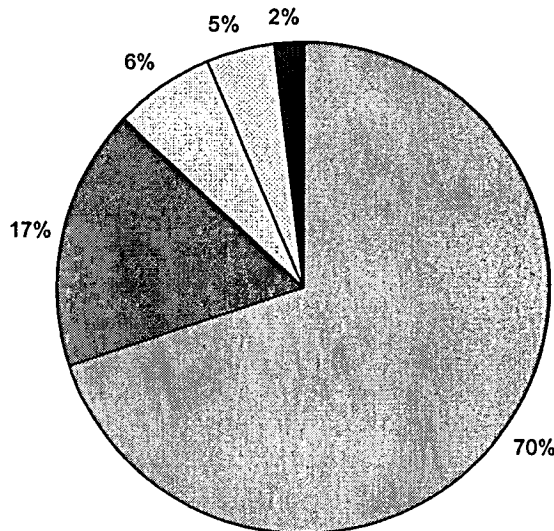


### METRO Applicants 1997 - 2003



1997- 2003 12% of Metro Applicants were minority  
 5% African Americans  
 3% Hispanics  
 3% Asians  
 1% Native Americans

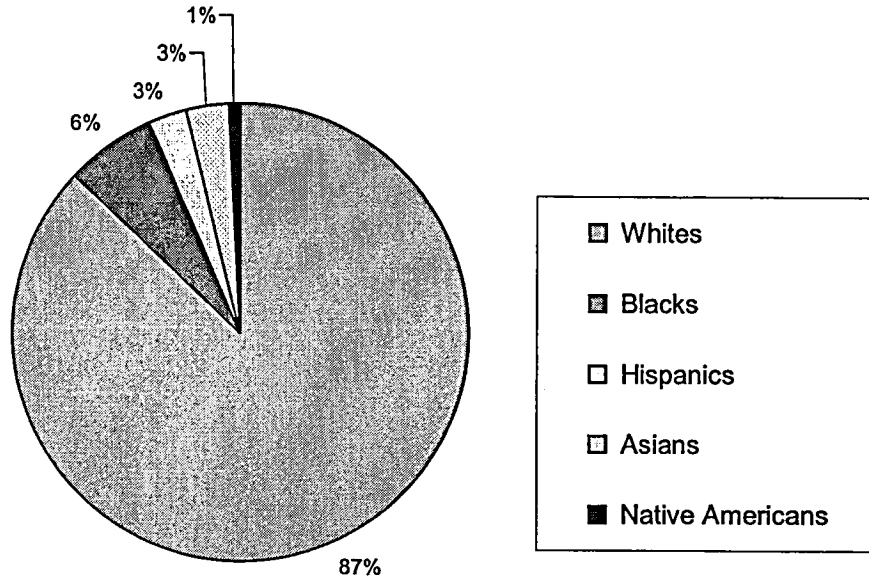
### MERC Applicants 1997 - 2003



1997- 2003 48% of MERC Applicants were minority  
 34% African Americans  
 9% Hispanics  
 3% Asians  
 2% Native Americans

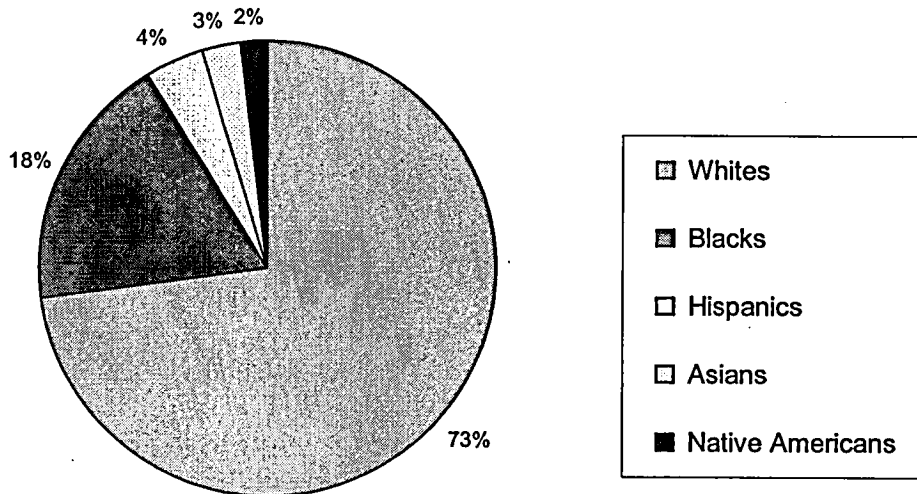


### METRO Hired Applicants 1997 - 2003



1997- 2003 13% of Metro Hires were minority  
 6% African Americans  
 3% Hispanics  
 3% Asians  
 1% Native American

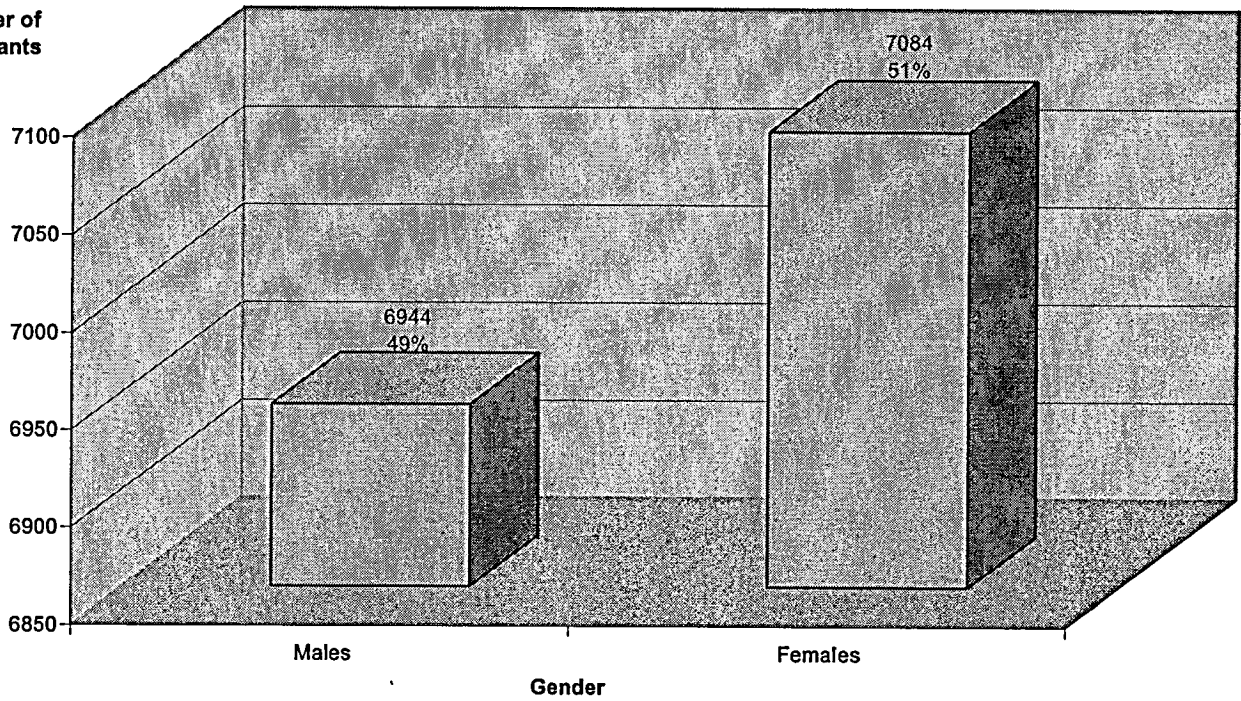
### MERC Hired Applicants 1997 - 2003



1997- 2003 27% of MERC Hires were minority  
 18% African Americans  
 4% Hispanics  
 3% Asians  
 2% Native Americans

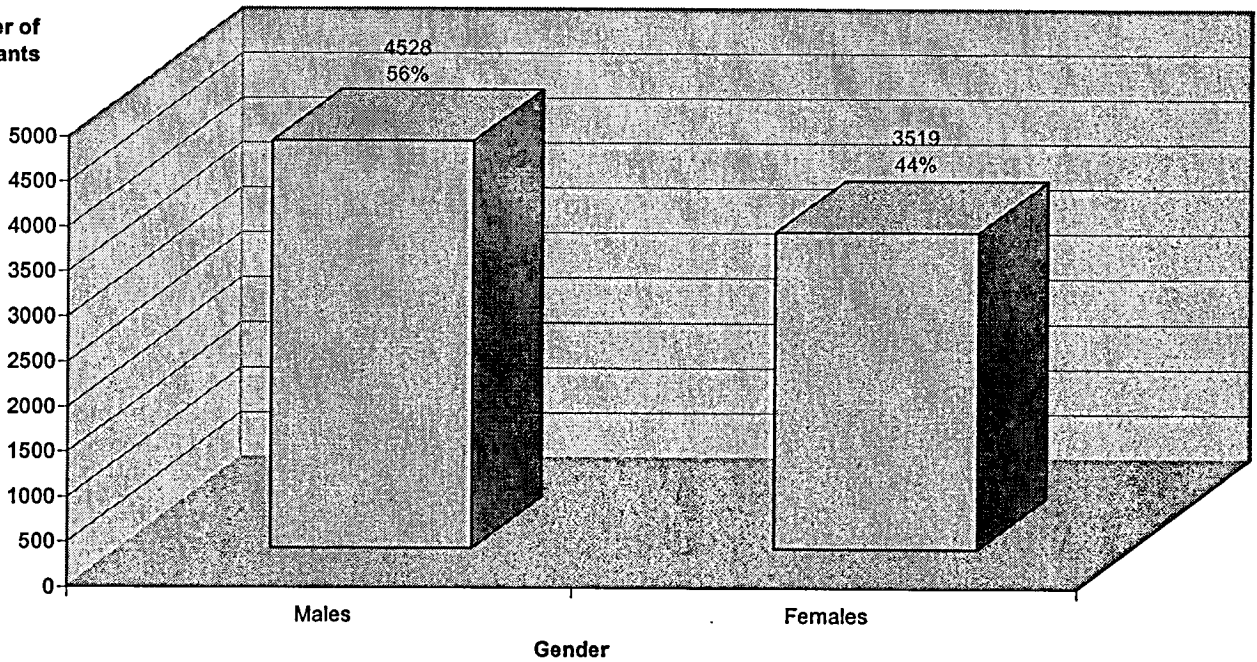
METRO Gender of Applicants from 1997-2003

Number of Applicants



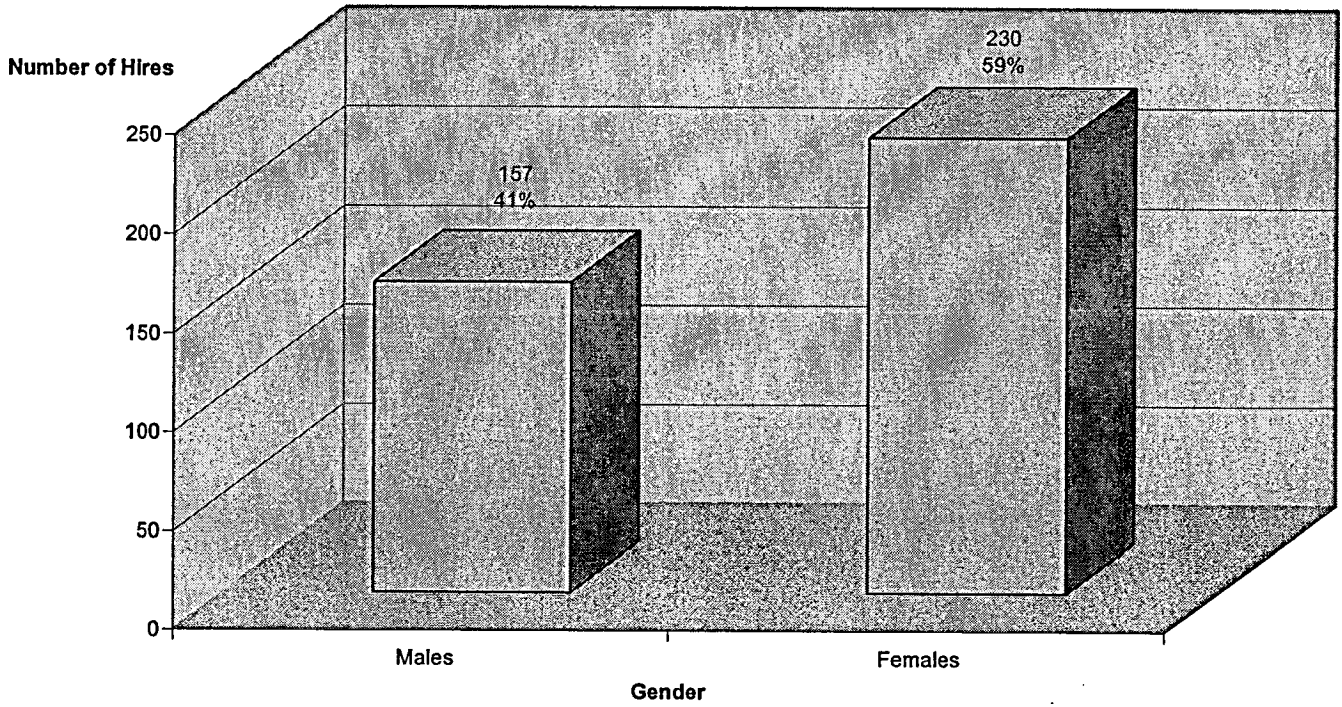
MERC Gender of Applicants from 1997-2003

Number of Applicants

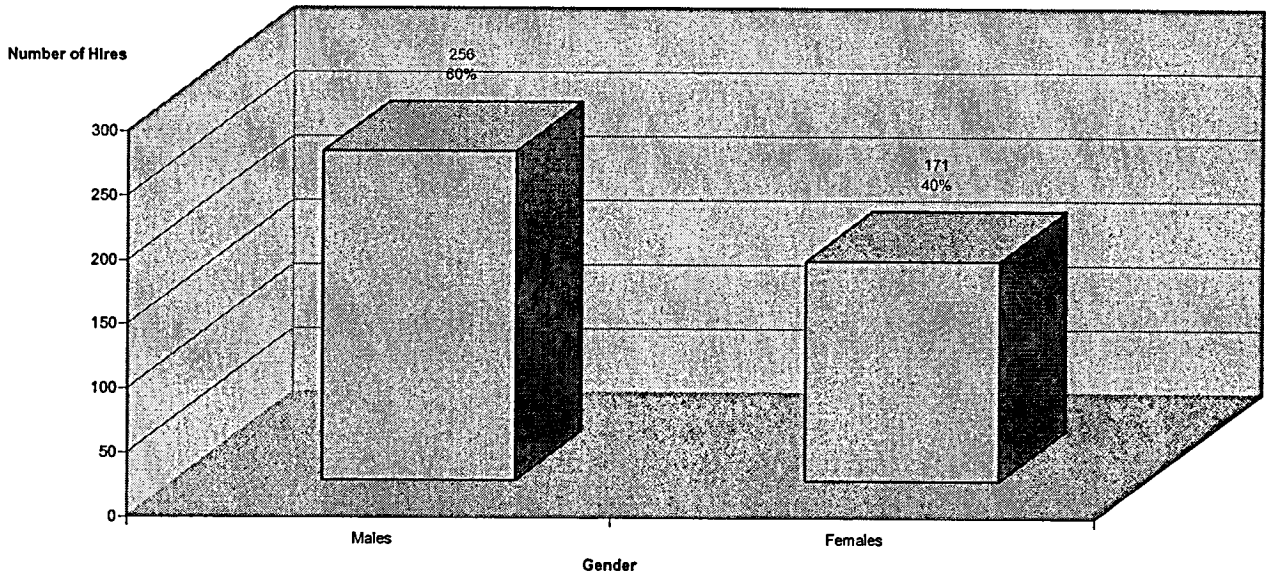


Gender of Applicants 1997- 2003		
	Metro	MERC
Males	49%	56%
Females	51%	44%

**METRO Gender of Hires from 1997-2003**



**MERC Gender of Hires from 1997-2003**



Gender of Hires 1997- 2003		
	Metro	MERC
Males	41%	60%
Females	59%	40%

## **CRITERIA USED IN PROMOTIONS**

MERC's Human Resource Department has a standard competitive process for promotions. Opportunities for promotions are first posted internally before posting for FOTA and then the general public. Management was interviewed at each of the MERC facilities and beyond the tangible job required skills they used the following criteria for promotion selection:

- Temperament
- Communication skills
- Enjoy other people
- Has a genuine concern for others
- A person who cares
- Can handle diversity
- Shows interest in learning and growing
- Well spoken, able to articulate reasonably well
- Positive attitude
- Doesn't take things personally
- Has an idea of their personal goal
- Interested in continuing education

Management was well versed in personnel policies and followed human resource procedures in hiring. In the promotion process, supervisors used a variety of subjective hiring criteria. Subjective occupational measures are bona fide job standards if applicable to the work being performed.

## **COMPARISON TO SIMILAR PROGRAMS**

MERC's FOTA program was compared to similar programs governed by the State of Oregon's Economic Development Department. Each of the programs was supported by state legislation and similar objectives. Yearly reports from the Enterprise Zone and the Strategic Investment programs were not available for comparison. Analysis had to be derived from a compilation of years between the two programs for comparison.

The purpose and framework around the Enterprise Zone was created in 1985. Its' principles and mission was similar to the objectives of FOTA. The compatible phrase in the Enterprise Zone reads, "there are areas in the state that need particular attention of government to help attract private business investment into those areas and to help resident businesses to invest and grow and that many local governments wish to have tax incentives and other assistance available to stimulate sound business investments that support and improve the quality of life."

In this evaluation period the Enterprise Zone report was for PY 1999-00, which yielded these results:

- 85% of all Enterprise Zone company wages exceed 150% of Oregon minimum wage after 1 year of employment
- Retention of at least 50% of all employees who completed their company probation period for a period of two years
- 32%-40% of the 682 employees hired by the Enterprise Zone companies during FY 1999-00 were people of color

- 21% of the 682 employees hired by the Enterprise Zone companies during FY 1999-00 were residents of the Enterprise Zone

The Oregon Legislation created Multnomah County's Strategic Investment Program (SIP) in 1993, in order to attract investment from the semiconductor industry. Since 1997, this program has reported four years of results for 1997, 1998, 1999 and 2000. The results are as follows:

<b>First Source Results</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>
First Source Hires	71	77	39	164
Total Hires		201		
10 Hires Year Unknown				
<b>SIP Target Populations</b>				
Unemployed	17	12	8	55
Underemployed	31	11	25	65
Adults & Family Service Recipients	10	5	1	
*Other Targeted Populations	13	49	5	44

\*"Other" target populations specified in the SIP agreement include: School to Work, Vocational School to Work, Oregon High School Graduates, Graduates of Oregon Institution of Higher Education and Oregon Residents.

Employers with SIP agreements exceeded benchmarks for job creation. The SIP job creation program created over 485 jobs over a three-year period, employing 100% of the targeted populations. The program success was attributed to universal access with targeted recruitment, training, and a payment incentive program of \$450.00 for every successful hire.

Data on hires was the most comprehensive data available for comparison to similar programs. By comparison, the FOTA program performed at a similar level with the Enterprise Zone program and significantly below the SIP program.

Program Hires Comparison by %

<b>PROGRAM</b>	<b>TARGET HIRES %</b>
FOTA	14% to 40%
Enterprise Zone	32% to 40%
SIP	100%

## **OUTREACH ACTIVITIES**

During this assessment period, outreach efforts were forged through a relationship with the Northeast One Stop Career Center from 1999-2001. The Northeast One Stop Career Center was a high profile employment and training agency providing employment services to the North/Northeast community. MERC/Metro personnel attended the quarterly Professional Networking Socials and gave presentations on MERC/Metro's application process and the FOTA program.

Through MERC's outreach efforts, recommendations from the community were implemented in 2002. The following are the changes that were implemented in response to feedback:

- Renamed the position from Utility Worker 1 to Setup Custodian to reflect the true duties of the job.
- Reduced grade level of job announcements language to attract more FOTA applicants.
- Replaced the supplemental questions with a self assessment questionnaire relating to the applicant's ability to consistently show up for work, their ability to get along with co-workers, and their availability to work any shift.
- Changed the requirement of three years of custodial experience to three years of dependable, verifiable work experience.
- Changed the physical test from the ability to read a schematic map, to ability to set up a room; and from the ability to operate a floor-scrubbing machine to having the physical ability to handle moving a table and a set of chairs.

## **FOTA ADVERTISEMENT PRACTICE**

MERC has successfully utilized traditional marketing avenues to announce available FOTA positions for all MERC facilities. FOTA positions are posted in all MERC facilities, on Metro's Job Hotline, in the Oregonian Newspaper and other local community newspapers. After the construction of the Convention Center and initial hiring, employment opportunities decreased therefore reducing the need for intense advertisement.

## **TRAINING ACTIVITIES**

The convention center was the birth of a new industry in the State of Oregon. Initial construction and staffing of the center required new industry training in convention and tourism. Training was frequent during the Convention Center's formative years and an intricate part of the center's success. After initial start up the need for training decreased significantly. During 1997 to 2003, Metro staff conducted management training on FOTA and the importance of the program. MERC Human Resource personnel conducted training at the NE Workforce Center and the North/Northeast One Stop Career Center.

## **FINDINGS**

House Bill 3075 states, "The Metropolitan Service District shall cooperate, to the maximum extent possible, with local job training and economic development agencies to identify, solicit, assist and, if necessary, train such persons to qualify for and receive employment in connection with the construction and operations of the Oregon Convention Center."

- MERC's FOTA program is successful despite the minimal effort to solicit FOTA candidates from distressed communities. Outreach, advertisement, and training activities were limited during 1997 to 2003. MERC's minority applicant pool was an astounding 48%. This is a significant number when compared to the 2000 US Census, Multnomah County data that indicates a minority population of 28.4%.
- The current FOTA income requirement is a barrier eliminating economically disadvantaged candidates and potential FOTA hires. The 1999 US Census states that the median household income in Multnomah County is \$41,278 and \$22,606 per capita income. Currently FOTA household income requirement is \$23,000, which is well below the county median household income level.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- MERC should set yearly outreach benchmarks for applicants and hires from targeted areas for the purpose of measuring FOTA outreach efforts
- MERC should form partnerships with community based organizations or minority businesses that can assist in meeting FOTA goals.
- MERC should extend outreach to communities in North/Northeast Portland that reflect high numbers in economically disadvantaged and distressed areas.
- MERC should make FOTA opportunities more visible and accessible throughout the neighboring distressed community by using a variety of outreach methods.
- MERC should partner and support trainings in distressed communities that increase FOTA applicants and FOTA hires.
- MERC should retain the same FOTA boundaries for North/Northeast Portland since the State's 2000 statistics and the 1996 US Census community surveys still report North/Northeast Portland as a distressed community.
- MERC should increase the minimum income requirement to \$25,000.00 per individual and \$40,000 per household to increase the number of FOTA qualified candidates. In this assessment a significant amount of candidates were not included because of income disqualification. If the minimum household income increased for FOTA applicants, the FOTA percentage would increase by approximately 17%.

## **PROPOSED DIVERSE WORKFORCE ATTRACTION STRATEGIES**

- Maximize recruitment and education in the highest distressed communities: Portsmouth, Hollywood, Vernon, Humboldt, King, Boise, and Eliot Neighborhoods.
- Work with community based organizations and/or businesses that serve the North/Northeast community to maximize outreach.
- When positions are available use both traditional and non-traditional techniques and methods to reach targeted audiences through canvassing, flyers, radio, churches, barbershops, beauty salons, and television, etc.
- Establish outreach and recruitment sites in the community.
- Increase availability of applications through community sites for all FOTA positions.
- Attend and support community events to build relationships with diverse communities.

# APPENDICES

Comparison of METRO & MERC

Federal Government Poverty Guidelines

North Portland Neighborhoods Map

Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods Map

North Portland Neighborhoods Statistics

- Portsmouth
- St. Johns
- Cathedral Park
- Kenton
- Overlook
- Arbor Lodge
- Hayden Island
- Bridgeton
- University Park

Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods Statistics

- Eliot
- Boise
- King
- Humboldt
- Vernon
- Hollywood
- Piedmont
- Sullivan's Gulch
- Irvington
- Concordia
- Sabin
- Woodlawn
- Grant Park-Hollywood
- Sabin-Irvington
- Grant Park Beaumont
- Alameda

MERC Resolution No. 98-24

MERC Resolution No. 97-43

MERC Resolution N. 95-4

MERC Advisory Committee on Development of Economic Opportunities  
Mission Statement

MERC Definitions Adopted Bt The Advisory Committee, 1989

House Bill 3075, 1989

Senate Bill 964, 1987