



**The Workforce  
Innovation Fund  
(WIF): A Synthesis  
Report on  
Evaluation Findings  
and Experiences**

**Appendices**

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## Highlights of *The Final Report on the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity Accelerated Training for Illinois Manufacturing*

### Project Overview

- **Grantee:** Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity
- **Intervention Focus Area:** Employer Engagement / Sector Strategies
- **Target Population:** WIA-eligible adults with at least 10<sup>th</sup> grade reading/9<sup>th</sup> grade math.
- **Area Served:** 5 regions in Illinois representing 62 out of 102 counties)
- **Congressional Districts:** IL 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18

### Grant Round: Round 1

### Evaluation Overview

- **Evaluation Types:** Implementation Evaluation, Outcomes Study, Random-assignment Impact Study, Cost Study
- **Evaluator Organization:** SPRA
- **Date of Final Report:** April 2017
- **Title:** Evaluation of Accelerated Training for Illinois Manufacturing (ATIM) Impact Report

### Evaluation Period

- October 2013 – April 2017

*This brief, one of a series highlighting findings from final Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) evaluation reports,<sup>1</sup> summarizes information from the study conducted by Social Policy Research Associates on the Accelerated Training for Illinois Manufacturing (ATIM) project.*

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, along with its partner agencies, the Illinois Community College Board and the Illinois Department of Employment Security, used its WIF grant to implement the Accelerated Training for Illinois Manufacturing (ATIM) program for WIA-eligible adults. The ATIM program, as originally envisioned, included seven components: 1) Integrated basic and occupational skills “bridge” training for participants with lower basic skills; 2) Industry-specific training, planned with employer input, leading to nationally-recognized credentials; 3) Accelerated training schedules, offering training in “stackable” credentials; 4) Individualized training and employment plans; 5) A state-level participant tracking system, to aid in case management and allow consistent measurement of outcomes across state agencies; 6) Team-based case management across the workforce system, training providers and employers; and 7) Work-based training, such as on-the-job training, internships, and job shadowing. While most of these components were implemented, the following were not ultimately feasible during the grant period: 1) integrated basic skills training, 2) case management teams, and 3) work-based training opportunities.

The evaluation of the ATIM program included an implementation study, an outcomes study, a random assignment impact study, and a cost study and included the findings as described below. The final sample for the impact study included 738 individuals: 514 who were assigned to the program group and thus able to enroll in ATIM and 224 who were assigned to the control group.

- Impact study findings confirmed the positive potential of sectoral training strategies, which are encouraged under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). ATIM had a positive and statistically significant impact on enrollment in and completion of occupational skills training and completion of multiple (stacked) certificates for ATIM participants relative to the control group, as well as positive impacts on earnings and, in select quarters, employment, during the second year following random assignment.
- The implementation study found that, because not all components of the program were implemented, and because a relatively lengthy intake process screened out many applicants, the population served was somewhat less disadvantaged than planned.
- The outcomes study found that 85 percent of ATIM participants enrolled in a basic manufacturing skills training module, 62 percent of whom received at least one certificate. Additionally, 76 percent of participants also enrolled in other occupational skills training programs offered through local training partners, 83 percent of whom completed training. The majority of ATIM participants (71 percent) also exited the program with employment, mostly (63 percent) in jobs related to their training.

<sup>1</sup> Under the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF), the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) provided 43 competitive grants to States, regions, Tribal entities and localities to design and evaluate new approaches in the public workforce system. Using a “tiered evidence” model (which builds on past research), WIF projects tested a variety of new service combinations, technological innovations, and systems changes (with a focus on program coordination and integration). ETA required grantees to procure independent third-party evaluations to document project implementation, costs, and results, all in order to inform future experimentation and to promote continuous improvement in operations and performance in the public workforce system.



- The impact study found that the program had positive impacts on enrollment in (69.8 percentage points) and completion of (51.9 percentage points) training; probability of receiving at least one training certificate (55.1 percentage points) and on average number of certificates received (2.0); and earnings (\$5,500 more during the second year after random assignment).
- The cost study found that the ATIM model was more expensive than standard WIA programming; however, this comparison captured the full start-up costs of the ATIM program, rather than comparing the costs of the two programs at steady state.



## Highlights of *The Final Report on the Baltimore County Department of Economic and Workforce Development's Accelerating Connections to Employment Project*

### Project Overview

- **Grantee:** Baltimore County Department of Economic and Workforce Development
- **Intervention Focus Area:** Career Pathways
- **Target Population:** Disadvantaged workers in need of basic skills as well as occupational skills training
- **Area Served:** Maryland (various sites), New Haven CT, Austin TX, Atlanta GA
- **Congressional Districts:** MD-2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>; CT-3<sup>rd</sup>; TX- 15<sup>th</sup>; GA-4<sup>th</sup>.
- **Grant Round:** Round 1

### Evaluation Overview

- **Evaluation Types:** Implementation evaluation, RCT impact analysis, cost analysis
- **Evaluator Organization:** ICF
- **Date of Final Report:** May 1, 2017
- **Title:** *Accelerating Connections to Employment: Final Evaluation Report*

### Evaluation Period

- June 2013 – December 2016

*This brief, one of a series highlighting findings from final Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) evaluation reports,<sup>2</sup> summarizes information from the study conducted by ICF on the Accelerating Connections to Employment (ACE) Project.*

The Baltimore County Department of Employment and Workforce Development used its WIF grant (Type C, adapting proven ideas) to implement the ACE project by a consortium of nine Workforce Investment Boards and ten community colleges across four states: Maryland, Texas, Georgia, and Connecticut. The program, modeled on Washington State's Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) strategy, included ten key components: 1) targeted training to low-skill occupations in industries with labor demand; 2) employer engagement; 3) training towards credentials; 4) pre- and post-testing to assess participant learning; 5) screening to ensure participant/program match; 6) integrated basic skills and occupational training curricula using a "co-teaching" model of a separate occupational instructor and basic skills or ESL instructor; 7) support services; 8) employment support services to aid in the transition to employment; 9) collaboration of WIB and local community college; and 10) participant tracking to measure outcomes.

The nine sites offered training in industries such as health care (e.g., dental assisting, medical billing, dietary aide, pharmacy tech), transportation (e.g., bus or commercial driver's license, warehouse logistics), and industries specific to local area (e.g., casino dealer, apartment maintenance, utility installer). Intensive support mechanisms, dedicated staff to help participants manage the training process and to access related available supports ("career navigator"), and to aid in the transition to employment ("job developer"). The evaluation found the following:

- The implementation study found that the ACE program achieved most required elements, and met its recruitment and completion target. Collaboration between the local WIBs and community colleges was difficult, as the two institutions needed to learn each other's cultures and agreed on appropriate roles and responsibilities. Sites developed their training programs in response to both initial labor market information, and information on employer needs and participant interest. The study found that early employer involvement was key in order to both gauge labor demand and design training focused on employer-valued skills and credentials; and the co-teaching model of integrating basic skills/ESL and occupational training using separate instructors was costly, time consuming, and at times difficult to implement.
- The RCT evaluation found that the ACE program had a positive impact on employment one and two years after the program, as measured by positive earnings in either the first four or eight quarters after randomization, and a positive impact on total earnings within one and two years after randomization in three of the four states; some evidence of positive impacts on measures of job quality, including the proportion of participants earning at least \$13 per hour one year after randomization, and the proportion working at least 35 hours.

<sup>2</sup> Under the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF), the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) provided 43 competitive grants to States, regions, Tribal entities and localities to design and evaluate new approaches in the public workforce system. Using a "tiered evidence" model (which builds on past research), WIF projects tested a variety of new service combinations, technological innovations, and systems changes (with a focus on program coordination and integration). ETA required grantees to procure independent third-party evaluations to document project implementation, costs, and results, all in order to inform future experimentation and to promote continuous improvement in operations and performance in the public workforce system.



## Highlights of *The Final Report on the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership's Career Connect Project*

### Project Overview

- **Grantee:** Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership
- **Intervention Focus Area:** MIS Changes and Technological Innovation
- **Target Population:** Workforce System Providers
- **Area Served:** Cook County, IL
- **Congressional District:** IL 7<sup>th</sup>
- **Grant Round:** Round 1

### Evaluation Overview

- **Evaluation Types:** Process Study – Type A
- **Evaluator Organization:** Social IMPACT Research Center at Heartland Alliance
- **Date of Final Report:** August 2017
- **Title:** *Final Report on The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership's Career Connect Project: An Implementation Study.*

### Evaluation Period

- October 2013 – March 2018

*This brief, one of a series highlighting findings from final Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) evaluation reports,<sup>3</sup> summarizes information from the study conducted by the Social IMPACT Center on the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership Career Connect Project.*

The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership used its WIF grant (a Type A project for new and untested ideas) to design, implement and test an integrated workforce management information system – Career Connect. The new system was to be used to house comprehensive information on programs, services and outcomes, and to allow cross-program sharing of data. The evaluation was a process study, and used data from project documents, observations, a survey, and interviews with key stakeholders. Findings included the following:

- Implementation of Career Connect required more time and staff resources than anticipated and a lengthy process of trial-and-error to establish appropriate roles, responsibilities, and levels of effort for all players involved.
- Identifying requirements to be included in a Request for Information (RFI) for the system was critical to gathering stakeholder input and helping the mostly non-technical project team develop an understanding of the technical needs, timeline, and costs.
- Stakeholder engagement was necessary for understanding key perspectives and potential for identifying challenges. However, stakeholders' interest waned over time and knowledge of the project's purpose and status was inconsistent, even amongst those who were highly engaged at the start of the project.
- Some stakeholders were worried that the Partnership would use Career Connect as a punitive compliance tool. The eventual system had a scaled-down number of interfaces, which meant that Career Connect was not as useful as originally intended.

The evaluator offered several recommendations for implementing similar projects in the future. These included: 1) assure sufficient time early on to articulate roles, responsibilities, and levels of effort, as well as to develop a detailed communications plan; 2) a robust systems requirement process is of vital importance in selecting the contractor and for assuring stakeholder engagement; 3) project resources should adequately cover management and administrative staff as well as subject matter experts, and specialists (consultants, developers, testers, etc.); 4) allow substantial time (and funding) to migrate data to new systems and build interfaces, and 5) make sure to develop – and communicate – policies and procedures about how to handle data that will *not* be migrated.

<sup>3</sup> Under the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF), the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) provided 43 competitive grants to States, regions, Tribal entities and localities to design and evaluate new approaches in the public workforce system. Using a “tiered evidence” model (which builds on past research), WIF projects tested a variety of new service combinations, technological innovations, and systems changes (with a focus on program coordination and integration). ETA required grantees to procure independent third-party evaluations to document project implementation, costs, and results, all in order to inform future experimentation and to promote continuous improvement in operations and performance in the public workforce system.



## Highlights of *The Final Report on the Metro North Regional Employment Board's Chelsea CONNECT Project*

### Project Overview

- **Grantee:** Metro North Regional Employment Board
- **Intervention Focus Area:** Cross-system coordination
- **Target Population:** Low-skilled workers, unemployed workers, and individuals with limited English proficiency
- **Area Served:** Areas adjacent to and north of Boston, Massachusetts
- **Congressional District:** MA-7
- **Grant Round:** Round 1

### Evaluation Overview

- **Evaluation Types:** Outcomes Study, Implementation Study
- **Evaluator Organization:** Mt Auburn Associates
- **Date of Final Report:** June 2015
- **Title:** *Evaluation of Chelsea Connect Final Report*

### Evaluation Period

- June 2013 – April 2015

*This brief, one of a series highlighting findings from final Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) evaluation reports,<sup>4</sup> summarizes information from the study conducted by Mt. Auburn Associates on the Metro North Regional Employment Board Chelsea CONNECT project.*

The Metro North Regional Employment Board used its WIF grant (Type A, new and untested ideas) to fund CONNECT, designed to coordinate and co-locate services in the areas of employment, financial education, financial services, skill development, and income and housing stabilization. A partnership of six organizations targeting low-wage, low-skilled, and unemployed individuals, the grantee designed CONNECT to improve the employment, education and financial outcomes of its participants by establishing close relationships between staff and participants and offering a targeted selection of services at one location.

The evaluation included an implementation study that documented the implementation of program components, the experiences of service providers and participants, how participants used services. The outcome evaluation used a pre-post design to explore participant-level outcomes of interest, including educational participation and achievement, employment, income, and financial stability. Findings included the following:

The implementation study found:

- Partners were positive about overall project structure, reported a stronger alignment with partner organizations, use of new approaches; and positive forum for sharing ideas and addressing challenges.
- Of 2,820 participants included in the evaluation, 55 percent used employment services most often. Others included: financial education services (46 percent); at least one skill development services (20 percent) or income and housing service (19 percent). About a quarter of the participants used more than one area of service.
- Participants reported some barriers, such as lack of transportation, waiting lists, and ineligibility for services.

The outcomes study found:

- Sixty percent of participants reported being employed at the end of the 18-month follow-up period compared to 44 percent at program entry. Seventy three percent reported being better able to meet their living expenses than they were at program intake. 60 percent said CONNECT improved on their financial stability.
- Participants reported an increase in average annual income between intake and 18 months.
- Fifteen percent of participants reported receipt of, or enrollment towards, a degree or certificate. 55 percent reported that CONNECT helped improve their education.
- The length of time participants were engaged in services did not have a statistically significant relationship on education level or financial stability, but those who were engaged in services for a longer durations reported lower income gains than those who were in the initiative for a shorter duration.

The evaluators offered recommendations for using the evaluation findings, including among others: 1) adopt a more deliberate definition of a participant and prioritize active participants; 2) define “success” in terms of the participants’ self-determined goal. Then, clarify the relationship between services and the measures of success. Map services to meet their needs; 3) sustain and strengthen the integrated data system and identify strategies for reducing redundant work.

<sup>4</sup> Under the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF), the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) provided 43 competitive grants to States, regions, Tribal entities and localities to design and evaluate new approaches in the public workforce system. Using a “tiered evidence” model (which builds on past research), WIF projects tested a variety of new service combinations, technological innovations, and systems changes (with a focus on program coordination and integration). ETA required grantees to procure independent third-party evaluations to document project implementation, costs, and results, all in order to inform future experimentation and to promote continuous improvement in operations and performance in the public workforce system.



## Highlights of The Final Report of *Electronic Ohio Means Jobs (OMJ)*

### Project Overview

- **Grantee:** Ohio Department of Job and Family Services
- **Intervention Focus Area:** MIS Systems Changes and Technological Innovation
- **Target Population:** All Ohio residents who sought employment services in 2013, 2014 and 2015 and who resided in one of the 11 study counties
- **Area Served:** 11 pilot counties (Adams, Belmont, Brown, Clark, Columbiana, Franklin, Hamilton, Lucas, Pike, Scioto, and Stark)
- **Congressional District:** OH-2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 15, 16
- **Grant Round:** Round 1

### Evaluation Overview

- **Evaluation Types:** Randomized Controlled Trial, Implementation Study
- **Evaluator Organization:** The Ohio State University
- **Date of Final Report:** November 2016
- **Title:** *A Randomized Control Trial: Evaluation of the OhioMeansJobs.com Internet-Based Employment Services System*

### Evaluation Period

- July 2014 – October 2016

*This brief, one of a series highlighting findings from final Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) evaluation reports,<sup>5</sup> summarizes information from the study conducted by Ohio State University on Ohio Means Jobs.*

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (DJFS) used its WIF grant (a Type C project for adapting proven ideas) to fund “Electronic Ohio Means Jobs (OMJ),” an online virtual service delivery approach that would streamline Ohio’s workforce development system to better assist job seekers and employers. OhioMeansJobs.com made most of the services available in One Stop Centers such as job searches, employment training, access to labor market information, resume writing, supportive services, and access to on-line workshops through an internet “self-serve” portal. Internet-based services included templates to assist writing different types of resumes and a rating tool that evaluated resumes and suggested changes and enhancements. Customers were able to save workforce development products and information such as resumes and cover letters, letters of recommendation, and job search data.

The evaluation included an impact and implementation study. The primary goal of the impact study was to assess if client outcomes differed using the OMJ self-serve portal versus using traditional online services accessed through the One Stop Centers. The implementation study found that the new model of online service delivery was executed as proposed, and clients tended to find the system useful. Staff also felt that the system was operating as intended although staff did not rate the system as positively as designers or customers. The impact of the OMJ intervention on client outcomes, however, cannot be assessed through the evaluation because the study experienced high crossover and attrition rates, rendering the study findings invalid.

Findings included the following:

- Over 78% of customers agreed that services were accessible with the exception of “assessments.”
- Implementation study participants rated two-thirds of OhioMeansJobs.com services as “useful,” and over 70% gave OhioMeansJobs.com an overall rating of “very” or “somewhat” useful.
- Users’ ratings of the system (as helpful, easy, of high quality, personal, clear, engaging, user friendly, available and new) while somewhat lower, approached designers’ ratings.
- 11 out of 12 OMJ Center staff were “very” or “somewhat” confident that the system was working as intended. However and as anticipated, staff judged the OMJ system less positively than designers and, more importantly, than clients.

The evaluators recommended that the OhioMeansJobs.com system should be retained as a primary feature of Ohio’s employment services system, in spite of lack of reliable impacts from the impact evaluation. Other recommendations included: 1) selected services currently provided by case-managers should be automated to free case-managers to work with the “most difficult to serve” and 2) enhanced efficiencies might be achieved if case-managers focused their attention on computer literacy training and instruction on how to use the OhioMeansJobs.com site.

<sup>5</sup> Under the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF), the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) provided 43 competitive grants to States, regions, Tribal entities and localities to design and evaluate new approaches in the public workforce system. Using a “tiered evidence” model (which builds on past research), WIF projects tested a variety of new service combinations, technological innovations, and systems changes (with a focus on program coordination and integration). ETA required grantees to procure independent third-party evaluations to document project implementation, costs, and results, all in order to inform future experimentation and to promote continuous improvement in operations and performance in the public workforce system.



## Highlights of *The Final Report on the Pasco-Hernando Workforce Board Workforce Innovation Fund Project*

### Project Overview

- **Grantee:** Pasco-Hernando Workforce Board
- **Intervention Focus Area:** MIS Systems Changes and Technological Innovation
- **Target Population:** Wagner-Peyser, WIA, TAA, Title 1, and Welfare Transition program customers
- **Area Served:** Pasco and Hernando Counties, FL
- **Congressional District:** CA-40
- **Grant Round:** Round 1

### Evaluation Overview

- **Evaluation Types:** Implementation Study, Outcomes Study, Cost Study
- **Evaluator Organization:** Brandt Information Services, University of South Florida
- **Date of Final Report:** October 2015
- **Title:** *Pasco-Hernando Workforce Board Workforce Innovation Fund Grant Evaluation*

### Evaluation Period

- October 2012 – June 2015

*This brief, one of a series highlighting findings from final Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) evaluation reports,<sup>6</sup> summarizes information from the study conducted by the University of South Florida Center for Research, Evaluation, Assessment, and Measurement on the Pasco-Hernando Workforce Board WIF Project.*

Pasco-Hernando Workforce Board (PHWB) used its WIF grant (Type A, new and untested ideas) to expand remotely available services in Pasco and Hernando counties. The goal was to more effectively reach the large geographic service area with few public transportation options. PHWB expanded its call center, Employment Support Center (ESC), to improve phone-based outreach and to provide resources and employment-related assistance over the phone. Through the ESC, PHWB staff provide job referrals, follow-up to employment services, and responses to questions. PHWB developed a variety of web-accessible self-directed and interactive informational videos on topics related to job search strategies and expanded its social media presence to increase customer knowledge about the services available through the American Job Center. The evaluation included an outcomes, implementation, and cost study and included the following findings:

- The use of remote services increased program staff's capacity to deliver services, collect accurate data, and follow-up on customer's outcomes. The study also found that participants who engaged in particular remote services (such as recruitment events, job fairs, online orientation, resume completion, training search, and/or follow-up from ESC workers) were more likely to become employed than job seekers that engaged in traditional in-person services, based on a quasi-experimental design. Engaging in career guidance, assistance with job search, or referrals to WIA did not increase employment levels.
- Staff-assisted customers who received job-search assistance or an in-person orientation were more likely to find employment than self-assisted participants. Staff-assisted services that were not associated with obtaining employment included "intensive" services provided by staff, a referral to another program, and staff-assisted labor market research.
- Self-assisted customers were 83 percent more likely to obtain employment than individuals who engaged in no services.
- The implementation study found that self-assisted customers reported that it was beneficial to receive information on workforce services without physically appearing at an office. However, those who had less computer literacy also expressed more frustration with remote services than other customers.
- Staff reported that, because some customers used the Employment Service Center instead of seeking in-person office staff, staff had a greater capacity to serve customers who did come to the office. Staff also noted that the ESC allowed staff to more easily follow up with customers via phone regarding their job search and to more easily maintain accurate information on whether job referrals resulted in employment.
- Self-assisted customers did not consistently utilize social media tools that were developed and results from the customer survey suggest these tools did not improve customers' engagement in employment-related services.

Evaluators provide some recommendations for future implementation of the program: 1) Provide additional resources or training to build customers' computer literacy; 2) make web sites more user friendly and continue to offer in-person services for customers that do not have readily available computer or Internet access; and 3) because the social media tools did not resonate with some customers, ensure that in-person and phone outreach efforts are used in addition to social media.

<sup>6</sup> Under the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF), the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) provided 43 competitive grants to States, regions, Tribal entities and localities to design and evaluate new approaches in the public workforce system. Using a "tiered evidence" model (which builds on past research), WIF projects tested a variety of new service combinations, technological innovations, and systems changes (with a focus on program coordination and integration). ETA required grantees to procure independent third-party evaluations to document project implementation, costs, and results, all in order to inform future experimentation and to promote continuous improvement in operations and performance in the public workforce system.



## WIF Final Evaluation Report Summary: *Gila River Indian Community (GRIC) Career Pathways Project*

### Project Overview

- **Grantee:** Gila River Indian Community (GRIC)
- **Intervention Focus Area:** Career Pathways
- **Target Population:** Tribal community members being served by WIA
- **Area Served:** Gila River Indian Community (AZ)
- **Congressional District:** AZ-7
- **Grant Round:** Round 1

### Evaluation Overview

- **Evaluation Types:** Outcomes Study
- **Evaluator Organization:** Arizona State University, Office of American Indian Projects
- **Date of Final Report:** June 2016
- **Title:** *GRIC Career Pathways Evaluation Final Report*

### Evaluation Period

- July 2012 – March 2016

*This brief, one of a series highlighting findings from final Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) evaluation reports,<sup>7</sup> summarizes information from the study conducted by Arizona State University School of Social Works' Office of American Indian Projects for the Gila River Indian Community (GRIC) Career Pathways Project.*

GRIC used its WIF grant (Type A, new and untested ideas) to implement the Career Pathways project, sector-based career pathways (CP) system targeted at the Native America population it serves to train and employ GRIC members in sectors where employment opportunities existed in the community. The project focused on five high-growth industries – Hospitality, Construction, Government (fire department), Small Business Development, and Healthcare and linked occupational skill and basic skills education, including an educational “coaching” program designed to help participants meet the basic educational thresholds required for the given sector training program. The GRIC project also provided “wrap around” support services to increase program retention (e.g., offering transportation). GRIC’s status as a sovereign tribal community required establishment of partnerships across jurisdictional boundaries with community colleges and private companies in addition to partnerships within GRIC with tribal departments, entities, and businesses. Through improved resource alignment and leveraging and partnerships between the workforce development system, employers, and post-secondary education, the GRIC project intended to create systemic innovations that other sovereign tribes, nations, and communities can adopt and replicate. The program enrolled a total of 113 participants.

The evaluation included an outcomes and implementation study. While the outcomes study was constrained by data limitations, the implementation study found that strong partnerships based in flexibility, mutual education about stakeholder needs, and cultural understanding were important for developing career pathways in the tribal community. Specific findings included:

- Developing appropriate partnerships and establishing key roles and responsibilities for each partner was a key step in developing the structure of the five career pathway sectors.
- Some sectors already had established training programs and/or curricula, whereas other sectors had to determine the appropriate training, and who could provide it. Some initial educational partners could not provide the needed training, and additional providers had to be developed. Developing training programs that were culturally sensitive to the population being served and developed partnerships with members across jurisdictional boundaries between tribal and non-tribal entities was important. One innovative strategy was an Educational Mentor to work alongside participants in the completion of course work.
- The completion of degree or certificate that was purposefully linked to the needs of each sector was a statistically significant predictor of employment in an unsubsidized position.
- Participants who received work readiness training were significantly more likely to complete the Career Pathways training program, and more likely to be employed post-training.

<sup>7</sup> Under the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF), the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) provided 43 competitive grants to States, regions, Tribal entities and localities to design and evaluate new approaches in the public workforce system. Using a “tiered evidence” model (which builds on past research), WIF projects tested a variety of new service combinations, technological innovations, and systems changes (with a focus on program coordination and integration). ETA required grantees to procure independent third-party evaluations to document project implementation, costs, and results, all in order to inform future experimentation and to promote continuous improvement in operations and performance in the public workforce system.



The evaluator recommended: 1) continue to develop tribal buy-in for innovative workforce development projects; 2) prioritize development of career pathways in industries that are appropriate for the economic context; 3) continue to assess the value of the career pathways approach to different stakeholders and develop additional tools for career pathways practitioners; 4) foster stakeholder buy-in through meetings and communication; 5); improve program infrastructures, especially as related to data management, recording case management information, and transportation services; and 6) address sustainability concerns with other sources of funding.



## Highlights of *The Final Report on the Washington State Workforce Development Councils' Housing and Employment Navigator Program*

### Project Overview

- **Grantee:** Central Tacoma, Southcentral, and Northwest (Pierce, Yakima, Skagit, and Island Counties) Workforce Development Councils
- **Intervention Focus Area:** Case Management/ Counseling / Coaching
- **Target Population:** Homeless families, head expresses interest in job services.
- **Area Served:** Pierce, Yakima, Whatcom, Skagit and Islands Counties, WA
- **Congressional District:** WA 1, 2, 4, 8, 9,10
- **Grant Round:** Round 1

### Evaluation Overview

- **Evaluation Types:** Implementation, RCT
- **Evaluator Organization:** Marc Bolan Consulting
- **Date of Final Report:** June 2017
- **Title:** Housing and Employment Navigator Program Evaluation

### Evaluation Period

- March 2013 – June 2017

*This brief, one of a series highlighting findings from final Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) evaluation reports,<sup>8</sup> summarizes information from the study conducted by Marc Bolan Consulting on the Housing and Employment Navigator Program.*

A consortium of Workforce Development Councils in Washington State received a WIF grant to fund the Housing and Employment Navigator Program for homeless families in three regions of the state (Pierce County, Yakima County, and a group of three Northwest counties). The program focused on homeless families in which the head was interested in career development and employment, and was limited to families that were in sufficiently stable housing situations, and those in which the head of household had no substantial barriers to employment, or was actively managing those barriers. The program model is centered on the role of the “Navigator,” an individual from within the local workforce agency who provides intensive case management to homeless families, including accessing workforce services that match specific needs, and helping access and navigate other social support including housing and social benefit programs. The ultimate goal of the individualized services provided by the Navigator is to help household heads achieve living-wage employment that will ultimately support stable housing for their families.

The evaluator found the following key findings.

- The implementation study found that the Navigator services addressed a range of participant needs such as establishing career and educational goals, obtaining housing, and working with other agencies to access services. Navigators were successful in both addressing client problems and helping clients with the tools, strategies and knowledge they needed to address their own problems. Program participants were consistent in their praise of the qualities that Navigators brought to their work. Navigators worked successfully with staff at other agencies to further aid program participants.
- In the short term, the RCT found strongly positive impacts on participation in education and training programs by 9 months after program start. However, the study found no impacts on self-efficacy or family barriers to success within this timeframe. In the long term, the impact study found no impacts on rates of achieving permanent housing by 18 months after program start.
- The program had no impact on participants' employment status 18 months after randomization. However, the evaluation found suggestive evidence that the program may increase employment in the longer term, with significantly higher employment rates for Navigator program participants among those who could be observed at least 24 months after randomization. Likewise, the evaluation found significantly higher rates of employment retention within the first 24 months after randomization for the subset of study participants observed through this point.
- The program had no impact on reducing TANF and SNAP benefit levels. Furthermore, counter to expectations, Navigator program participants received TANF benefits for significantly *more* months during the first 18 months after randomization.

<sup>8</sup> Under the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF), the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) provided 43 competitive grants to States, regions, Tribal entities and localities to design and evaluate new approaches in the public workforce system. Using a “tiered evidence” model (which builds on past research), WIF projects tested a variety of new service combinations, technological innovations, and systems changes (with a focus on program coordination and integration). ETA required grantees to procure independent third-party evaluations to document project implementation, costs, and results, all in order to inform future experimentation and to promote continuous improvement in operations and performance in the public workforce system.



## Highlights of *The Final Report on Worksystems, Inc. Housing Works Project*

### Project Overview

- **Grantee:** Worksystems, Inc.
- **Intervention Focus Area:** Case Management/ Counseling / Coaching
- **Target Population:** Public housing residents
- **Area Served:** Clackamas County, OR; Multnomah County, OR; Washington County, OR; Clark County, WA
- **Congressional District:** OR 1, OR 3, WA 3
- **Grant Round:** Round 1

### Evaluation Overview

- **Evaluation Types:** Implementation Study, Outcomes Study, Quasi-Experimental Study, Cost Allocation Analysis
- **Evaluator Organization:** Public Policy Associates
- **Date of Final Report:** March 2017
- **Title:** *Final Report for Housing Work: A Regional Workforce-Housing Alliance*

### Evaluation Period

- 2013-2017

*This brief, one of a series highlighting findings from final Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) evaluation reports,<sup>9</sup> summarizes information from the study conducted by the Public Policy Associates on the Worksystems, Inc. Housing Works project.*

Worksystems, Inc., a consortium of public housing authorities (PHAs) and workforce investment boards (WIBs) on the Oregon-Washington state border, used its (Type B, promising ideas) WIF grant to fund Housing Works, an initiative designed to streamline workforce services for public housing residents and to better prepare residents for in-demand careers in construction, healthcare, manufacturing, and office work. WIBs trained PHA case managers about the workforce system so that staff could assess residents' employment readiness needs and connect them to appropriate workforce opportunities. Enrolled residents participated in career mapping workshops and received an individual resource planning session with case managers and WorkSource (a division of Oregon Employment Department) liaisons. Residents also completed a career and resource plan that was updated as residents progressed through the program. Participants enrolled directly in Career Link, a 40-hour course focused on developing residents' life skills and while receiving intensive case management and also engaged in activities such as workshops, occupational coaching, skills training, internships, and on-the-job training.

To achieve their shared goals, all PHAs and WIBs involved in Housing Works were required to contribute funds, reassess any policies or procedures to facilitate joint services, and counties dedicated a staff member to strengthen the collaboration between WIBs and PHAs and Housing Works partners. The program exceeded its target of 210 enrollees with 308 participants who earned 536 credentials, including 309 industry certifications.

The implementation evaluation found that participants valued the services and training received, the cohort approach, and expressed most interest in health care occupational training out of all available areas. Overall, participants were satisfied with the program at program exit, but were less satisfied a year after exiting, especially if they were not employed. In particular, participants were less satisfied with their ability to obtain employment one year after enrolling in the program. While the program met its targets for participant enrollment in occupational training, it fell short for number of participants completing internships or on the job training opportunities, due in part to the challenge in finding construction and manufacturing job opportunities.

The impact study found that participants were 20 percentage points more likely to be employed in the first quarter after exit than PHA residents who did not participate in the program. Evaluators did not find statistically significant differences in the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> quarters after exit. As mentioned above, these differences may be driven in part by differences in participant characteristics between the two groups. There were no statistically significant difference between the Housing Works group and the comparison group on earnings in the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> quarters after program exit.

Evaluator recommendations for replication of Housing Works include using the cohort-based model, offering training that can be completed within the grant period, ensuring participant eligibility in particular industries (e.g., does a criminal record prevent employment) and having a history of cooperation among partners.

<sup>9</sup> Under the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF), the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) provided 43 competitive grants to States, regions, Tribal entities and localities to design and evaluate new approaches in the public workforce system. Using a "tiered evidence" model (which builds on past research), WIF projects tested a variety of new service combinations, technological innovations, and systems changes (with a focus on program coordination and integration). ETA required grantees to procure independent third-party evaluations to document project implementation, costs, and results, all in order to inform future experimentation and to promote continuous improvement in operations and performance in the public workforce system.



## Highlights of *The Final Report on the Riverside County (CA) Economic Development Agency's Linking Innovation, Knowledge and Employment Program*

### Project Overview

- **Grantee:** Riverside County Economic Development Agency
- **Intervention Focus Area:** Case Management /Counseling/ Coaching
- **Target Population:** Disconnected youth aged 18-22
- **Area Served:** Riverside, San Bernardino and Imperial Counties, CA
- **Congressional District:** CA-21,25,41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 49, 51
- **Grant Round:** Round 1

### Evaluation Overview

- **Evaluation Types:** Impact evaluation using a QED, Implementation Study, Cost/Benefit Analysis
- **Evaluator Organization:** IMPAQ International, LLC
- **Date of Final Report:** October 28, 2016
- **Title:** *Evaluation of the Linking Innovation, Knowledge, and Employment Program Final Evaluation Report.*

### Evaluation Period

- October 2012 – October 2016

*This brief, one of a series highlighting findings from final Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) evaluation reports,<sup>10</sup> summarizes information from the study conducted by the IMPAQ International, LLC for the Riverside County Economic Development Agency's Linking Innovation, Knowledge, and Employment Program (@LIKE).*

The Riverside County Economic Development Agency used its (Type B, promising ideas) WIF grant to fund the @LIKE program, a collaborative effort between three Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) located in three counties in southern California – Riverside, San Bernardino, and Imperial. The program provided services in five general areas: life coaching, career exploration, education, employment, and work readiness preparation, and served disconnected youth aged 18-22 who self-identify as low income or not enrolled in school, work or the armed forces for the past 90 days. Expected outcomes of program involvement included placement into paid internships, completion of a high school diploma or GED, entry into vocational training, and placement into unsubsidized employment.

The program served 664 low-income and disadvantaged young adults across the three counties, just shy of the original goal of 675 participants. For program completion rates, the program experienced a successful completer rate of 45.5 percent. With respect to the completion of career-oriented training, over 70 percent of participants completed a Career Awareness Component and a substantial share obtained the National Career Readiness Certification (NCRC) as a career credential. Of the individuals who did not have a high school diploma or GED at program entry, approximately 15 percent obtained one through the program. Finally, a significant share of participants received placement in some form of employment, either a paid internship (about 43 percent) or unsubsidized employment (about 50 percent).

Findings from the impact evaluation show that @LIKE had a positive and statistically significant impact on several outcomes: placement in unsubsidized employment, attainment of vocational training, completion of high school/GED, and program completion. The implementation study found that key milestones and implementation of components were achieved and that organizational partnerships were built through effective leadership and building up staff in each county. Challenges were encountered in how to engage the disconnected youth audience and meeting recruitment and enrollment goals.

The evaluator made a number of recommendations related to replication or continuation of the program, including 1) Plan strategically and use a leadership system that delivers consistent project management; 2) Include young adult participants in strategic planning; 3) Be data driven by collecting and using program data early and often; 4) Separate Life Coaching and Case Management tasks into two separate staff roles; 5) Use multiple approaches to recruitment, including recruiting participants at non-traditional locations (i.e., tattoo parlors, skate parks, etc.) and accepting participant referrals; 6) Streamline program enrollment processes and prioritize participant engagements; 7) Allow inactive participants to re-engage with the program, and 8) Use social and psychological assessments as tools to facilitate Life Coaching.

<sup>10</sup> Under the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF), the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) provided 43 competitive grants to States, regions, Tribal entities and localities to design and evaluate new approaches in the public workforce system. Using a “tiered evidence” model (which builds on past research), WIF projects tested a variety of new service combinations, technological innovations, and systems changes (with a focus on program coordination and integration). ETA required grantees to procure independent third-party evaluations to document project implementation, costs, and results, all in order to inform future experimentation and to promote continuous improvement in operations and performance in the public workforce system.



## Highlights of *The Final Report on Los Angeles Economic Workforce Development Department's Los Angeles Reconnections Career Academy (LARCA)*

### Project Overview

- **Grantee:** City of Los Angeles Economic Workforce Development Department
- **Intervention Focus Area:** Career Pathways
- **Target Population:** Dropout Youth Ages 16 to 24
- **Area Served:** Los Angeles County CA
- **Congressional District:** CA – 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 33, 34, 37, 40, 43, 44
- **Grant Round:** Round 1

### Evaluation Overview

- **Evaluation Types:** Implementation, Random Assignment Impact, and Cost
- **Evaluator Organization:** Social Policy Research Associates
- **Date of Final Report:** April 28, 2017
- **Title:** *Helping Dropout Youth Find Education and Employment: Final Report of the Los Angeles Reconnections Career Academy (LARCA) Program*

### Evaluation Period

- July 2012 – April 2017

*This brief, one of a series highlighting findings from final Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) evaluation reports,<sup>11</sup> summarizes information from the study conducted by Social Policy Research Associates on the Los Angeles Reconnections Career Academy (LARCA) Program.*

The Los Angeles Economic Workforce Development Department (EWDD) created LARCA using its WIF grant (Type C, for adapting proven ideas) to address the extensive education and employment needs of the city's sizable out-of-school youth population. The program provided chronically absent and dropout youth, ages 16 to 24, with education, training and employment services, alongside case management and other supportive services, using a career pathways model. The evaluation of the LARCA program included an implementation study, an impact study, and a cost study. Key findings include:

- LARCA improved educational attainment. At two years after random assignment, the program had positive impacts on enrollment in secondary education, receipt of secondary education credentials, enrollment in post-secondary education, and the number of post-secondary credits attempted. Within one year after random assignment, participants also earned more credits than control group members.
- However, LARCA did not improve employment or criminal justice outcomes. Participants were less likely to be employed and earned slightly less than control group members at either one year or two years after random assignment. The evaluators note that a longer evaluation timeframe may be needed to fully assess long-term employment impacts, since many program group youth were still enrolled in postsecondary education at two years after random assignment. LARCA had no impact on arrest, conviction, or jail incarceration rates, though the program was not specifically designed to target these impacts.
- Unsurprisingly given its intensive service model, LARCA spent more per participant to achieve its impacts on educational attainment than was spent on the WIA services that were available to the control group. However, this finding should be interpreted with caution because of possible under-estimation of the cost of serving the control group, inclusion of startup costs in the calculation of program costs, an inability to examine costs by service delivery area, and an evaluation timeframe too short to detect additional longer-term impacts.

Based on these findings, the evaluators recommend that future programs for disconnected youth consider: 1) providing additional services that help re-connect youth to education and employment and reduce their likelihood of criminal justice system involvement; 2) providing more intensive versions of the existing program model services; and 3) ensuring the use of methods and designs that allow for the effective measuring of all relevant impacts.

<sup>11</sup> Under the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF), the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) provided 43 competitive grants to States, regions, Tribal entities and localities to design and evaluate new approaches in the public workforce system. Using a "tiered evidence" model (which builds on past research), WIF projects tested a variety of new service combinations, technological innovations, and systems changes (with a focus on program coordination and integration). ETA required grantees to procure independent third-party evaluations to document project implementation, costs, and results, all in order to inform future experimentation and to promote continuous improvement in operations and performance in the public workforce system.



## Highlights of *The Final Report on Three Rivers Workforce Investment Board's Made Right Here Project*

### Project Overview

- **Grantee:** Three Rivers Workforce Investment Board
- **Intervention Focus Area:** Work-based learning and Apprenticeship
- **Target Population:** Dislocated manufacturing union members, youth, adults, and professionals with an interest in pursuing manufacturing careers
- **Area Served:** Pittsburgh, PA
- **Congressional District:** PA 18th
- **Grant Round:** Round 1

### Evaluation Overview

- **Evaluation Types:** Outcomes, Formative, and Implementation
- **Evaluator Organization:** University of Illinois at Chicago and Keystone Research Center
- **Date of Final Report:** May 2016
- **Title:** *New App for Making It in America Final Evaluation Report*

### Evaluation Period

- August 2013-September 2015

*This brief, one of a series highlighting findings from final Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) evaluation reports,<sup>12</sup> summarizes information from the study conducted by the University of Illinois at Chicago and the Keystone Research Center on the Made Right Here Project.*

The Three Rivers Workforce Investment Board in Pittsburgh, PA used its Type A (new and untested ideas) WIF grant to fund the *Made Right Here* initiative. The workforce component of *Made Right Here* was designed to attract youth, dislocated manufacturing union members, and others to advanced manufacturing and to provide them with the skills necessary to earn a living as modern makers. (“Makers” are independent inventors, designers, and artisans, and many modern makers work with low-cost “digital tools” – e.g., electronics, robotics, and 3-D printing – and in artisan-based activities such as metalworking, woodworking, and arts and crafts.) The full *Made Right Here* model had several elements designed to help startups manufacture and grow in America. First, the project developed an apprenticeship program that integrated classroom and on-the-job training, organized apprentices into teams that addressed problems across specialized areas, and culminated in a *Maker Professional* certificate, combining traditional apprenticeship with recruitment and initial training in a modern maker space (i.e., a do-it-yourself workspace with computer-controlled tools). Second, the project established an online maker registry that linked makers (e.g., trainees, job seekers, employed, contractors, self-employed, entrepreneurs), and listed paid opportunities and individuals who seek paid engagements (“the maker bench”), serving an electronic hiring hall/job matching function. Third, the project aimed to help startup companies secure technical resources and services from suppliers and manufacturers. Over the course of the grant period, the program engaged 198 participants. The evaluation of *Made Right Here* included an outcomes study, a formative evaluation, and an implementation study. The post program outcomes were limited by low-response to exit surveys and low-sample size; observations should be considered descriptive.

The outcomes evaluation found that almost 50 percent of program participants had prior experience working in the manufacturing industry, and many had some form of higher education. Forty-one percent of program participants who enrolled had at least one job placement when they left the program. Many placements (42 percent) were the result of a referral by project staff. Employed participants had an earnings gain of \$1,445 in the quarter after exiting the program compared to the quarter prior to entering the program. Wage data was available for 68 percent of participants who found jobs. A large number of firms (47) provided employment placements as part of the project. These firms varied in terms of their level of engagement with the project.

The formative study found that startup firms reported a variety of needs during their companies’ early stages. The project sparked modest union innovations, stimulating one union to launch its own version of the project, and others to explore connecting with manufacturing using a building trade’s union or worker cooperative model. Finally, the involvement of a research university, Carnegie Mellon University, with a recent track record of spinning off new startups was critical to the project’s early achievements and its ability to engage startups.

<sup>12</sup> Under the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF), the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) provided 43 competitive grants to States, regions, Tribal entities and localities to design and evaluate new approaches in the public workforce system. Using a “tiered evidence” model (which builds on past research), WIF projects tested a variety of new service combinations, technological innovations, and systems changes (with a focus on program coordination and integration). ETA required grantees to procure independent third-party evaluations to document project implementation, costs, and results, all in order to inform future experimentation and to promote continuous improvement in operations and performance in the public workforce system.



## Highlights of *The Final Report on Newark Workforce Investment Board's Managing for Success Project*

### Project Overview

- **Grantee:** Newark Workforce Investment Board
- **Intervention Focus Area:** MIS Changes and Technological Innovation
- **Target Population:** Public workforce systems customers
- **Area Served:** Newark, NJ
- **Congressional District:** NJ-10
- **Grant Round:** Round 1

### Evaluation Overview

- **Evaluation Types:** Outcomes, Implementation
- **Evaluator Organization:** John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers University
- **Date of Final Report:** December 2016
- **Title:** *Evaluation of Managing for Success Final Report*

### Evaluation Period

- July 2013 – December 2016

*This brief, one of a series highlighting findings from final Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) evaluation reports,<sup>13</sup> summarizes information from the study conducted by The John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers University on the Managing for Success Project.*

The Newark Workforce Investment Board (NWIB) used its WIF grant (Type A, new and untested ideas) to fund the *Managing for Success* program, an initiative designed to use information from an integrated management information system (MIS). For this initiative, NWIB expected to build a new data system that would pull information on public workforce system clients and the services they receive from a variety of sources, including data from multiple state agencies, the One-Stop system, and the City of Newark. Staff would then use this information to better target services to individual clients with a goal of improving their employment and earnings outcomes. NWIB was ultimately unable to build an MIS that integrated data from various agency sources due to state and federal confidentiality and data security concerns. Instead, NWIB created a data sharing agreement with New Jersey's Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJ DLWD) to obtain access to some individual-level customer data in order to gain insights into the Newark One Stop System's operations. NWIB had originally planned to use these inputs to deliver more targeted services to individual clients, but did not receive the data with sufficient time left in the grant to make changes to program operations. Instead, NWIB staff used aggregate data to better understand the demographic characteristics of the individuals they serve. To improve customer services and client performance, NWIB encouraged staff performance through team-building activities, sustained outreach to staff from NWIB staff, and awards luncheons.

The outcomes evaluation explored the extent to which jobseekers were satisfied with the services they received. While the outcomes survey data suggest that customer satisfaction increased during the intervention period, findings were not statistically significant. Customer satisfaction was found to decline after the end of the intervention period. Evaluators also analyzed the extent to which Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) testing showed increased pass rates after the implementation of a TABE refresher course, and found that customers who took the refresher course had higher pass rates than those who did not. Findings were statistically significant, but, due to the limited rigor of the evaluation design, should not be interpreted as causation.

The implementation evaluation explored the extent to which the program met its goals to improve data availability for decision making and to enhance staff capacity to serve job seekers. The implementation study was supported by focus groups, interviews with key stakeholders, and data from America's One-Stop Operating System (AOSOS).

One of the evaluator's key conclusions was that current federal, state, and local regulations may make it challenging for workforce agencies to build fully integrated data systems. Federal policies that incentivize secure data sharing among state and local agencies for the purposes of performance improvement may ease the way for the creation of integrated data systems.

<sup>13</sup> Under the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF), the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) provided 43 competitive grants to States, regions, Tribal entities and localities to design and evaluate new approaches in the public workforce system. Using a "tiered evidence" model (which builds on past research), WIF projects tested a variety of new service combinations, technological innovations, and systems changes (with a focus on program coordination and integration). ETA required grantees to procure independent third-party evaluations to document project implementation, costs, and results, all in order to inform future experimentation and to promote continuous improvement in operations and performance in the public workforce system.



## Highlights of *The Final Report on Metro-Atlanta LWIA Project to Aid the Long-Term Unemployed*

### Project Overview

- **Grantee:** Metro-Atlanta Local Workforce Investment Area Consortium
- **Intervention Focus Area:** Work-Based Learning/ Subsidized Employment/ Apprenticeship
- **Target Population:** Long-term unemployed
- **Area Served:** Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry, and Rockdale Counties, GA
- **Congressional District:** GA-3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 13
- **Grant Round:** Round 1

### Evaluation Overview

- **Evaluation Types:** Implementation Study, Outcomes Study
- **Evaluator Organization:** Empowerment of the Minds Learning Center, Research and Evaluation Group
- **Date of Final Report:** May 2015
- **Title:** *DeKalb County Workforce Development*

### Evaluation Period

- April 2013 – May 2015

*This brief, one of a series highlighting findings from final Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) evaluation reports,<sup>14</sup> summarizes information from the study conducted by the Research and Evaluation Group on the Metro-Atlanta Local Workforce Investment Area Consortium Project to Aid the Long-Term Unemployed in DeKalb County, Georgia.*

Using the WIF grant (Type A, new and untested ideas) awarded in 2012 to fund the Project to Aid the Long-Term Unemployed, the Metro-Atlanta Local Workforce Investment Area (LWIA) Consortium focused on improving the employment outcomes of long-term unemployed jobseekers through providing temporary subsidized work experience positions. Working with staffing agencies, such as Manpower, the LWIA Consortium placed jobseekers that had been unemployed for at least a year into subsidized job placements for up to six months. The project subsidized the individual’s wages as an incentive for employers to hire and train workers. Manpower’s role was to act as an intermediary by matching participants who came into LWIAs to employers. The LWIA Consortium is comprised of the five workforce investment areas spanning 10 counties. The project also provided job placement, resume customization and work readiness training through Manpower’s online job skills courses.

The Metro-Atlanta LWIA Project evaluation found that the program was not implemented as planned, and that challenges in program implementation limited the program’s capacity. The implementation study found that communication among key partners was a challenge; there were few opportunities for coordination of efforts and project goals were not clear to all organizations participating in the intervention. Additionally, recruiting employers to participate in subsidized placements was more challenging than originally anticipated. Some employers were not aware of the benefits of the program and others that did participate did not have the capacity to sustain the subsidized placements over six months or hire jobseekers in unsubsidized employments at the end of the placement. Finally, it was challenging to recruit participants who met the eligibility requirements (i.e., had at least a high school diploma or GED and had been unemployed for at least one year but no longer than two years) but also had sufficient job readiness skills to be successful in subsidized employment. Participants (especially those placed or work ready) found the resources offered by both the staffing agencies and the LWIA to be helpful in preparing them for the workforce. The outcomes study found that 203 jobseekers participated in the program.

The outcomes evaluation, including the pre-intervention versus post-intervention outcome analysis, was constrained by the number of study participants for whom both a baseline survey and post-intervention survey were completed; pre-intervention and post-intervention data were available for only 17 individuals. The outcome study found no statistically significant findings on employment or earnings. Given the small sample size, generalizations about the effectiveness of the intervention cannot be made.

The evaluator offered a number of recommendations, such as 1) improve marketing strategies to increase awareness of the program and attract a variety of employers across different occupational sectors and industries; 2) build stronger communication channels among the key partners; 3) maintain a strong presence of leadership; 4) use multiple staff agencies to maintain a diverse employer pool and diversify the type of placements available; 5) offer more customized assistance and instruction to ensure participants are adequately prepared for placements.

<sup>14</sup> Under the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF), the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) provided 43 competitive grants to States, regions, Tribal entities and localities to design and evaluate new approaches in the public workforce system. Using a “tiered evidence” model (which builds on past research), WIF projects tested a variety of new service combinations, technological innovations, and systems changes (with a focus on program coordination and integration). ETA required grantees to procure independent third-party evaluations to document project implementation, costs, and results, all in order to inform future experimentation and to promote continuous improvement in operations and performance in the public workforce system.



## Highlights of *The Final Report on the Ohio Workforce Initiative Association's Business Resource Network Expansion*

### Project Overview

- **Grantee:** Workforce Initiative Association, Inc.
- **Intervention Focus Area:** Employer Engagement / Sector Strategies
- **Target Population:** Employers considered “at risk” or to have “growth potential”
- **Area Served:** 13 Counties in Ohio
- **Congressional District:** OH-16
- **Grant Round:** Round 1

### Evaluation Overview

- **Evaluation Types:** QED Impact Study, Implementation Study
- **Evaluator Organization:** Public Policy Associates, Incorporated
- **Date of Final Report:** June 2016
- **Title:** *Evaluation of the Ohio Business Resource Network Expansion*

### Evaluation Period

- October 2012 – June 2016

*This brief, one of a series highlighting findings from final Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) evaluation reports,<sup>15</sup> summarizes information from the study conducted by Public Policy Associates on the Ohio Business Resource Network (BRN) Expansion.*

The Workforce Initiative Association, Inc., the administrative entity for Local Workforce Investment Area (LWIA), used its WIF grant (Type B, promising ideas) to expand the Business Resource Network (BRN) into three additional LWIAs in Ohio. The purpose of the BRN was to operate as a central actor in building connections between the workforce system, economic development, and other public and private organizations. The goal of the initiative was to help businesses access critical services in order to maintain and/or create jobs in the local economy. The BRN service model sought to achieve this goal by: identifying area businesses either at risk of laying off workers or that had the potential to grow and fuel demand for additional workers; interviewing identified businesses to assess their strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and threats; developing a comprehensive proposal containing offers of assistance from one or more of the 200+ organizations that served as BRN partners. Offers of assistance were tailored to address the identified business’ needs that included: offering guidance on succession planning, accessing capital for new technology or expansion, market diversification, incumbent worker training, and acquiring skilled workers; and following up with employers following delivery of a proposal to determine if the employer had worked with any partners to address identified challenges or opportunities.

The evaluation of the Ohio BRN Expansion project included two components: an implementation study and an impact study. The implementation study documented the development and operation of the BRN in the new geographic areas, including accomplishments and lessons learned through the process. The implementation evaluation found that the BRN program was an effective strategy for identifying business’s current and potential needs, and helping employers learn about the wide array of services and resources available to address their needs. The BRN met and exceeded its performance goals of identifying businesses, offering assistance, targeting at risk and growing businesses, and conducting outreach opportunities.

The impact study used a difference-in-difference quasi-experimental design to examine the outcomes of the BRN program on employers in two of the five LWIAs. Using wage record data from the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services, the impact study compared changes in the number of full-time employees and total wages for employers who acted on at least one of the BRN-proposed business services to those who did not take up any of the BRN-proposed services. The impact analysis found no evidence of a positive effect on businesses’ number of full-time employees or wage levels.

Evaluators had several recommendations about the BRN model and program, including 1) replication or adaptation of the Ohio BRN approach is worthy of consideration for a range of reasons, including its potential for enhancing the credibility of the workforce system, in the eyes of economic developers and community partners, by expanding its focus to include the wide range of employer needs; 2) the model encourages a deeper focus on business needs that helps strengthen employer perceptions of the workforce system as an important business and economic development partner; and 3) when considering replication, practitioners should consider focusing on targeted high-growth, high wage sectors; investing in building partnerships with service providers and employers; and understand that the level of employer engagement may start low and increase over time.

<sup>15</sup> Under the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF), the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) provided 43 competitive grants to States, regions, Tribal entities and localities to design and evaluate new approaches in the public workforce system. Using a “tiered evidence” model (which builds on past research), WIF projects tested a variety of new service combinations, technological innovations, and systems changes (with a focus on program coordination and integration). ETA required grantees to procure independent third-party evaluations to document project implementation, costs, and results, all in order to inform future experimentation and to promote continuous improvement in operations and performance in the public workforce system.



## Highlights of *The Final Report on the West Central Job Partnership's Oh-Penn Pathways to Competitiveness*

### Project Overview

- **Grantee:** West Central Jobs Partnership
- **Intervention Focus Area:** Work-Based Learning/ Subsidized Employment/ Apprenticeship
- **Target Population:** Youth, veterans, dislocated workers, low-income adults
- **Area Served:** Columbiana, Mahoning, and Trumbull Counties, OH; Lawrence and Mercer Counties, PA
- **Congressional District:** OH-6, OH-13, OH-14, PA-3, PA-4, PA-12
- **Grant Round:** Round 1

### Evaluation Overview

- **Evaluation Types:** Quasi-Experimental Design, Outcomes, Implementation,
- **Evaluator Organization:** IMPAQ International
- **Date of Final Report:** December 2016
- **Title:** *Oh-Penn Pathways to Competitiveness Evaluation*

### Evaluation Period

- March 2013-January 2017

*This brief, one of a series highlighting findings from final Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) evaluation reports,<sup>16</sup> summarizes information from the study conducted by IMPAQ International on the Oh-Penn Pathways to Competitiveness project.*

The West Central Job Partnership used its WIF grant (Type B, promising ideas) to fund the Oh-Penn Pathways to Competitiveness (P2C) program. This initiative was designed to expand the cross-state region's manufacturing pipeline, develop manufacturing career pathways, increase enrollment in manufacturing-related training and credential attainment, improve employer satisfaction with job candidates, and improve employment outcomes of job seekers. To expand the pipeline, P2C staff hosted over 750 outreach events, primarily focused on school-aged children, their parents, and their educators, to highlight the opportunities in, and benefits of careers in manufacturing. P2C staff also worked to better align manufacturing-related training with the needs of employers by bringing together training providers to create a common base-curriculum for machining. This effort included conducting a skills gap analysis, creating a crosswalk between employers' needs and industry-recognized standards, facilitating meetings and collaboration between training providers, and encouraging the adoption of National Institute of Metalworking Skills credentials. P2C staff also attempted to improve employers' satisfaction with job candidates by assisting potential manufacturing employees to earn the Manufacturing Skills Standards Council's Certified Production Technician credential and the National Career Readiness Credential. Finally, project staff attempted to create more opportunities for work-based learning through the creation of an employer incentive of up to 50 percent wage subsidy for 300 hours of a student's employment. This planned incentive of a \$1,000 student subsidy was implemented in the last year of the grant.

The evaluation of the P2C program included an implementation study, an outcomes study, and a quasi-experimental impact evaluation. The implementation and outcomes study of the P2C program found that the program exceeded outreach targets, training enrollment and credential attainment goals, fostered greater levels of employer engagement with the public workforce system, and produced evidence of improved employer satisfaction with the skill levels of job candidates. The impact evaluation (quasi-experimental design) found evidence suggesting positive impacts on employment in manufacturing, overall employment, and wages among previously unemployed men in Ohio during the first year after applying to the public workforce system, but possibly negative impacts on these outcomes for men in Pennsylvania, and women in both states. Yet because evaluators could not identify which unemployed individuals received P2C-based services (estimated at approximately 500), the "treatment" group instead captured all unemployed individuals receiving public workforce services in the five counties in the Oh-Penn region (approximately 60,000). The impact estimates are therefore calculated on samples in which only a very small percentage of the "treatment" group were "treated" by the P2C program, and are therefore unlikely to capture the impact of the P2C program.

<sup>16</sup> Under the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF), the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) provided 43 competitive grants to States, regions, Tribal entities and localities to design and evaluate new approaches in the public workforce system. Using a "tiered evidence" model (which builds on past research), WIF projects tested a variety of new service combinations, technological innovations, and systems changes (with a focus on program coordination and integration). ETA required grantees to procure independent third-party evaluations to document project implementation, costs, and results, all in order to inform future experimentation and to promote continuous improvement in operations and performance in the public workforce system.



## Highlights of *The Final Report on the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training's On-Ramps to Career Pathways Project*

### Project Overview

- **Grantee:** Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training
- **Intervention Focus Area:** MIS Changes and Technological Innovation
- **Target Population:** Low-income and low-skilled workers
- **Area Served:** State of Rhode Island
- **Congressional District:** RI-1, 2
- **Grant Round:** Round 1

### Evaluation Overview

- **Evaluation Types:** Outcomes Study, Implementation Study, Cost Study
- **Evaluator Organization:** Public Policy Associates, Inc. and Brandon Roberts + Associates
- **Date of Final Report:** June 2016
- **Title:** *On-Ramps to Career Pathways Evaluation*

### Evaluation Period

- November 2012 – June 2016

*This brief, one of a series highlighting findings from final Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) evaluation reports,<sup>17</sup> summarizes information from the study conducted by Public Policy Associates on the On-Ramps to Career Pathways project.*

The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training used its WIF grant (Type A, new and untested ideas) to implement the On-Ramps to Career Pathways (ORCP) project, an initiative that included both a systems change component and a participant-level pilot (the On-Ramps Pilot). For the systems change component, a goal was to reallocate resources and reconfigure policies to support implementation of a new set of services to better meet the needs of workforce participants and employers. This component involved working in partnership with a number of state agencies and other partners to align state funding, policies, and support services to strengthen the state workforce system in the six areas: career pathways, aligned funding, support services, work readiness, work experience, and common performance measures. For the On-Ramps Pilot, ORCP aimed to develop and implement a new set of services for workforce participants to be delivered through American Job Centers (AJC) and other local partners, to improve low-income and low-skilled participants' career focus and job readiness, reflected in improved employment, wages, and job retention. The Pilot as designed included three components: work readiness training, work experience, and career coaching. In the work readiness component, participants attended a two-week, 30-hour course using curricula procured from national vendors, which included skill assessment, career exploration activities, career planning, and resume development. At the end of the training, participants who passed the course were granted the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC). Although the Pilot was to include the work experience and career coaching components, these services were not fully implemented as planned.

The evaluation of ORCP involved three components: outcomes, implementation, and cost. The outcomes study examined the On-Ramps Pilot, using a quasi-experimental design. The On-Ramps Pilot enrolled 599 participants, against its goal to enroll 1,000. The evaluation included 473 of these. The outcomes evaluation examined employment, employment retention and wage gains using Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage record data.

The evaluator concluded that the ORCP project faced numerous implementation challenges, which prevented it from accomplishing its goals. While a competent and dedicated team was assembled to implement ORCP, the staffing capacity, management tools, and overall support for the ORCP initiative were insufficient to meet the ambitions of the project. For the On-Ramps Pilot, a high percentage of participants received NCRC recognition at the bronze, silver, or gold levels. The ORCP achieved some notable milestones in its systems change goal, particularly related to career pathways, which continued to be a focus within the state beyond the grant. The other systems change activities were not fully adopted within the workforce system. The ORCP did not improve participant employment rates or wage gains; however, it did have a positive effect on employment retention among participants who were employed. Overall, the ORCP pilot was not cost effective and the added cost was not balanced by improved outcomes. The Pilot was approximately twice as costly as standard services at the AJCs.

The evaluator shared the following recommendations for similar efforts: 1) require evidence that performance targets are reasonable and achievable in proposals; 2) provide a planning period to solidify commitments and resources and build the organizational capacity to conduct the work; and 3) require projects to develop an implementation plan and require analysis of those plans before funds are committed to the effort.

<sup>17</sup> Under the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF), the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) provided 43 competitive grants to States, regions, Tribal entities and localities to design and evaluate new approaches in the public workforce system. Using a "tiered evidence" model (which builds on past research), WIF projects tested a variety of new service combinations, technological innovations, and systems changes (with a focus on program coordination and integration). ETA required grantees to procure independent third-party evaluations to document project implementation, costs, and results, all in order to inform future experimentation and to promote continuous improvement in operations and performance in the public workforce system.



## Highlights of *The Final Report on the Orange County Workforce Investment Board (OCWIB)'s Orange County Information Technology Cluster Competitiveness Project*

### Project Overview

- **Grantee:** Orange County Workforce Investment Board (OCWIB)
- **Intervention Focus Area:** Employer Engagement / Sector Strategies
- **Target Population:** IT employers, educational institutions, community organizations, youth and adult students, incumbent workers, veterans, and job searchers.
- **Area Served:** Orange County, CA
- **Congressional District:** CA-40
- **Grant Round:** Round 1

### Evaluation Overview

- **Evaluation Types:** Formative Study, Outcomes Study, Cost Analysis
- **Evaluator Organization:** WestEd
- **Date of Final Report:** December 31, 2015
- **Title:** *Evaluation of the Orange County Information Technology Cluster Competitiveness Project*

### Evaluation Period

- October 2012 – December 2015

*This brief, one of a series highlighting findings from final Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) evaluation reports,<sup>18</sup> summarizes information from the study conducted by WestEd on the Orange County Information Technology Cluster Competitiveness Project (ITCCP).*

The Orange County Workforce Investment Board (OCWIB) used its WIF grant (Type A, new and untested ideas) to fund the Orange County Information Technology Cluster Competitiveness Project (ITCCP). The project had three goals: to improve alignment between Information Technology (IT) employers' skills demand and education supply; to improve the pipeline for IT employment for students and veterans; and to increase collaboration among providers and business stakeholders in the area of IT employment. The grantee first convened a planning process and then implemented three distinct pilot efforts. The Orange County Business Council led the planning process to improve communications between employers and the education community and direct the design of the pilots, which served as a key project innovation. One pilot, *Bridging the Digital Divide Pilot*, provided various forms of public outreach to engage and educate K-12 students about Information Technology (IT) careers. The project contracted with Vital Link, a community-based nonprofit specializing in workforce, education and training programs, to implement the pilot. A second pilot effort, *New and Improved Training Pilot*, engaged two partners who developed and delivered training in several growth areas such as IT security, mobile application development, business process analytics, business intelligence and predictive analytics, cloud computing and healthcare IT. A third pilot, *Internship Pipeline Pilot Project*, assisted veterans and students to obtain internship positions by expanding internship capacity and infrastructure and by formalizing a network among employers. Vital Link, a selected external provider, implemented an "Internship Matching System," an internship pipeline and network for students. Saddleback College, a second provider, implemented the "Veterans' Pipeline" that developed internships specifically for veterans leading to direct placement into employment or training and then placement.

The evaluation included formative, outcomes and cost study elements. The formative evaluation was designed to describe the development, conduct and results of the business and education planning process. The formative study on the process found that stakeholders held generally positive perceptions about the planning and convening format and process, with participants noting that the process facilitated open communication and sharing of ideas. Business stakeholders expressed the desire to continue to be engaged in a planning process in the future. The formative study also examined how the *Bridging the Digital Divide Pilot* unfolded and found that the provider's experience as a trusted intermediary and its capacity to tap into existing relationships and leverage resources was instrumental to the pilot's successful implementation. The planning for this pilot involved engaging "champions," individuals with experience, need and interest, to develop specific efforts based on strategies that had worked in the past. The pilot developed intersections between employers, schools and colleges by engaging businesses in a variety of ways, such as serving as exhibitors in events and judges in competitions featuring students' projects.

<sup>18</sup> Under the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF), the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) provided 43 competitive grants to States, regions, Tribal entities and localities to design and evaluate new approaches in the public workforce system. Using a "tiered evidence" model (which builds on past research), WIF projects tested a variety of new service combinations, technological innovations, and systems changes (with a focus on program coordination and integration). ETA required grantees to procure independent third-party evaluations to document project implementation, costs, and results, all in order to inform future experimentation and to promote continuous improvement in operations and performance in the public workforce system.



The outcomes study found for the *New and Improved Training Programs Pilot Project* that the majority of participants (67 percent) who were unemployed at enrollment were employed at follow up. For those who were incumbent workers at enrollment, the average increase in wages from pre-training to post-training was \$0.75 an hour. All incumbent workers remained employed at follow up. Finally, the number of courses participants completed and the number of courses participants passed were not significantly associated with employment or with increased wages.

For the *Internship Pipeline Pilot Project*, the study found that the Internship Matching System met its target goal of enrolling 50 students in paid internships and a total of 49 completed their internship. The Veterans' Pipeline placed 21 veterans into paid internships and all completed their internship.

The evaluation report provides a set of "lessons learned" from the evaluation of the ITCCP that could help inform similar endeavors. These include: 1) when convening diverse stakeholders in an industry cluster planning process, it can be helpful to explore common interests as well as differences, and offer options to participate in a variety of formats; 2) positioning a trusted intermediary to lead change is an important factor in promoting the extensive collaboration necessary to success; 3) leveraging existing relationships, systems, and structures to build new programs helps make it possible to attract participation and interest, and to scale pilot projects rapidly; 4) engaging parents and students in career awareness and exploration activities can help bridge the digital divide and 5) existing relationships the pilot providers had established with key stakeholders and business in Orange County greatly facilitated progress on the pilots.



## Highlights of *The Final Report on Texas Border Workforce Alliance's Project Growing Regional Opportunity for the Workforce (Project GROW)*

### Project Overview

- **Grantee:** Workforce Solutions, Inc.
- **Intervention Focus Area:** Career Pathways
- **Target Population:** Low-skilled adults aged 18 and older
- **Area Served:** Cameron, Lower Rio Grande, Middle Rio Grande, South Texas, and Upper Rio Grande, Texas
- **Congressional Districts:** TX-15, TX-16, TX-23, TX-28, and TX-34
- **Grant Round:** Round 1

### Evaluation Overview

- **Evaluation Types:** QED, Outcome and Implementation
- **Evaluator Organization:** Ray Marshall Center University of Texas - Austin
- **Date of Final Report:** October 2016
- **Title:** *Growing Regional Opportunity for the Workforce (Project GROW) Final Evaluation Report*

### Evaluation Period

- Feb. 2012 – Oct. 2016

*This brief, one of a series highlighting findings from final Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) evaluation reports,<sup>19</sup> summarizes information from the study conducted by Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources at the University of Texas at Austin on Project GROW.*

The Texas Border Workforce Alliance, 5 WIB areas encompassing the entire Texas-Mexico border region, used its (Type B, promising ideas) WIF grant to fund Project GROW, an initiative designed to accelerate credentialing, employment, and career advancement for in-demand occupations among low-skilled adults through local coordination between WIB training contractors, community colleges, local employers, and non-profit career training providers. Project GROW created three service cohorts and subgroups within cohorts in order to target appropriate services based on student skill level. Cohort A participants, who already had a high school diploma or GED but were not yet college ready, received occupational training and college readiness efforts. Cohort B, who did not have secondary credentials but had reading and numeracy scores between 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade levels, received GED preparation as well as occupational training. Cohort C, who did not have a secondary credential and had reading and numeracy scores between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade levels, received contextualized adult basic education and, where appropriate, English as a Second Language classes. Individuals in all cohorts received either standard or intensive case management. Project GROW sought to streamline services; advance employer engagement strategies; test the use of a laptop-based In-Home Learning System; and develop and use a shared, common IT system to improve participants' employment prospects based on enhanced, systemic regional development. Many individuals, regardless of cohort, took part in occupational training, which was originally offered in six areas: medical assistant, commercial driver's license (CDL), maintenance and repair occupations (including welding and HVAC), emergency medical technicians (EMT), medical records and health information techs, and construction carpenters.

The evaluation found, overall, that the Project GROW model was not implemented as envisioned. Recruitment was more challenging than originally anticipated, in part due to potential participants balking at the time commitments required by the program, mismatch between potential participants' interests and occupational training offerings, and challenges in contacting potential participants for enrollment. Employer engagement was less robust than anticipated. While evaluators also found that Project GROW did not have any statistically significant impacts on participants' employment and educational outcomes, the implementation analysis found that staff increased capacity to serve hard-to-serve individuals and work across WIBs and regions. The evaluation's ability to detect statistically significant results may have been hampered by lower than anticipated sample sizes.

Project GROW enrolled 425 individuals, 64 percent of their original enrollment target. Staff from the five participating WIBs recruited 79 participants for Cohort A, 187 participants for Cohort B, and 159 participants for Cohort C. 64 percent of Project GROW participants completed the training program, but only 24 percent completed their occupational vocational training.

<sup>19</sup> Under the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF), the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) provided 43 competitive grants to States, regions, Tribal entities and localities to design and evaluate new approaches in the public workforce system. Using a "tiered evidence" model (which builds on past research), WIF projects tested a variety of new service combinations, technological innovations, and systems changes (with a focus on program coordination and integration). ETA required grantees to procure independent third-party evaluations to document project implementation, costs, and results, all in order to inform future experimentation and to promote continuous improvement in operations and performance in the public workforce system.



## Highlights of *The Final Report on the San Mateo County's Silicon Valley ALLIES Innovation Initiative*

### Project Overview

- **Grantee:** San Mateo County
- **Intervention Focus Area:** Cross-System Coordination
- **Target Population:** English Language Learners
- **Area Served:** Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties
- **Congressional District:** CA-14, 16
- **Grant Round:** Round 1

### Evaluation Overview

- **Evaluation Types:** Formative Study, Outcomes Study, Cost Study
- **Evaluator Organization:** WestEd
- **Date of Final Report:** June 30, 2015
- **Title:** *Silicon Valley ALLIES Innovation Initiative Evaluation Report*

### Evaluation Period

- October 2013 – May 2015

*This brief, one of a series highlighting findings from final Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) evaluation reports,<sup>20</sup> summarizes information from the study conducted by WestEd on the Silicon Valley ALLIES Innovation Initiative.*

San Mateo County, CA used its (Type A, new and untested ideas) WIF grant to fund the Silicon Valley ALLIES Innovation Initiative (SV ALLIES), a project designed to assist adult English learners in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties to succeed in family-sustaining careers. The two primary project goals were to: 1) build a system to coordinate and align the activities of multiple stakeholders that provide education, training, and employment opportunities to English learners; and 2) pilot new program services for English learners that blend English instruction and workforce readiness skills.

SV ALLIES sought to apply a “Collective Impact” approach to social innovation to organize stakeholders and align their activities around shared goals. Collective Impact outlines five conditions—a common agenda, shared measurement, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication, and the presence of a backbone organization—that are perceived as necessary to engage multiple stakeholders in strategic planning efforts. The approach assumes that by working together and by establishing the five conditions, stakeholders can more effectively address problems and achieve social change than if they were to work independently. SV ALLIES was guided by a Steering Committee composed of organizations from key sectors in the English learner-serving community, including adult schools, community-based organizations, community colleges, employers, labor organizations, philanthropic organizations, workforce development agencies, and organizations supporting English learners. In addition to building infrastructure for a sustainable Collective Impact effort, the Steering Committee generated plans for several pilots to improve education and training services.

The project piloted one program aimed at job seekers, *English Learners' Ladders to Success*, and three programs targeted at incumbent workers, *Santa Clara Kaiser Permanente Workplace English*, *Skyline College English Language Development and Training*, and *Hospitality 360 Banquet Service Class*. It also sought to develop a system-wide coordinated assessment and referral process, which was designed to create common intake processes, assessment tools, databases, and staff training resources for providers that serve English learners across the two counties.

The evaluation of SV ALLIES included a formative, outcomes, and cost study evaluation design. The formative study focused on two components of the SV ALLIES project: 1) the effort to apply the Collective Impact approach and 2) the development of projects focused on services for English learners and job seekers. Key findings included: the project did not yield broad changes to the workforce systems that serve adult English learners, as was initially planned. However, the initiative did result in new relationships between project stakeholders that serve English learners, especially those that participated in the Steering Committee. The project experienced changes in leadership and organizational structure over the grant period that slowed progress. SV ALLIES provided the opportunity for partners to meet regularly on the Steering Committee and work together to create new programs and services. Certain project components, such as the coordinated assessment and referral system, were not executed as planned. The interest and involvement of some stakeholders decreased over the course of the grant, with the number of Steering Committee members attending meetings falling from 25 to approximately 15.

<sup>20</sup> Under the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF), the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) provided 43 competitive grants to States, regions, Tribal entities and localities to design and evaluate new approaches in the public workforce system. Using a “tiered evidence” model (which builds on past research), WIF projects tested a variety of new service combinations, technological innovations, and systems changes (with a focus on program coordination and integration). ETA required grantees to procure independent third-party evaluations to document project implementation, costs, and results, all in order to inform future experimentation and to promote continuous improvement in operations and performance in the public workforce system.



The outcome study found that the majority of program completers in each of the four SV ALLIES programs (53 percent in *English Learners' Ladders to Success*, 60 percent in *Kaiser Permanente Workplace English*, 80 percent in *English Language Development Training*, and 77 percent in *Hospitality 360 Banquet Service*) demonstrated gains based on pre- and post-assessment tests of their English language skills. Within 60 days of the job seeker program ending, 28 percent of participants had obtained a new job. The evaluation reported a positive association between the number of job advising sessions that participants attended and their likelihood of obtaining a new job. Results from the participant survey suggested that the pilot projects increased participants' confidence to succeed in their jobs and advance in their careers. Finally, employers involved in the pilots reported observing gains in their employee participants' English abilities and confidence.

The evaluator made several recommendations for similar efforts, including: 1) before employing the Collective Impact approach, it is important to ensure that certain preconditions are in place, particularly a core cadre of influential leaders who have the resources and vision to generate changes; 2) project activities and progress could have been enhanced if specific data had been collected and analyzed during the planning stages. This includes information on the population in question (i.e., adult immigrant English learners), the services and programs already available in the community, and stakeholders' understanding of gaps that exist; 3) the project would have been well-served by focusing simultaneously on short-term, feasible goals while keeping larger, longer-term objectives in mind, to help maintain the interest and investment of key stakeholders; 4) the Collective Impact approach could be improved by additional research focused on how project teams should establish the foundation, preconditions, and infrastructure of a Collective Impact project and 5) collaborative efforts, involving employers and stakeholders across different sectors can occur in many different ways. Such partnerships can be nurtured by members of the project leadership team and through stakeholders' participation on a steering committee.



## Highlights of *The Final Report on Workforce Development Board (WDB) of South Central Wisconsin's Skills Wisconsin Project*

### Project Overview

- **Grantee:** Workforce Development Board of South Central Wisconsin
- **Intervention Focus Area:** Employer Engagement / Sector Strategies
- **Target Population:** Workforce Development Boards
- **Area Served:** Wisconsin
- **Congressional District:** WI – 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
- **Grant Round:** Round 1

### Evaluation Overview

- **Evaluation Types:** Impact evaluation using a QED, implementation study, and outcome study
- **Evaluator Organization:** IMPAQ International, LLC
- **Date of Final Report:** December 16, 2016
- **Title:** *Evaluation of Skills Wisconsin: Final Report*

### Evaluation Period

- October 2012 – December 2016

*This brief, one of a series highlighting findings from final Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) evaluation reports,<sup>21</sup> summarizes information from the study conducted by IMPAQ International, LLC on the Skills Wisconsin project.*

The Workforce Development Board (WDB) of South Central Wisconsin and its 11 WDB partners across the state used the WIF grant (Type B, promising ideas) to fund Skills Wisconsin, an initiative designed to improve communication and coordination among Wisconsin's workforce development stakeholders. Skills Wisconsin consisted of three related components: 1) implementation of Salesforce – a cloud-based customer relationship management (CRM) application; 2) provision of training on a demand-driven approach to workforce development; 3) enhancement of industry partnerships and development of new training curricula. Through these three components, Skills Wisconsin was intended to improve the workforce system's ability to be more responsive to employer needs; leading to improved outcomes for jobseekers.

The process study found that the project was largely implemented as planned. Major grant activities included the successful launch and continued support of Salesforce, training delivered to workforce system staff on how to implement the Salesforce approach, and in-person conferences to enable sharing and discussion. Generally, collaboration among workforce system stakeholders improved and increased after the implementation of Skills Wisconsin. However, despite these improvements, the workforce system continued to encounter some challenges related to collaboration across stakeholders. Nonetheless, Skills Wisconsin was able to exceed all but one of its performance targets (e.g., number of businesses served, number of employer profiles, number of jobseekers trained and served, number of times Salesforce was accessed) while operating as a relatively low cost-program in terms of cost per outcome.

The impact study results suggest that Salesforce implementation in pilot areas led to an increase in the likelihood of employment but had no effect on job retention or earnings, after controlling for observable differences among jobseeker cohorts. In the outcomes analysis, the evaluators found that employer opinions of the workforce system did not change in a meaningful way, though employers with more direct contact with the program had slightly more positive feelings about the workforce system.

The outcomes study found that there was little change in employer opinions about the ability of the workforce system across the three waves of the employer survey. However, results from the third wave suggest that employers with more direct contact with Skills Wisconsin had slightly more positive feelings about the workforce system. Skills Wisconsin exceeded all of the quantitative performance measures associated with the grant, with many of the targets met by the midpoint of the grant period. Overall, the grant expended \$69 per business served and \$481 per jobseeker served. Focusing on Salesforce-related expenditures, Skills Wisconsin spent \$21 per business served and \$144 per jobseeker served.

<sup>21</sup> Under the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF), the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) provided 43 competitive grants to States, regions, Tribal entities and localities to design and evaluate new approaches in the public workforce system. Using a "tiered evidence" model (which builds on past research), WIF projects tested a variety of new service combinations, technological innovations, and systems changes (with a focus on program coordination and integration). ETA required grantees to procure independent third-party evaluations to document project implementation, costs, and results, all in order to inform future experimentation and to promote continuous improvement in operations and performance in the public workforce system.



Evaluator recommendations include the following: 1) increased support of, and engagement in the use of Salesforce has the potential to lead a more universal business services coordination platform, which could provide greater value to the workforce system; 2) grant partners that have embraced Skills Wisconsin could strengthen support for the platform by sharing their success stories; and 3) coordination and collaboration among workforce system stakeholders could be achieved through the combination of the introduction of a CRM platform, training, and other efforts.



## Highlights of *The Final Report CareerSource North Central Florida's Startup Quest®*

### Project Overview

- **Grantee:** CareerSource North Central Florida
- **Intervention Focus Area:** Entrepreneurial training
- **Target Population:** Unemployed/under-employed workers with at least an Associate's degree
- **Area Served:** North central Florida
- **Congressional District:** Various in FL
- **Grant Round:** Round 1

### Evaluation Overview

- **Evaluation Types:** Process study, random assignment impact evaluation
- **Evaluator Organization:** IMPAQ International
- **Date of Final Report:** April 2017
- **Title:** *Evaluation of CareerSource North Central Florida's Workforce Innovation Fund Grant: Startup Quest®*

### Evaluation Period

- October 2012 – April 2017

*This brief, one of a series highlighting findings from final Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) evaluation reports,<sup>22</sup> summarizes information from the study conducted by IMPAQ International on the CareerSource North Central Florida's Startup Quest® program.*

CareerSource North Central Florida, the local workforce development board (LWDB) in Alachua and Bradford counties, used its (Type C project for adapting proven ideas) WIF grant to implement the Startup Quest® entrepreneurial training program in eight LWDBs in Florida, including Daytona, Gainesville, Jacksonville, Tallahassee, and Tampa Bay. The Startup Quest® program goal is to provide unemployed and underemployed individuals with associate's degrees or above with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to start and operate their own businesses or find wage/salary employment. The program involves a 10-session entrepreneurial training program that provides participants with an introduction to the processes required to form a startup, and the opportunity to work with a team and entrepreneurial mentor to develop and present a commercialization strategy for an innovative technology. The random assignment impact evaluation of the Startup Quest® program included the following findings:

- No impact on self-employment outcomes (likelihood of self-employment, or earnings from self-employment).
- A positive impact on wage/salary employment approximately 2 years after program receipt (6.0 percentage points, statistically significant at the 10 percent level; note that about half of the sample was observed for 7 to 8 quarters beyond random assignment).
- A negative impact on ever receiving Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits during the 14- to 16-month period following random assignment (a 6.7 percentage-point reduction in likelihood of UI receipt, statistically significant at the 5 percent level).
- A negative impact on duration of receipt of UI benefits, during the 14- to 16-month period following random assignment (a 1.5 week reduction in duration of receipt, statistically significant at the 10 percent level).
- A pattern of increasing wage/salary employment and earnings over the 8 quarters post-randomization (impacts on earnings are never statistically positive).

The process study found that Startup Quest® was implemented in accordance with the program model across the nine regions. Scaling up a new program for implementation in nine separate and distinct regions did lead to challenges and lessons learned, but program implementers were quick to identify workable solutions, and emphasized the importance of the following steps:

- Employing high quality staff who were well connected to the local entrepreneurial community; and
- Taking regional context, such as the richness of the local entrepreneurial culture, into consideration when planning for the program.

<sup>22</sup> Under the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF), the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) provided 43 competitive grants to States, regions, Tribal entities and localities to design and evaluate new approaches in the public workforce system. Using a "tiered evidence" model (which builds on past research), WIF projects tested a variety of new service combinations, technological innovations, and systems changes (with a focus on program coordination and integration). ETA required grantees to procure independent third-party evaluations to document project implementation, costs, and results, all in order to inform future experimentation and to promote continuous improvement in operations and performance in the public workforce system.



## Highlights on *The Final Report on the Fulton, Montgomery, and Schoharie Counties Workforce Development Board, Inc.'s Steps Up to STEM Project*

### Project Overview

- **Grantee:** Fulton, Montgomery, and Schoharie Counties Workforce Development Board, Inc.
- **Intervention Focus Area:** Work-based Learning/ Subsidized Employment/ Apprenticeship
- **Target Population:** Job seekers
- **Area Served:** Greater Capital Region (NY)
- **Congressional District:** NY-19, 20, 21
- **Grant Round:** Round 1

### Evaluation Overview

- **Evaluation Types:** Implementation Study, Outcomes Study, Cost Allocation Analysis
- **Evaluator Organization:** Thomas P. Miller & Associates
- **Date of Final Report:** March 2016
- **Title:** *Steps Up to STEM: U.S. Department of Labor Workforce Innovation Fund Final Evaluation Report*

### Evaluation Period

- November 2012 – October 2015

*This brief, one of a series highlighting findings from final Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) evaluation reports,<sup>23</sup> summarizes information from the study conducted by Thomas P. Miller & Associates on the Steps Up to STEM Project.*

Funded with a WIF grant (Type A, new and untested ideas), *Steps Up to STEM* was a workforce development program implemented in 11 counties by the four workforce areas that form New York’s Greater Capital Region Workforce Development Boards (GCR WDBs). The program’s aim was to increase awareness of and access to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) career and training opportunities. A key component of the program was the development of individualized career plans for middle-skill occupations. These served as three-way agreements among the workforce areas, the job seeker participant, and the employer. The majority of these career plans focused on two steps of participant training, which could include a mix of pre-hire classroom training, on-the-job training (OJT), and customized training. A total of 147 participants engaged in the individualized career plans. Lasting effects of the program have included: 1) Enhanced workforce system capacity via sustained grant innovations and preparation for WIOA; 2) Increased levels of engagement between the workforce system and regional employers; and 3) Stronger occupational outlook for participants, measured by transferrable skills and wages.

The evaluation of the *Steps Up to STEM* innovation included implementation, outcomes, and cost allocation studies. The implementation study found that close relationships with employers were essential to gain enough buy-in to have adequate placement sites, and consortium leadership relied on close connections with WIF-funded staff and with each other. Program success was heavily dependent on workforce area responsiveness to the business as the customer; the program seemed to work best when it was highly customized and highly responsive. The program provided STEM labor market and career information to more than 14,400 job seekers and assessed approximately 2,200 people for STEM readiness, exceeding the program’s goals by more than 60%; connected 147 individuals engaged in individualized career plans, with a total of 42 employers (half of the expected goal of 88) participating in Two-Step training contracts; provided 28 professional development opportunities to workforce staff. Finally, the study found that WDBs experimented with innovations, increasing capacity to prepare for and adapt to changes, such as WIOA.

The outcome study found that *Steps Up to STEM* improved training participants’ wages by an average of \$2.55/hour measured before and after training participation. 66% of individuals (97 of 147 individuals) attained their first of two training steps with an additional 16% still in the process of that training. Of the 71 participants who had a Step Two Goal, approximately half (35 individuals) obtained their Step Two goal with another 15% still progressing through. *Steps Up to STEM* did not appear to influence job retention, but the analysis was limited due to missing data.

The evaluator recommended the following related to implementation of the model: 1) initial start-up takes time and requires consideration of: establishing investment (time and money) needs, understanding consortium area differences and how to best leverage strengths, establishing buy-in of leaders and staff, setting up regular meetings, creating an employer engagement approach, and clearly communicating initiative vision; 2) levels of program staffing including the need for business support and data-focused staff, and staff trainings; 3) the Two-Step model need not be limited to STEM and is appropriate for a wide range of occupations; and 4) the Train First adaptation of the model (sector based training approach) may be a lower barrier to entry in regions that lack stronger employer support of the workforce investment system.

<sup>23</sup> Under the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF), the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) provided 43 competitive grants to States, regions, Tribal entities and localities to design and evaluate new approaches in the public workforce system. Using a “tiered evidence” model (which builds on past research), WIF projects tested a variety of new service combinations, technological innovations, and systems changes (with a focus on program coordination and integration). ETA required grantees to procure independent third-party evaluations to document project implementation, costs, and results, all in order to inform future experimentation and to promote continuous improvement in operations and performance in the public workforce system.



## Highlights of *The Final Report on the City of San Francisco Office of Economic and Workforce Development's TechSF Workforce Innovation Partnership*

### Project Overview

- **Grantee:** San Francisco Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD)
- **Intervention Focus Area:** MIS Changes and Technological Innovation
- **Target Population:** Long-term unemployed and all workforce system customers
- **Area Served:** City and County of San Francisco, and the surrounding Bay Area
- **Congressional District:** CA-8
- **Grant Round:** Round 1

### Evaluation Overview

- **Evaluation Types:** Outcomes and Formative Study, Cost Analysis
- **Evaluator Organization:** WestEd
- **Date of Final Report:** July 31, 2015
- **Title:** *Evaluation of TechSF Workforce Innovation Partnership Report*

### Evaluation Period

- September 2013 - May 2015

*This brief, one of a series highlighting findings from final Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) evaluation reports,<sup>24</sup> summarizes information from the study conducted by WestEd on the TechSF Workforce Innovation Partnership project.*

The City of San Francisco, CA used its (Type A, new and untested ideas) WIF grant to fund the *TechSF Workforce Innovation Partnership*. TechSF was designed to improve the local workforce system's ability to create and deliver effective workforce services and to develop the local talent pool in order to close skills gaps in the Information Technology (IT) industry. TechSF consisted of both systems-level and participant service-level projects. The systems-level projects (CoLab, txt2wrk, and an employer engagement initiative) were designed to develop new relationships among IT stakeholders and to implement improvements in the local workforce development system. The purpose of CoLab was a new forum for catalyzing innovation in San Francisco's workforce development system, strengthening partnerships with employers, and responding to local employment gaps. Txt2wrk was a web-based texting application that would streamline job matching and referral services offered by the Office of Economic and Workforce Development. Finally, the employer engagement initiative was designed to adopt practices and strategies from the region's IT industry to build new relationships between employers, job seekers, and workforce service, education, and training providers. TechSF also developed a talent development project, which consisted of a range of services geared at placing San Francisco residents in local IT jobs, including technical training (in areas such as networking, tech support, programming, and multimedia services), career management workshops, project-based learning opportunities, and employer-supported contextualized learning opportunities.

The evaluation of TechSF included an outcomes, formative, and cost study evaluation design. The formative evaluation was designed to study how the three projects developed and to provide feedback to inform project development and to assess the longer-term sustainability of the projects. The evaluation found that CoLab activities helped generate new ideas and enhanced the capacity of the workforce development policy arena in city government. CoLab's strategy of bringing together diverse stakeholders to promote change in the local workforce development system was viewed as valuable, though on a small scale. The txt2wrk application was not implemented as planned or within the three-year grant term because of challenges encountered during the project planning and prototyping phases. Instead of a texting application, txt2wrk evolved into a tool used for sending general program announcements to alumni of CityBuild, a pre-apprenticeship and construction administration training program. TechSF offered employers opportunities to engage in a variety of activities, ranging from low to high commitment. Employers were motivated to participate in engagement activities for a range of reasons, including networking with and learning from peers in IT, seeking help recruiting job candidates, promoting their company's services and achieving corporate philanthropic and community service goals.

The outcomes evaluation examined the employment and earnings outcomes of the talent development project, specifically the outcomes of technical training participants who attended career management workshops. It also included participants' perceptions of the workshops. There was a positive association between the number of career management workshops that participants attended and their likelihood of obtaining a new job. Among participants who obtained a new job after receiving services, 59 percent were employed in contract positions. According to participants and program staff, attending the career management workshops improved their interviewing skills, ability to identify job leads, and helped create resumes that communicated their skills.

<sup>24</sup> Under the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF), the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) provided 43 competitive grants to States, regions, Tribal entities and localities to design and evaluate new approaches in the public workforce system. Using a "tiered evidence" model (which builds on past research), WIF projects tested a variety of new service combinations, technological innovations, and systems changes (with a focus on program coordination and integration). ETA required grantees to procure independent third-party evaluations to document project implementation, costs, and results, all in order to inform future experimentation and to promote continuous improvement in operations and performance in the public workforce system.



The evaluator provided a number of recommendations stemming from the study's results: 1) In order to maximize employer involvement, it is important to offer a range of engagement opportunities—from those that require minimal time commitments (e.g., business meetings) to those that involve significant time and effort (e.g., collaborations with local education institutions); 2) Development of txt2wrk would have proceeded more effectively if partners had been consulted as early as possible in the planning and design process; 3) A thorough needs assessment should be conducted before project planning begins; 4) Changes in the local workforce development system require a significant commitment of time and effort, as well as a willingness to engage in some amount of trial and error; and 5) Career management workshops that are short-term can be effective for tailoring workforce development services to meet the needs of IT hiring practices.



# Highlights of *The Final Report on Utah’s Department of Workforce Services and Montana’s Department of Labor Next Generation Labor Exchange (GenLEX) Initiative*

## Project Overview

- **Grantee:** Utah Department of Workforce Services
- **Intervention Focus Area:** MIS Changes and Technological Innovation
- **Target Population:** Job seekers and employers
- **Area Served:** States of Utah and Montana
- **Congressional Districts:** UT-1, UT-2, UT-3, UT-4 and MT-1 At Large
- **Grant Round:** Round 1

## Evaluation Overview

- **Evaluation Types:** RCT, QED, Implementation
- **Evaluator Organization:** Social Research Institute at the University of Utah
- **Date of Final Report:** December 2016
- **Title:** *Utah and Montana GenLEX Initiative: Final Report*

## Evaluation Period

- 2012 - 2016

*This brief, one of a series highlighting findings from final Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) evaluation reports,<sup>25</sup> summarizes information from the study conducted by The University of Utah College of Social Work’s Social Research Institute (SRI) on the Next Generation Labor Exchange (GenLEX) Initiative.*

Utah’s Department of Workforce Services (DWS), in partnership with Montana’s Department of Labor, used their (Type B, promising ideas) WIF grant to carry out the *GenLEX Initiative*, a newly-developed labor exchange system that replaced the states’ existing labor exchange systems (online self-service, job matching systems). The GenLEX initiative was designed to: 1) Reduce reliance on staff-assisted services and promote the use of self-service LEX; 2) provide LEX at a lower cost-per-participant; 3) address the strain and access issues at physical American Job Centers; 4) assist job seekers and students with better connection to career pathways and related education opportunities; and 5) improve Common Measures by introducing new, innovative outcomes that more accurately measure LEX success.

The evaluation of the GenLEX initiative included an impact study (which used both a randomized controlled trial (RCT) design and a quasi-experimental analysis), a descriptive analysis, and a process evaluation. The impact evaluation was conducted only in Utah because Montana did not have the capacity to maintain two labor exchange platforms simultaneously. The evaluation found, overall, that the new system did not result in any statistically significant changes in job seeker outcomes. Job seeker satisfaction with the system was statistically significantly lower for the new/test system compared to the standard system. In addition, employer usage generally did not change. The implementation of the GenLEX initiative was hampered by personnel changes and shifting priorities. However, after the conclusion of the WIF grant, both states continued implementing the new system, as leaders felt that the continued improvements to the system were worthwhile and would result in long-term positive changes.

The evaluator included several conclusions and recommendations: 1) Several timing and pacing issues affected implementation of the project, including the loss of important positive momentum with personnel changes early in the project, and challenges in assessing the time needed for implementation of the initiative. Evaluators noted that with other competing interests, getting the attention of staff at all levels to focus on the changes to be implemented, or to give the time and attention needed for training and skill building around the implementation, is challenging. Regular program design interim deadlines are necessary for moving the project forward at a more consistent pace; 2) Another group of recommendations involves the relationship building needed with implementation of a new initiative. Stronger relationships with senior management are needed to retain support and to stay focused on the project’s vision and goals. Engaging other partners and representatives from various areas (i.e., agency administration, IT and financial management) is necessary to keep all involved and apprised of activities, progress and needs; 3) Implementing strategies for helping technology-averse staff to embrace new technology based products and services is a necessary component to this type of initiative; and 4) continued testing of assumptions will help ensure continued relevance of the assumptions.

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## Highlights of *The Final Report on the SkillSource Group's Evaluation of the Virginia Employment Through Entrepreneurship Consortium (VETEC) Program*

### Project Overview

- **Grantee:** The SkillSource Group
- **Intervention Focus Area:** Entrepreneurship Training
- **Target Population:** Low-income WIA-eligible adults and dislocated workers
- **Area Served:** Northern Virginia, Greater Richmond, VA and Hampton Roads, VA
- **Congressional District:** VA- 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>
- **Grant Round:** Round 1

### Evaluation Overview

- **Evaluation Types:** Implementation study and random assignment impact study
- **Evaluator Organization:** IMPAQ International
- **Date of Final Report:** June 30, 2017
- **Title:** *Evaluation of the Virginia Employment Through Entrepreneurship Consortium (VETEC) Program*

### Evaluation Period

- December 2012 – October 2016

*This brief, one of a series highlighting findings from final Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) evaluation reports,<sup>26</sup> summarizes information from the study conducted by the IMPAQ International on the Virginia Employment Through Entrepreneurship Consortium (VETEC) Program.*

The SkillSource Group Inc. (SkillSource)—the Northern Virginia Workforce Investment Board's non-profit fiscal agent—used its (Type C, adapting proven ideas) WIF grant for the VETEC program. VETEC operated in three Virginia Local Workforce Investment Areas and was designed to provide comprehensive entrepreneurship and self-employment training, mentoring, and technical assistance to WIA/WIOA-eligible adults and dislocated workers interested in starting small businesses and attaining long-term financial self-sufficiency through self-employment. Across the three sites, VETEC participants received a set of core trainings on essential entrepreneurship topics. Sites were allowed to decide whether to use existing service delivery models (if available) or create an entirely new strategy, but all VETEC participants were to complete the program with the same core skills and receive the same Certificate of Completion. In addition to the core training, program participants had access to supplemental services, which varied by site. Sites conducted 1 to 2 weeks of core training followed by one to 5 weeks of supplemental training. Business Counselors provided guidance and advice on business plan development. Program Case Managers served as the point of contact to provide wrap-around services and engage the participant throughout the program. As part of the completion requirements, participants developed a preliminary business plan.

The evaluation of the VETEC program assessed program implementation as well as its impact on the labor market and self-sufficiency outcomes of randomly assigned program participants. The impact evaluation compared non-veteran eligible VETEC applicants that were assigned to a treatment group to those assigned to a control group. 733 individuals were enrolled, with 373 receiving treatment and 360 in the control group. The outcome and impact studies found that participation in VETEC resulted in a statistically significant impact on the likelihood of being self-employed at 18 months after random assignment.

The implementation and process studies documented program implementation and highlighted challenges, best practices, and lessons learned. Overall the evaluation found that the program model was well received by staff, partners and participants, and they recommended replicating it in the future, despite some implementation challenges. The evaluator also observed promising or "best" practices including: 1) The flexibility provided to the sites to use multiple tools of communication led to effective external communication with participants; 2) Effective marketing strategies, such as promotional materials in several languages with brief write-ups describing experiences of past participants, encouraged participation; 3) Attendance of business counselors at information sessions provided participants with information about business start-ups while keeping them engaged; 4) Access to eligibility documents at the information session helped case managers determine whether the attendee was eligible to apply for the program; 5) Scheduling of orientation session soon after random assignment reduced early drop-out rates; and 6) Close and frequent coordination of business counselors and case managers ensured that participants' needs were met.

<sup>26</sup> Under the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF), the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) provided 43 competitive grants to States, regions, Tribal entities and localities to design and evaluate new approaches in the public workforce system. Using a "tiered evidence" model (which builds on past research), WIF projects tested a variety of new service combinations, technological innovations, and systems changes (with a focus on program coordination and integration). ETA required grantees to procure independent third-party evaluations to document project implementation, costs, and results, all in order to inform future experimentation and to promote continuous improvement in operations and performance in the public workforce system.

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## Highlights of *The Final Report on San Diego Workforce Partnership's Breaking Barriers*

### Project Overview

- **Grantee:** San Diego Workforce Partnership (CA)
- **Intervention Focus Area:** Case Management /Counseling/ Coaching
- **Target Population:** Low-income Individuals with Disabilities
- **Area Served:** San Diego County
- **Congressional District:** CA 50<sup>th</sup>, 51<sup>st</sup>, 52<sup>nd</sup>, 53<sup>rd</sup>
- **Grant Round:** Round 2

### Evaluation Overview

- **Evaluation Types:** RCT – Type B
- **Evaluator Organization:** MDRC and MEF Associates
- **Date of Final Report:** September 2019
- **Title:** *Breaking Barriers: Implementing Individual Placement and Support in a Workforce Setting*

### Evaluation Period

- January 2016 – December 2018

*This brief, one of a series highlighting findings from final Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) evaluation reports,<sup>27</sup> summarizes information from the study conducted by MDRC and MEF Associates on the Breaking Barriers program.*

The San Diego Workforce Partnership (SDWP) used its WIF grant (a Type B project) to design, implement, and evaluate the Breaking Barriers program. Breaking Barriers aimed to improve the employment outcomes of low-income individuals with disabilities. Breaking Barriers program model was based on the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) approach, which was originally designed for individuals with serious mental illness in a clinical setting. Using the IPS approach, Breaking Barriers provided a range of employment and support services, including career counseling, job search assistance, personalized benefits counseling, supportive services referrals, and follow-along service once participants found a job placement. Overall, Breaking Barriers implemented services with fidelity to the IPS model.

The evaluation of the Breaking Barriers program consisted of an implementation study, a randomized control trial impact study, and a cost study. In total, 1,061 individuals were enrolled in the study (528 to the program group, 533 to the control group). Study participants were randomly assigned to a group offered Breaking Barriers service or to a group not offered Breaking Barriers services. Data sources included site visit interviews, IPS fidelity assessments, Breaking Barriers' management information system, a fifteen-month participant follow-up survey, and program cost data. Findings included the following:

- Breaking Barriers experienced staff turnover. About one-third of employment specialists and supervisors hired at program launch were still at Breaking Barriers 1.5 years later.
- Recruitment efforts were focused on individuals referred from Breaking Barriers referral partners. Key referral partners were the San Diego Behavioral Health Services, California Department of Rehabilitation, and CalWORKs.
- The majority of study participants (92%) had some employment history. However, less than half of study participants (42%) were employed in the year before study enrollment.
- A little over half of program participants received follow-along services, which varied depending on the needs of the participant. Some participants received intensive support, while others needed or only wanted light check-ins
- Breaking Barriers did not have a statistically significant impact on any employment or earnings outcomes measured—including total earnings, length of employment, hours worked, and hourly wage—or any physical and mental health outcomes.
- On average, the cost per person served by Breaking Barriers over a 12-month period was \$4,340 (in program year 2017 dollars). Breaking Barriers' average cost per person is lower than other programs operating the IPS model.

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## Highlights of *The Final Report on Herkimer, Madison and Oneida Counties Workforce Development Boards' Bridge to Employment and Academic Marketplace*

### Project Overview

- **Grantee:** Herkimer, Madison, and Oneida Counties Workforce Development Board
- **Intervention Focus Area:** Case Management /Counseling/ Coaching
- **Target Population:** Economically Disadvantaged Adults
- **Area Served:** Central New York Counties: Herkimer, Madison, Oneida Broome, Tioga, Chenango, Delaware, Otsego, Tompkins
- **Congressional District:** NY 19<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, and 23<sup>rd</sup>
- **Grant Round:** Round 2

### Evaluation Overview

- **Evaluation Types:** RCT – Type A
- **Evaluator Organization:** Social Policy Research Associates
- **Date of Final Report:** September 2019
- **Title:** *BEAM: USDOL Workforce Innovation Fund Evaluation*

### Evaluation Period

- November 2015 – September 2018

*This brief, one of a series highlighting findings from final Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) evaluation reports,<sup>28</sup> summarizes information from the study conducted by Thomas P. Miller & Associates and The Policy & Research Group on the Bridge to Employment and Academic Marketplace (BEAM) initiative.*

The Herkimer, Madison, and Oneida Counties Workforce Development Board used its WIF grant to design, implement, and evaluate the Bridge to Employment and Academic Marketplace initiative. BEAM was designed to help economically disadvantaged adults disconnected from work or education return to and complete postsecondary training and/or education that leads to high-growth jobs. Outreach Coordinators (OCs), who were based in the local American Job Center, provided BEAM participants with intensive case management and one-on-one academic and employment support services.

Evaluation of the BEAM program consisted of an implementation study, a randomized control trial impact study, and a cost study. For the impact study, 401 study participants were randomly assigned to receive either the Guided Career Pipeline (GCP) intervention (325 students) or services typically offered by the AJC (75 students). Data for the evaluation came from interviews, program documents, participant surveys, program data, and administrative data from the National Student Clearinghouse and New York State Department of Labor. The project fell short of the enrollment target of 1,800 students, as well as the number of participants who began training, completed training or earned industry-recognized credentials. Evaluation findings included the following:

- The most prominent barriers to education faced by BEAM participants, as well as potential participants, were financial issues, such as student loans that were in default.
- Co-location of OCs at the local AJC increased workforce staff's awareness of the BEAM program, which facilitated referral of individuals to BEAM.
- Using a common case management system strengthened communication and collaboration between workforce staff and Outreach Coordinators.
- There was very little difference in education, employment, and earnings outcomes for individuals receiving the GCP intervention compared to individuals who received the typical services provided by the AJC. None of the differences were statistically significant.

The evaluator offered several recommendations for implementing similar projects in the future. These included: 1) develop strong relationships with community partners; and 2) learn about and create protocols for providing financial aid assistance to help address financial barriers to education.

<sup>28</sup> Under the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF), the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) provided 43 competitive grants to States, regions, Tribal entities and localities to design and evaluate new approaches in the public workforce system. Using a “tiered evidence” model (which builds on past research), WIF projects tested a variety of new service combinations, technological innovations, and systems changes (with a focus on program coordination and integration). ETA required grantees to procure independent third-party evaluations to document project implementation, costs, and results, all in order to inform future experimentation and to promote continuous improvement in operations and performance in the public workforce system.



## Highlights of *The Final Report on Northwest Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board's Career Jump Start Program*

### Project Overview

- **Grantee:** Northwest Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board
- **Intervention Focus Area:** Case Management /Counseling/ Coaching
- **Target Population:** Individuals with One or More Employment Barriers
- **Area Served:** Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Venango, and Warren Counties, PA
- **Congressional District:** PA 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>
- **Grant Round:** Round 2

### Evaluation Overview

- **Evaluation Types:** Implementation, Outcomes, and Cost Study
- **Evaluator Organization:** IMPAQ International, LLC
- **Date of Final Report:** September 30, 2019
- **Title:** *Evaluation of the Career Jump Start Program*

### Evaluation Period

- October 2015 – March 2019

*This brief, one of a series highlighting findings from final Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) evaluation reports,<sup>29</sup> summarizes information from the study conducted by IMPAQ International LLC on the Career Jump Start (CJS) program.*

The Northwest Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board used its WIF grant (a Type A project for new and untested ideas) to design, implement, and test the Career Jump Start program. The CJS program provided participants with intensive case management, services to reduce barriers to employment, and occupational skills training. The evaluation included an implementation study, an outcomes study, and a cost study. Overall, the evaluation used data from site visits, focus group with participants, administrative data, program documents, interviews with key stakeholders, and participant surveys. The final sample for the outcome study consisted of 109 participants, and 39 were still active in the program at the end of the evaluation period. Findings included the following:

- CJS program administrators faced many implementation challenges, including difficulties with recruiting and retaining participants and changes in the program approach and staffing. As a result, CJS program administrators made changes to the original program model, such as adding an orientation and removing the time-intensive Work Certified™ course requirement prior to enrollment in occupational skills training.
- Intensive case management and consistent contact with participants were crucial for keeping participants engaged in the CJS program.
- Approximately 59% (64 out of 109) participants completed an industry-specific occupational credential from Penn State in healthcare or manufacturing.
- Participants who entered CJS with only one or two barriers to employment and higher math skills were more likely to earn an occupational credential than those with more barriers to employment and weaker math skills.

The evaluator offered several recommendations for implementing similar projects in the future. These included: 1) triage participants based on the number and type of barriers to employment; 2) tailor the intensity of case management based on participants' needs; 3) make sure that the instructional style and content of training opportunities are appropriate for target population; 4) plan for unexpected delays in implementation to make certain that there are sufficient funds available once program is fully operational; and 5) account for the high per participant cost of providing intensive case management to participants with multiple barriers to employment.

<sup>29</sup> Under the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF), the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) provided 43 competitive grants to States, regions, Tribal entities and localities to design and evaluate new approaches in the public workforce system. Using a “tiered evidence” model (which builds on past research), WIF projects tested a variety of new service combinations, technological innovations, and systems changes (with a focus on program coordination and integration). ETA required grantees to procure independent third-party evaluations to document project implementation, costs, and results, all in order to inform future experimentation and to promote continuous improvement in operations and performance in the public workforce system.



## Highlights of *The Final Report on Florida Department of Economic Opportunity's Performance Funding Model*

### Project Overview

- **Grantee:** Florida Department of Economic Opportunity/CareerSource Florida
- **Intervention Focus Area:** MIS Changes and Technological Innovation
- **Target Population:** Local workforce boards and job seekers
- **Area Served:** Florida
- **Congressional District:** FL-all
- **Grant Round:** Round 2

### Evaluation Overview

- **Evaluation Types:** Implementation, Outcomes, and Cost Study
- **Evaluator Organization:** The Policy and Research Group
- **Date of Final Report:** September 2019
- **Title:** *Florida Department of Economic Opportunity Performance Funding Model*

### Evaluation Period

- July 2015 – June 2018

*This brief, one of a series highlighting findings from final Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) evaluation reports,<sup>30</sup> summarizes information from the study conducted by PRG Group on the Performance Funding Model project.*

The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity/CareerSource Florida used its WIF grant (a Type A project for new and untested ideas) to design, implement, and test the Performance Funding Model (PFM) program. CareerSource Florida, the state of Florida's workforce system's policy making board, designed the PFM as a strategy to reward the performance of the state's 24 local workforce development boards (LWDBs) across 7 performance metrics. The aim was to motivate LWDBs to increase efficiency and effectiveness, ultimately resulting in better outcomes for clients (such as increased employment and wages). The 7 performance metrics fall into 3 categories of "placement" and "exit" metrics focusing on job seekers, and "business" metrics that focus on businesses served by the CareerSource Florida network.

Evaluation of the PFM included an implementation, an outcomes, and a cost study. Key findings of the implementation study found that the roll out of the project deviated from the original plan due to a number of external and other factors. Turnover of key staff, initial internal delays, and the effects of two natural disasters all contributed to the implementation challenges of the project. Given the complexity and scope of the project, the implementation study found that having necessary staff (both technical and non-technical) aligned to the key functional requirements of the model was important. Further, a variety of communication strategies are necessary to convey to the users the purpose and function of the model at implementation and for ongoing use of the model. Although outside of the control of the PFM, the lag in wage data was an issue as the information was too late to impact changes. Having a web application of the model was important as it allowed access to up-to-date data for the users. Obtaining and applying stakeholder feedback ensures that the model is relevant, affects decision making as intended and enables a sustainable design.

The outcomes study produced mixed results, finding marginal positive effects on employment outcomes, marginal negative effect on wage outcomes and small positive effects on employment for those unemployed at enrollment. The evaluation suggests that the time period for the evaluation may have been too short to fully assess results, especially those on labor outcomes. In spite of the implementation challenges, the evaluator finds that there is evidence of promise for the model. Stakeholders reported that having learned lessons around the value of planning, partnerships and continuous improvement, there is potential to engage in the PFM or a revised version going forward.

<sup>30</sup> Under the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF), the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) provided 43 competitive grants to States, regions, Tribal entities and localities to design and evaluate new approaches in the public workforce system. Using a "tiered evidence" model (which builds on past research), WIF projects tested a variety of new service combinations, technological innovations, and systems changes (with a focus on program coordination and integration). ETA required grantees to procure independent third-party evaluations to document project implementation, costs, and results, all in order to inform future experimentation and to promote continuous improvement in operations and performance in the public workforce system.



# Highlights of *The Final Report Evaluation of Code Louisville Training Program*

### Project Overview

- **Grantee:** KentuckianaWorks
- **Intervention Focus Area:** Technological Innovation (New Online/Remote Services)
- **Target Population:** Job seekers in Information Technology and coding specifically
- **Area Served:** Louisville, KY
- **Congressional District:** KY -3rd

### Evaluation Overview

- **Evaluation Types** QED, Implementation and Cost
- **Evaluator Organization:** University of Kentucky, Gatton College of Business and Economics
- **Date of Final Report:** September 2019
- **Title:** *Evaluation of the Code Louisville Training Program*

### Evaluation Period

- 2015 - 2019

*This brief, one of a series highlighting findings from final Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) evaluation reports,<sup>31</sup> summarizes information from the study conducted by the University of Kentucky, Center for Business and Economic Research, Gatton College of Business and Economics on the Code Louisville Training Program.*

KentuckianaWorks used its WIF grant (a Type A project for new and untested ideas) to design, implement and test an online training program for job seekers interested in information technology, and especially coding. The training involved a 12-week series of online classes instead of a traditional classroom-based method, paired with a mentorship component. Job placement assistance and social “mixers” were also part of the services. The evaluation included an implementation and impact study. Findings included the following:

- A total of 1,421 individuals started the program by January 2018, and the program had a substantial waiting list. Of the total who had started, 58% had completed at least one track. The participant group was majority male, white, and is more educated than the typical WIOA participant.
- Program participants typically had lower employment rates than those in comparison groups during the year post program entry. In terms of earnings, program participants had higher earnings post program initially as compared to the comparison groups, but the difference declines over time.
- The implementation study noted that early in implementation there was confusion about the role of the mentor, and this component of the program took some time to evolve. Participants reported that the mentor was a key aspect of the program. Finding mentors – a volunteer position – has posed challenges for the program, but at the time of data collection, there was a pool of 200 mentors with more being added from the group of program graduates.
- The QED study compared the Code Louisville participants to three other training programs. As compared to the other training programs, the study found that Code Louisville participants experienced declining average earnings post program. Code Louisville participants are less likely to be employed after enrollment than other training participants, although this gap closes for some over the first year. The employment rates during the first year for Code Louisville participants with more than a high school degree are comparable to participants in other programs.

The evaluator offered several conclusions about the study. These included: 1) the Code Louisville program serves a different population than those in the comparison training groups, and the evaluator used propensity score matching to adjust for these differences; 2) The Code Louisville program prepares participants for entry level positions in a career track that may have earnings growth. The one-year timing of the evaluation limits what outcomes can be observed.

<sup>31</sup> Under the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF), the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) provided 43 competitive grants to States, regions, Tribal entities and localities to design and evaluate new approaches in the public workforce system. Using a “tiered evidence” model (which builds on past research), WIF projects tested a variety of new service combinations, technological innovations, and systems changes (with a focus on program coordination and integration). ETA required grantees to procure independent third-party evaluations to document project implementation, costs, and results, all in order to inform future experimentation and to promote continuous improvement in operations and performance in the public workforce system.



## Highlights of *The Final Report on the Los Angeles Regional Initiative for Social Enterprise (LA:RISE) Pilot Program*

### Project Overview

- **Grantee:** Los Angeles Economic and Workforce Development Department
- **Intervention Focus Area:** Work-Based Learning/ Subsidized Employment/ Apprenticeship
- **Target Population:** Opportunity youth; individuals with a criminal record or unstable housing
- **Area Served:** Los Angeles, CA
- **Congressional District:** CA 34<sup>th</sup>

### Evaluation Overview

- **Evaluation Types** Implementation Study, RCT, Cost Study
- **Evaluator Organization:** Social Policy Research Associates
- **Date of Final Report:** September 2019
- **Title:** *Final Report for the Impact Evaluation of the Los Angeles Regional Initiative for Social Enterprise (LA:RISE) Pilot Program*

### Evaluation Period

- September 2015 – April 2019

*This brief, one of a series highlighting findings from final Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) evaluation reports,<sup>32</sup> summarizes information from the study conducted by Social Policy Research Associates on the LA:RISE Project.*

The Los Angeles Economic and Workforce Development Department, in partnership with REDF, used its WIF grant (a Type B project for promising ideas) to design, implement, and test an enhanced transitional employment program – LA: RISE. The program brought together and provided supports to a network of partners who delivered training and assessment services, support services, and employment placement services to individuals facing barriers to employment. The evaluation included an implementation study, impact study, and cost study and used data from project documents, interviews with key stakeholders, observations, administrative data, and cost data. Findings included the following:

- The LA:RISE program, which facilitated new a number of partnerships, provided services to approximately 500 youth and adults. Most program participants (62 percent) achieved at least 300 hours of transitional employment, nearly half (43 percent) completed the job readiness assessment, and most (77 percent) were also co-enrolled into WIOA within one year. LA:RISE staff reported that over time participants achieved many personal, educational, and employment successes.
- LA:RISE had a positive impact on employment in the short-term, but not the longer-term. In the first quarter after random assignment, 62 percent of the program group was employed, compared to 54 percent of the control group (this is largely driven by the provision of transitional employment). However, after the third quarter following random assignment there was no impact on employment and employment rates were similar for both groups.
- LA:RISE did not have any impact on earnings. Over the 12-quarter follow-up period, average quarterly earnings for both groups grew over time, but there was not any statistically significant difference between the two.
- LA:RISE did not have an impact on participants' rates of arrests, convictions, or jail incarcerations within the three years following random assignment.
- The average cost of serving an LA:RISE participant (excluding start-up costs) was \$7,480, compared to \$417 for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult services and \$3,286 for WIOA Youth services. These costs do not reflect expenditures partners paid through leveraged funding.

The evaluator offered three recommendations for implementing similar projects in the future. These included: 1) consider modifying participant milestones or program goals for partners serving only opportunity youth to better reflect their emphasis on education and training; 2) provide services to address criminogenic needs and provide homelessness-related services to improve outcomes; and 3) expand the network of employers to help place program participants in good jobs that can lead to permanent employment.

<sup>32</sup> Under the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF), the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) provided 43 competitive grants to States, regions, Tribal entities and localities to design and evaluate new approaches in the public workforce system. Using a “tiered evidence” model (which builds on past research), WIF projects tested a variety of new service combinations, technological innovations, and systems changes (with a focus on program coordination and integration). ETA required grantees to procure independent third-party evaluations to document project implementation, costs, and results, all in order to inform future experimentation and to promote continuous improvement in operations and performance in the public workforce system.



## Highlights of *The Final Report on the Willamette Workforce Partnership's Rethinking Job Search Project*

### Project Overview

- **Grantee:** Willamette Workforce Partnership
- **Intervention Focus Area:** Case Management /Counseling/ Coaching
- **Target Population:** WIOA Participants Receiving UI Benefits
- **Area Served:** Clackamas, Coos, Deschutes, Jackson, Klamath, Lane, Lincoln, Marion, Multnomah, Washington, Yamhill Counties, Oregon

### Congressional District:

- OR 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, & 5<sup>th</sup>
- **Grant Round:** Round 2

### Evaluation Overview

- **Evaluation Types** Implementation, Outcomes, and Cost Study
- **Evaluator Organization:** Public Policy Associates
- **Date of Final Report:** September 2019
- **Title:** *Rethinking Job Search: Final Report*

### Evaluation Period

- January 2015 – April 2019

*This brief, one of a series highlighting findings from final Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) evaluation reports,<sup>33</sup> summarizes information from the study conducted by the Public Policy Associates on the Rethinking Job Search project.*

The Willamette Workforce Partnership used its WIF grant (a Type A project for new and untested ideas) to design, implement, and evaluate the Rethinking Job Search (Rethinking) program. Operating in 11 counties in Oregon, Rethinking provided a series of workshops to teach the benefits of cognitive-behavioral techniques (CBT) to job seekers receiving Unemployment Insurance (UI). The aim of the workshops was to enhance job seeker motivation and self-efficacy related to job search activities, which would ultimately improve employment outcomes. The Rethinking curriculum consisted of 12 two-hour workshops held three days a week for four consecutive weeks. By the end of the grant period, Rethinking offered 157 workshop series. A total of 1,215 individuals enrolled in the workshops, which exceeded the enrollment target by 218 participants. The majority of participants completed the program.

The evaluation consisted of an implementation study, outcomes study, and cost study. Data sources included key stakeholder interviews, participant focus groups, participant surveys, program data, and administrative data. Findings included the following:

- Facilitator turnover in six of the eleven Rethinking sites led to delays while new facilitators were brought on board and trained. Possible explanations for the turnover included: personal reasons, staffing shifts related to funding, and low compensation.
- Workshops were implemented with fidelity to the program standards and curriculum, with little variation across sites.
- Participants' self-ratings of their socioemotional skills, confidence, and motivation were high in both the post-workshop survey and the six-month follow-up survey.
- Rethinking participants had a 12% greater chance of being employed in third quarter and an 8% greater chance of being employed in the fourth quarter compared to individuals in a matched comparison group.
- Attending a greater number of workshops did not increase the likelihood of employment.

The evaluator offered several recommendations for implementing similar projects in the future. These included: 1) offer robust training of local workforce board staff regarding the workings of the program in order to facilitate staff knowledge of and buy-in to the program; 2) plan for initial investment in hiring and training facilitators; 2) provide ongoing technical assistance to facilitators; and 3) pay attention to the cultural relevance of the training.

<sup>33</sup> Under the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF), the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) provided 43 competitive grants to States, regions, Tribal entities and localities to design and evaluate new approaches in the public workforce system. Using a “tiered evidence” model (which builds on past research), WIF projects tested a variety of new service combinations, technological innovations, and systems changes (with a focus on program coordination and integration). ETA required grantees to procure independent third-party evaluations to document project implementation, costs, and results, all in order to inform future experimentation and to promote continuous improvement in operations and performance in the public workforce system.



## Highlights of *The Final Report on the Southwest Michigan Employer Resource Network Expansion (SWMERN-E) Project*

### Project Overview

- **Grantee:** W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research
- **Intervention Focus Area:** Employer Engagement / Sector Strategies
- **Target Population:** Employers and their incumbent workers
- **Area Served:** Branch, St. Joseph, Kalamazoo and Calhoun counties, MI
- **Congressional District:** MI-3<sup>rd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>

**Grant Round:** Round 2

### Evaluation Overview

- **Evaluation Types** Implementation, Outcomes and Cost
- **Evaluator Organization:** SPR
- **Date of Final Report:** July 2019
- **Title:** *Engaging Employers, Incumbent Workers and Jobseekers*

### Evaluation Period

- November 2015 – July 2019

*This brief, one of a series highlighting findings from final Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) evaluation reports, <sup>34</sup> summarizes information from the study conducted by SPR on the Southwest Michigan Employer Resource Network Expansion (SWMERN-E) Project.*

W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research used its WIF grant (a Type A project for new and untested ideas) to expand the reach and services of an Employer Resource Network in Michigan. Employer Resource Networks are private-public groups whose goal is reduced absenteeism and retention through support of employees. The Southwest Michigan Employer Resource Network (SWMERN-E) project was already established in two counties and the goal with the WIF grant was to expand into two additional counties, and from 10 to 25 employer members. Using WIF grant funds, SWMERN-E also provided various services for incumbent workers, including success coaching and leadership, supervisory and occupational skills, and recruiting and training jobseekers to fill available job career pathways for retention and succession planning. Building collaborative relationships with the public workforce system was another goal of the project, along with engaging with member organizations to build career pathways for employees. SWMERN-E made services such as onsite success coaches, career coaching and support for career advancement through short-term occupational skills training available to member organizations. The project expanded the network to include 29 new members, beyond the original goal of 25. 141 jobseekers received training through the WIF grant, 201 incumbent workers received short term classroom training and 170 received on-the-job (OJT) training.

The evaluation included implementation, outcomes and cost studies. One goal of the evaluation was to assess the effectiveness of the model in reducing absenteeism and employee turnover at member organizations. However, assessing change in member companies' absenteeism and retention rates over time was challenged by low response rates, difficulties administering the employer survey, and unavailability of employee data from firms. Through employer and participant surveys, the evaluation concluded that the expanded model provided necessary resources that employers could use to aid their workforce. The services and training provided soft skills and occupational skills training and OJT to assist new employees to be successful in their new positions. Participants were satisfied or very satisfied with the training and resources. Employers also reported value in networking with one another and working collectively across firms to identify retention challenges in the local community.

The evaluator noted several conclusions about the project and further research. These included: 1) the findings contribute to the knowledge base on interventions for low-skilled, entry-level workers which may be valuable in understanding how best to support those placed in employment but still needing support; 2) the model may provide useful information for those designing workforce interventions for adults, dislocated workers and youth to help inform how to connect employers and their employees to needed resources.

<sup>34</sup> Under the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF), the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) provided 43 competitive grants to States, regions, Tribal entities and localities to design and evaluate new approaches in the public workforce system. Using a "tiered evidence" model (which builds on past research), WIF projects tested a variety of new service combinations, technological innovations, and systems changes (with a focus on program coordination and integration). ETA required grantees to procure independent third-party evaluations to document project implementation, costs, and results, all in order to inform future experimentation and to promote continuous improvement in operations and performance in the public workforce system.



## Highlights of *The Final Report on the New Orleans Office of Workforce Development's Career Pathways Program*

### Project Overview

- **Grantee:** New Orleans Office of Workforce Development (LA)
- **Intervention Focus Area:** Career Pathways
- **Target Population:** Unemployed Individuals, Underemployed Workers, Discouraged Workers
- **Area Served:** New Orleans, LA
- **Congressional District:** LA 2<sup>nd</sup>
- **Grant Round:** Round 2

### Evaluation Overview

- **Evaluation Types:** Implementation, RCT, and Cost Study
- **Evaluator Organization:** RAND
- **Date of Final Report:** September 2019
- **Title:** *Effectiveness of Pre-Screened, Demand-Driven Job Training Programs for Disadvantaged Workers: An Evaluation of the New Orleans Career Pathway Training*

### Evaluation Period

- August 2016 – April 2019

*This brief, one of a series highlighting findings from final Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) evaluation reports,<sup>35</sup> summarizes information from the study conducted by RAND Corporation on the New Orleans Career Pathways program.*

The New Orleans Office of Workforce Development (OWD) used its WIF grant (a Type B project for “promising Ideas”) to design, implement, and test the Career Pathways program. The program name was shortened from “Summer Career Pathways” to “Career Pathways” when the program expanded to serve multiple cohorts year-round instead of one cohort each summer. Career Pathways was designed to help lower-skilled individuals train for and find jobs in advanced manufacturing, energy, health care, and information technology fields. The program’s main components are: 1) rigorous screening system; 2) career pathways training that incorporate stackable credentials; and 3) coordination for connecting trainees to employers. For the training component, there were 367 participants in 25 cohorts who were offered two rounds of training and a subsidy to cover materials and training related costs. The first round of training was a two-month classroom-based training, followed by an optional second “stackable” credit training. Of the 83% of participants who attended at least one session of the first training, 77.8% completed the training, for an overall completion rate of 64.4%. Attendance at the second training was lower at 20 percent.

The evaluation consisted of an implementation study, a randomized control trial study, and a cost study. Data sources for the evaluation included stakeholder interviews and focus groups, program documents, program data, administrative employment and earnings data, surveys, and criminal justice records. Findings included the following:

- OWD transitioned from relying on external partners (e.g., businesses in the hospitality and leisure field and local cultural partners) for recruitment to overseeing the responsibilities internally, with support from a contractor.
- The screening process became more rigorous over time. The process eventually included a two-day orientation, a 45-minute interview to assess interested candidates’ likelihood of completing the program, and basic skills assessments.
- Participation and completion rates were high. About 83% of individuals in the training group attended at least one class. The overall completion rate was about 64%.
- There were positive program impacts on earnings; however, there were no statistically significant impacts on the likelihood of being employed or persisting in a job.
- Individuals who were unemployed and who had lower earnings when they started the training had the largest increases in earnings compared to control group members.

The evaluator offered several recommendations for implementing similar projects in the future. These included: 1) integrate more hands-on learning opportunities; 2) make sure that there are strong connections between the training programs and the local labor market; and 3) clearly communicate to participants the full range of program benefits and supports available.

<sup>35</sup> Under the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF), the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) provided 43 competitive grants to States, regions, Tribal entities and localities to design and evaluate new approaches in the public workforce system. Using a “tiered evidence” model (which builds on past research), WIF projects tested a variety of new service combinations, technological innovations, and systems changes (with a focus on program coordination and integration). ETA required grantees to procure independent third-party evaluations to document project implementation, costs, and results, all in order to inform future experimentation and to promote continuous improvement in operations and performance in the public workforce system.



## Highlights of *The Final Report on the Virginia Community Colleges System's Virginia Financial Success Network (VFSN)*

### Project Overview

- **Grantee:** Virginia Community Colleges System
- **Intervention Focus Area:** Cross-System Coordination
- **Target Population:** Adult and Dislocated Worker WIOA participants
- **Area Served:** State of Virginia
- **Congressional District:** VA 1<sup>st</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup>
- **Grant Round:** Round 2

### Evaluation Overview

- **Evaluation Types** RCT, Implementation, Cost-Effectiveness
- **Evaluator Organization:** Public Policy Associates, Incorporated
- **Date of Final Report:** September 2019
- **Title:** *Virginia Financial Success Network Final Evaluation Report*

### Evaluation Period

- October 2015 – September 2017

*This brief, one of a series highlighting findings from final Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) evaluation reports,<sup>36</sup> summarizes information from the study conducted by Public Policy Associates, Incorporated on the Virginia Financial Success Network (VFSN).*

The Virginia Community Colleges System used its WIF grant (a Type C project for adapting proven ideas) to design, implement and test the Virginia Financial Success Network (VFSN). Through the VFSN, WIOA adult and dislocated workers were offered a range of services at American Job Centers, including workforce and education, income support, and financial services (including access to a financial coach). The evaluation included an implementation study, impact study, and cost study, and used data from interviews with key stakeholders, observations, focus groups, surveys, administrative data, and wage records. Findings included the following:

- While many aspects of the project were implemented as designed, VFSN had challenges with some of the program components: 1) the program operated at a somewhat smaller scale than planned (falling short of the 1,800 enrollment goal by approximately 300); 2) one of the financial tools – The Benefit Bank® - was delayed and not all components were developed; 3) support services were underutilized; and 4) the take-up of financial coaching was much lower than expected – with only 57 percent of participants meeting at least once with a coach.
- While VFSN established effective working relationships, and most participants reported positive experiences with the program, VFSN will not continue to be implemented at the state level. However, some regional workforce boards expressed interest in implementing some version of VFSN locally.
- VFSN did not have an impact on education attainment, employment, wages, or net worth. Further, service intensity did not lead to impacts on most outcomes, though receipt of more coaching sessions was associated an increase in the likelihood of earning a credential and increasing individual and household income.
- The average cost per VFSN participant was \$7,900 – approximately 50 percent more than standard adult and dislocated worker WIOA service costs. VFSN costs varied by region, ranging from a two-year average of \$2,139 to \$12,353 per participant.

The evaluator offered several recommendations for implementing similar projects in the future. These included: 1) implement a small-scale pilot prior to full implementation and assess customer motivation to set realistic targets; 2) secure staff buy-in and reduce turnover to the extent possible; 3) develop accountability measures; 4) hire financial coaches with experience with financial services and resources as well as the workforce system context; 5) offer additional support services; 6) plan for shorter-term, flexible coaching services; 7) encourage high levels of participation; and 8) build in a mechanism for capturing credit scores beyond participant self-reports.

<sup>36</sup> Under the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF), the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) provided 43 competitive grants to States, regions, Tribal entities and localities to design and evaluate new approaches in the public workforce system. Using a “tiered evidence” model (which builds on past research), WIF projects tested a variety of new service combinations, technological innovations, and systems changes (with a focus on program coordination and integration). ETA required grantees to procure independent third-party evaluations to document project implementation, costs, and results, all in order to inform future experimentation and to promote continuous improvement in operations and performance in the public workforce system.



## Highlights of *The Final Report on Monterey County Economic Development Department and Workforce Development Board's Youth Ambassadors for Peace Project*

### Project Overview

- **Grantee:** Monterey County Economic Development Department and Workforce Development Board
- **Intervention Focus Area:** Case Management /Counseling/ Coaching
- **Target Population:** Youth formerly involved in or at-risk of becoming involved in gang activity or the criminal justice system, Youth who are academically truant
- **Area Served:** Monterey County, CA
- **Congressional District:** CA 20<sup>th</sup>
- **Grant Round:** Round 2

### Evaluation Overview

- **Evaluation Types:** Implementation, Outcomes, and Cost Study
- **Evaluator Organization:** Social Policy Research Associates
- **Date of Final Report:** September 2019
- **Title:** Engaging Opportunity Youth: Final Report for the Monterey County Youth Ambassadors for Peace

### Evaluation Period

- October 2015 – April 2019

*This brief, one of a series highlighting findings from final Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) evaluation reports,<sup>37</sup> summarizes information from the study conducted by Social Policy Research Associates on the Youth Ambassadors for Peace (YAP) program.*

The Monterey County Economic Development Department and Workforce Development Board used its WIF grant (a Type A project for new and untested ideas) to design, implement, and test the Youth Ambassadors for Peace program. The YAP program aimed to increase the employability of youth who were disconnected from education and employment. Over the course of 18 months, YAP participants received a range of services including assessments, work readiness and life skills training, case management, and work-based learning. YAP participants also received financial incentives for completion of program milestones. Out of the 167 youth enrolled in YAP, 120 youth were included in the evaluation study.

Evaluation of the YAP program consisted of an implementation study, an outcomes study, and a cost study. Data for the evaluation came from site visits, pre- and post-program participant surveys, program documents, program data, and administrative data from the California Department of Justice. Findings included the following:

- Developing strong relationships with community stakeholders was crucial for successfully recruiting and enrolling youth in the program's targeted population.
- Establishing connections with employers willing to serve as host sites for work-based learning experiences can be difficult.
- Using an individual-level service delivery strategy, rather than a cohort model, allowed the program to meet the needs of the youth it served.
- Most of the youth in the study received a financial incentive for actively engaging in and completing program activities.

The evaluator offered several recommendations for implementing similar projects in the future. These included: 1) build relationships with key community organizations that can serve as referral partners prior to starting program enrollment; 2) lay the groundwork for developing work-based learning placements in addition to securing the funding to subsidize it; and 3) modifications to the program service model may be needed to meet the needs to the target youth population.

<sup>37</sup> Under the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF), the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) provided 43 competitive grants to States, regions, Tribal entities and localities to design and evaluate new approaches in the public workforce system. Using a "tiered evidence" model (which builds on past research), WIF projects tested a variety of new service combinations, technological innovations, and systems changes (with a focus on program coordination and integration). ETA required grantees to procure independent third-party evaluations to document project implementation, costs, and results, all in order to inform future experimentation and to promote continuous improvement in operations and performance in the public workforce system.

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## Highlights of *The Final Report on the Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board’s Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative*

### Project Overview

- **Grantee:** Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board
- **Intervention Focus Area:** Work-Based Learning/ Subsidized Employment/ Apprenticeship
- **Target Population:** Unemployed and underemployed job seekers and manufacturing employers
- **Area Served:** Eastern Connecticut
- **Congressional District:** CT 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>
- **Grant Round:** Round 3

### Evaluation Overview

- **Evaluation Types:** Implementation, Outcomes and Cost
- **Evaluator Organization:** Public Policy Associates
- **Date of Final Report:** September 2019
- **Title:** *Final Evaluation Report Eastern Connecticut Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative*

### Evaluation Period

- 2016 - 2019

*This brief, one of a series highlighting findings from final Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) evaluation reports,<sup>38</sup> summarizes information from the study conducted by Public Policy Associates on the Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board (EWIB) Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative (MPI).*

The Connecticut Department of Labor used its WIF grant (Type A, new and untested ideas) to fund the EWIB’s Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative. A goal of the MPI is to enhance collaboration and alignment of workforce programs to target employer needs through customized training, ensuring training and services are aligned with available jobs, and increasing the commitment from employers in hiring. A second goal of the MPI is to strengthen the quality of American Job Center services by using high quality assessment tools and case management methods and by working directly with employers to identify training needs in growing industry areas. Designed in large part as a response to the needs of General Dynamics/Electric Boat (a major supplier of submarines to the U.S. Navy) for 5,000 new employees to fill manufacturing positions to meet output requirements from major Defense contracts, the MPI provided quick-turnaround training and a method for recruiting, assessing, screening and preparing candidates for employment in this advanced manufacturing area. In addition to General Dynamics/Electric Boat, EWIB’s partners included other manufacturing employers, community colleges, technical high schools and workforce development organizations to carry out the MPI. The MPI program was comprised of 5 stages (recruitment/assessment, basic skills and work readiness, customized skills training, supportive services and on the job training), with participants completing only those stages appropriate for their job training/seeking needs. With the WIF grant, MPI enrolled just over 700 participants in 40 skills training classes. Participants spent approximately 18 weeks from registration with the MPI to completion. 598 participants completed the program and earned a credential.

The evaluation of the program found that the MPI met the needs of employers by providing needed employees, and that the MPI was effective at transitioning job seekers with little to no manufacturing experience to manufacturing employment in a short amount of time. The study found that the engagement of employers in the design of the program and the commitment of all partners involved toward a common goal were key elements of the program’s outcomes. MPI participants benefited from the program by obtaining industry-recognized credentials, employment, and increased earnings.

The evaluator shared conclusions and offered recommendations which included: 1) an employer-demand effort the size of the MPI required deep involvement by all partners, characterized by ongoing communication, joint problem solving, effective negotiation and a project culture of open engagement and unity of purpose; 2) short-term occupation skills training courses along with supports helped with retention and completion for unemployed and underemployed adult workers. Employers were satisfied with the quality of the workers they hired; 3) significant employer involvement in curriculum development enabled participants to learn much of what they needed as new hires.

<sup>38</sup> Under the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF), the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) provided 43 competitive grants to States, regions, Tribal entities and localities to design and evaluate new approaches in the public workforce system. Using a “tiered evidence” model (which builds on past research), WIF projects tested a variety of new service combinations, technological innovations, and systems changes (with a focus on program coordination and integration). ETA required grantees to procure independent third-party evaluations to document project implementation, costs, and results, all in order to inform future experimentation and to promote continuous improvement in operations and performance in the public workforce system.



## Highlights of *The Final Report on Kansas Department of Commerce's Workforce Innovation Fund Project*

### Project Overview

- **Grantee:** Kansas Department of Commerce
- **Intervention Focus Area:** Cross-System Coordination
- **Target Population:** Workforce System Providers; Job Seekers with Barriers to Employment

### Area Served: Kansas

- **Congressional District:** KS 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, & 4<sup>th</sup>
- **Grant Round:** Round 3

### Evaluation Overview

- **Evaluation Types:** Implementation, Outcomes, and Cost Study
- **Evaluator Organization:** Public Policy Associates, Inc.
- **Date of Final Report:** September 30, 2019
- **Title:** *Evaluation of the Kansas Workforce Innovation Fund: Final Report*

### Evaluation Period

- May 2016 – March 2019

*This brief, one of a series highlighting findings from final Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) evaluation reports,<sup>39</sup> summarizes information from the study conducted by Public Policy Associates on the Kansas Workforce Innovation Fund project.*

The Kansas Department of Commerce used its WIF grant (a Type A project for new and untested ideas) to design, implement, and evaluate the effectiveness of cross-system training, along with other activities. The aim of the WIF project was to strengthen the service delivery and improve workforce system alignment in order to improve customer experience and outcomes. Key partners for the project included the Kansas Department for Children and Families, the Kansas Board of Regents, the Kansas Department of Labor, and all five local workforce development boards in Kansas. The WIF project activities included: develop and conduct cross-system training for workforce staff, assisting job seekers with on-the-job (OJT) placements and co-enrollment in partner services, and build an online portal (ReEmployKS) to support customer access to partners and their services.

The evaluation consisted of an outcomes study, implementation study, and cost study. Data sources for the evaluation included site visits, observations of cross-system training, interviews with staff and employers, participant survey, as well as program and administrative data. Findings included the following:

- A lack of a communication plan and structure for collaboration among the partner agencies caused challenges early in the grant implementation. Once a communication plan was put in place, communication between partner agencies improved.
- The ReEmployKS online portal, including a mobile app, for job seekers was successfully developed and launched. ReEmployKS is expected to be maintained beyond the WIF grant.
- A total of 19 in-person cross-system trainings were conducted with a total of 513 workforce staff in attendance. Staff who attended the training reported being satisfied with the training and found it valuable.
- Program enrollment and on-the-job training (OJT) placements were highest toward the end of the grant period. Enrollments exceeded the planned goal, with 240 participants enrolled. However, the percentage of participants who started and completed an OJT placement was 43 and 58 percent, lower than the planned targets of 80 and 70 percent. A little over three-quarter of employers interviewed (21 of 27) reported that the OJT placement met their performance standards. However, less than half of employers interviewed (41%) reported that they still employed their OJT placement.

The evaluator offered several recommendations for implementing similar projects in the future. These included: 1) establish the value proposition of the initiative for each partner to ensure greater buy-in; 2) share best practices for enhancing OJTs across the system; 3) invest time in educating employers about OJTs; and 4) designate a dedicated staff to monitor the relevancy of training content.

<sup>39</sup> Under the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF), the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) provided 43 competitive grants to States, regions, Tribal entities and localities to design and evaluate new approaches in the public workforce system. Using a “tiered evidence” model (which builds on past research), WIF projects tested a variety of new service combinations, technological innovations, and systems changes (with a focus on program coordination and integration). ETA required grantees to procure independent third-party evaluations to document project implementation, costs, and results, all in order to inform future experimentation and to promote continuous improvement in operations and performance in the public workforce system.



## Highlights of *The Final Report on Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry's Micro-credentials: Opportunities through Stackable Achievements Project*

### Project Overview

- **Grantee:** PA Department of Labor and Industry
- **Intervention Focus Area:** Career Pathways
- **Target Population:** Students with Barriers to Education and Employment
- **Area Served:** Allegheny, Bucks, Delaware, Montgomery, Northampton, Lehigh, Philadelphia, and Westmoreland Counties, Pennsylvania
- **Congressional District:** PA 1<sup>st</sup>-, 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, & 17<sup>th</sup>
- **Grant Round:** Round 3

### Evaluation Overview

- **Evaluation Types:** Implementation, outcomes, and Cost Study
- **Evaluator Organization:** Thomas P. Miller & Associates
- **Date of Final Report:** September 2019
- **Title:** *Final Evaluation Report 2019*

### Evaluation Period

- May 2016 – May 2019

*This brief, one of a series highlighting findings from final Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) evaluation reports,<sup>40</sup> summarizes information from the study conducted by Thomas P. Miller & Associates on the Micro-Credentials: Opportunities through Stackable Achievements project.*

The Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry used its WIF grant (a Type A project for new and untested ideas) to design, implement and test the Micro-credentials: Opportunities through Stackable Achievements project. The project was implemented by partnerships between the local community colleges and workforce development boards (WDB) in seven workforce areas. The aim of the project was to create opportunities for students with barriers to education and employment to earn credentials within a short timeframe. Each partnership worked closely with local employers to develop micro-credentials programs, using a career pathways model. All micro-credential programs embedded instruction on technical and soft skills into the curriculum and provided students with support services. Overall, total of 700 individuals were enrolled in 19 micro-credential pathways offered across the seven partnerships.

The evaluation consisted of an implementation study, outcomes study, and cost study. Data came from in-person interviews and focus groups, surveys, a curriculum study and review, program documents, and administrative and wage data from the PA Center for Workforce Information and Analytics. Findings included the following:

- The partnerships made modifications and adjustments to the original project model throughout the grant period in order to meet the needs of students and employers.
- Collaboration within the partnerships as well as between partnerships and employers facilitated the development of curricula and micro-credentials that met local needs.
- Most participants (80.1%) enrolled in one micro-credential pathway. A small portion of participants enrolled in two or three pathways (14.5% and 4.7%, respectively). Most participants (92.1% of participants) completed at least one micro-credential.
- Participants who completed at least one micro-credential and were employed 12 months before and 3- or 6-months after the program experienced an increase in wages.

The evaluator offered several recommendations for implementing similar projects in the future. These included: 1) hire or identify specialized staff early in the grant period to help the project to meet grant timelines; 2) create opportunities for collaboration and sharing across the partnerships; 3) explore innovative methods for engaging employer partners; 4) document institutional knowledge throughout the grant to counteract possible delays due to staff turnover; 5) leverage existing resources and structures within partner organizations; 6) prioritize the needs to the target population; and 7) develop marketing strategies early in the grant period.

<sup>40</sup> Under the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF), the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) provided 43 competitive grants to States, regions, Tribal entities and localities to design and evaluate new approaches in the public workforce system. Using a “tiered evidence” model (which builds on past research), WIF projects tested a variety of new service combinations, technological innovations, and systems changes (with a focus on program coordination and integration). ETA required grantees to procure independent third-party evaluations to document project implementation, costs, and results, all in order to inform future experimentation and to promote continuous improvement in operations and performance in the public workforce system.



## Highlights of *The Final Report on the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development's Workforce Innovation Fund Project*

### Project Overview

- **Grantee:** Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development
- **Intervention Focus Area:** MIS Changes and Technological Innovation
- **Target Population:** Career Seekers; Employers; Workforce System Staff and Partners
- **Area Served:** Minnesota
- **Congressional District:** MN 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, & 7<sup>th</sup>
- **Grant Round:** Round 3

### Evaluation Overview

- **Evaluation Types:** Implementation, Outcomes, and Cost Study
- **Evaluator Organization:** IMPAQ International, LLC
- **Date of Final Report:** September 2019
- **Title:** *Evaluation of the Minnesota DEED Workforce Innovation Grant: Final Report*

### Evaluation Period

- May 2017 – April 2019

*This brief, one of a series highlighting findings from final Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) evaluation reports,<sup>41</sup> summarizes information from the study conducted by the IMPAQ International, LLC on the Minnesota DEED WIF project.*

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) used its WIF grant (a Type A project for new and untested ideas) to design, implement, and evaluate an online platform. The new platform was designed to be a one-stop-shop for labor market tools and information for both career seekers and employers in Minnesota. Three main design components of the new platform were: integration of workforce system tools and resources (e.g., job postings, workshop listings, and career planning resources); use of a modern interface with customized content; and support for collaboration and communication among workforce system staff, partner organizations, career seekers, and employers. In 2017, the new platform was integrated into the CareerForce branding initiative; thus, adopting the name CareerForceMN.com. The evaluation consisted of an implementation study, outcomes study, and cost study. Data sources included program documents, interviews with project stakeholders, administrative data, and surveys of career seekers, employers, and workforce system staff. Findings included the following:

- Engagement of and support from key stakeholders throughout all phases of the project was a critical part of the WIF project's success. Early advocates for the WIF project included staff from partners and DEED Divisional Leadership. During the build phase, the WIF project team engaged 130 DEED staff and other stakeholders through discovery sessions and workgroups.
- Using an agile design approach, the platform vendor completed a series of two-week sprints to develop and deploy CareerForceMN.com functionality.
- A higher percentage of employers reported "some interaction" with the workforce system after the platform launch. However, the portion of employers who reported being "not at all satisfied" also increased.
- A total of 101,674 visitors accessed the platform between November 2018 and May 2019. On average, visitors accessed 4.62 pages per session.
- A total of 6,362 users created an account on CareerForceMN.com between November 2018 and April 2019. On average, approximately 1,000 new accounts were created each month.

The evaluator offered several recommendations for implementing similar projects in the future. These included: 1) develop a system for continuous feedback to gather input from diverse user groups; 2) prioritize the development of a single sign-on system to facilitate integration of the platform with related workforce portals and partner websites; and 3) maintain robust training and outreach to workforce staff and partners.

<sup>41</sup> Under the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF), the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) provided 43 competitive grants to States, regions, Tribal entities and localities to design and evaluate new approaches in the public workforce system. Using a "tiered evidence" model (which builds on past research), WIF projects tested a variety of new service combinations, technological innovations, and systems changes (with a focus on program coordination and integration). ETA required grantees to procure independent third-party evaluations to document project implementation, costs, and results, all in order to inform future experimentation and to promote continuous improvement in operations and performance in the public workforce system.



## Highlights of *The Evaluation of Inter-Tribal Council of Louisiana's Southcentral Region Free Flowing Workforce Project*

### Project Overview

- **Grantee:** Inter-Tribal Council of Louisiana
- **Intervention Focus Area:** Career Pathways
- **Target Population:** Tribal members from the areas served who are unemployed/underemployed, low-income, youth or living with disabilities
- **Area Served:** South-central Region Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, and Texas
- **Congressional Districts:** LA, MS, AR, TX
- **Grant Round:** Round 3

### Evaluation Overview

- **Evaluation Types:** Process Study
- **Evaluator Organization:** Pierite Group
- **Date of Final Report:** September 2019
- **Title:** *Evaluation Report Inter-Tribal Council of Louisiana WIF Grant*

### Evaluation Period

- 2015-2019

*This brief, one of a series highlighting findings from final Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) evaluation reports,<sup>42</sup> summarizes information from the study conducted by the Pierite Group (and the Q Marketing Group) on the Workforce Innovation Grant of the Inter-Tribal Council of Louisiana.*

The Inter-Tribal Council of Louisiana used its WIF grant (a Type A project for new and untested ideas) in partnership with a consortium of WIOA Section 166 programs – the Urban Inter-Tribal Center of Texas (UITCT), Alabama Coshatta Workforce (ACW), the American Indian Center of Arkansas (AICA), and the Mississippi Band of Choctaw (MBC) – to implement the Southcentral Region Free Flowing Workforce project, an effort to address the structural unemployment facing Native Americans. Through the partnership, the aim of the project is to enable job-seekers access to employment opportunities in various job markets across WIOA Section 166 service providers and geographic areas in several states (South-central Region Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, and Texas). Using a Career Pathways model, the project was designed to provide wrap around, education based, industry focused job training services with multiple entry/exit points that align with regional employer needs. Enhanced support services were intended to provide participants with information about relocation to different regions with viable employment opportunities and to support participants in the transition to new areas so that they can pursue training and placement into employment in those areas. A key aspect of the project was to design and build an integrated workforce development tool that would enable the various Councils involved to enter and track participant information. The project intended to serve 955 participants through the 3-year project period, with a total of 394 finding employment.

The evaluation was intended to be a process study, using data from project documents, observations, surveys, and interviews with key stakeholders. However, the final report includes a series of tabulations from responses to a survey conducted with the staff from the partner organizations, with a short discussion of these descriptive statistics. There is no information about the number of participants in the program. From the survey results, the evaluator reports:

- Related to the topic of how the Councils were able to target and engage participants, the survey shows that the program infrastructure was put in place, but the program experienced a lack of participants. The report does not include participant numbers.
- Regarding the types of programs and services provided to participants, the survey shows that very few participants were opting to relocate to other areas.
- With regard to the centralized data system, only one Council fully implemented the system.

The evaluator offers the following recommendations: 1) for similar projects, the development of a fully functional database that all partners can use is necessary; 2) case workers need sufficient training and knowledge in order to assist participants effectively; and 3) each sub-grantee, partner Council organization should develop a one-day program to showcase and offer services.

<sup>42</sup> Under the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF), the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) provided 43 competitive grants to States, regions, Tribal entities and localities to design and evaluate new approaches in the public workforce system. Using a “tiered evidence” model (which builds on past research), WIF projects tested a variety of new service combinations, technological innovations, and systems changes (with a focus on program coordination and integration). ETA required grantees to procure independent third-party evaluations to document project implementation, costs, and results, all in order to inform future experimentation and to promote continuous improvement in operations and performance in the public workforce system.



## Highlights of *The Final Report on the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services' Wage Pathways Program*

### Project Overview

- **Grantee:** Ohio Department of Job and Family Services
- **Intervention Focus Area:** Case Management /Counseling/ Coaching
- **Target Population:** Youth aged 18-24 disconnected from workforce
- **Area Served:** Ohio Counties – Cuyahoga, Ashtabula, Ottawa and Summit
- **Congressional District:** OH-9<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>
- **Grant Round:** Round 3

### Evaluation Overview

- **Evaluation Types:** Implementation, Outcomes, Cost
- **Evaluator Organization:** Ohio State University
- **Date of Final Report:** September 2019
- **Title:** *Evaluation Report of Ohio's Wage Pathways Program*

### Evaluation Period

- July 2016 – September 2019

*This brief, one of a series highlighting findings from final Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) evaluation reports,<sup>43</sup> summarizes information from the study conducted by Ohio State University on the Wage Pathways Program.*

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services used its WIF grant (a Type A project for new and untested ideas) to implement and test the Wage Pathways Program, developed as a component of the state's Comprehensive Case Management and Employment program (CCMEP). CCMEP is the state-wide workforce and support programs aimed at addressing underemployment, barriers to employment and skills attainment for youth. Wage Pathways offered additional incentives and support beyond that provided under CCMEP. A goal of Wage Pathways was to provide to youth ages 18 – 24 disconnected from the work force a quick route to employment, services to support the participant post placement and earnings advancement in a job. Program components included comprehensive case management to help participants become "work-ready," personal finance and budgeting instruction, information about the labor market and developing work habits, job coaching after employment placement, short term training opportunities and work-related financial incentives to encourage employment retention, increases in wages, and placement in high-demand jobs. As the primary differentiator with the CCMEP suite of offerings, the incentives were intended to motivate participants towards jobs or employment advances in a variety of ways. The evaluation report shows that across the 4 counties, there were 679 Wage Pathways participants.

The evaluation included implementation, outcomes and cost studies, and used data from project documents, observations, a survey, and interviews with staff, as well as incorporation of administrative data. Findings included the following:

- The implementation study concluded that the Wage Pathways model was implemented with fidelity to the primary elements of its intended design. The study found some variation among the sites in how aspects of the model were implemented. For example, the WP "Tool" and Financial Management and budget calculation tools were not regularly used with participants, and the cash incentive was not typically accompanied by a plan with specific steps for advancement.
- The level of rigor required for the evaluation was a pre- and post-outcomes study, but the evaluator opted to pursue a higher level of rigor, approaching the WP sites as "experimental" as compared to the areas in the state that did not implement WP. The evaluation's quantitative analysis found a statistically significant effect of the Wage Pathways program on participant earnings. Evaluators estimated that effect at approximately \$500 annually.
- The cost study found that, once one county with very low participation is removed, and which was disproportionately affecting the calculation, the Wage Pathways program cost of about \$450 per eligible participant.

The evaluator offered a number of conclusions about the evaluation and implications for the future. The evaluator finds that the WP program has promise, and indicates that even if the positive results decrease in the second and third years after participation, that the benefit in the form of higher earnings for participants will likely exceed the costs of the program.

<sup>43</sup> Under the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF), the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) provided 43 competitive grants to States, regions, Tribal entities and localities to design and evaluate new approaches in the public workforce system. Using a "tiered evidence" model (which builds on past research), WIF projects tested a variety of new service combinations, technological innovations, and systems changes (with a focus on program coordination and integration). ETA required grantees to procure independent third-party evaluations to document project implementation, costs, and results, all in order to inform future experimentation and to promote continuous improvement in operations and performance in the public workforce system.

## Appendix B. List of All WIF Projects

### B.1 Round 1 WIF Grants

Project Name	Grantee (State)	WIF Project Type	Intervention Category	Evaluation Types	Brief Description of Intervention
Accelerated Training for Illinois Manufacturing (ATIM)	Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (IL)	C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employer Engagement / Sector Strategies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RCT</li> <li>Implementation</li> <li>Cost</li> </ul>	Provided accelerated training for WIA-eligible adults to prepare for and be placed in employment in advanced manufacturing.
Accelerating Connections to Employment (ACE)	Baltimore County Department of Employment and Workforce Development (MD)	C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Career Pathways</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RCT</li> <li>Implementation</li> </ul>	Combined basic skills and occupational skills training in locally in-demand occupations in health care, transportation and logistics, and industries specific to the local area. Intensive support mechanisms helped participants manage the training process, access related available support, and in their transition from training to employment.
Career Connect	Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership (IL)	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MIS Changes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outcome</li> <li>Implementation</li> </ul>	Set out to design and implement an integrated workforce management information system—Career Connect—that would house comprehensive program and client-specific information, as well as information on performance measures across funding streams, resulting in accomplishment of the long-term goals to improve economic outcomes for jobseekers and employers, broaden economic gains across Cook County, and help increase coordination across funding streams in the field of workforce development. For several reasons, the Partnership was able to accomplish only part of its intended project.
Chelsea CONNECT	Metro North Regional Employment Board (MA)	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cross-System Coordination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outcome</li> <li>Implementation</li> </ul>	Coordinated and co-located services in the areas of employment, financial education, financial services, skill development, and income and housing stabilization to improve employment, education, and financial outcomes of low-wage, low-skilled, and unemployed individuals.

Project Name	Grantee (State)	WIF Project Type	Intervention Category	Evaluation Types	Brief Description of Intervention
Electronic Ohio Means Jobs (OMJ)	Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (OH)	C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technological Innovation (New Online/Remote Services)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RCT</li> <li>Implementation</li> </ul>	Designed to be an online virtual service delivery portal that provided internet-based employment services available in One-Stop Centers (e.g., job searches, resume writing, labor market information, and access to workshops) to residents through a “self-serve” portal.
Employment Support Center (ESC)	Pasco-Hernando Workforce Board, Inc. (FL)	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technological Innovation (New Online/Remote Services)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>QED</li> <li>Implementation</li> <li>Cost</li> </ul>	Expanded the Employment Support Center (ESC) to improve phone-based outreach and to provide resources and employment-related assistance, job referrals, as well as informational videos on topics related to job search strategies and an expanded social media presence with the goal to increase services provision and information to remotely located job seekers.
GRIC Career Pathways (GRIC CP)	Gila River Indian Community (GRIC) (AZ)	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Career Pathways</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outcome</li> <li>Implementation</li> </ul>	Provided training for GRIC members in five high-growth industries – Hospitality, Construction, Fire Department, Small Business Development, and Healthcare – linking occupational skill and basic skills education, including an educational “coaching” program designed to help participants meet the basic educational thresholds required for the given sector training program, and eventual employment after training completion.
Housing and Employment Navigator Program	WorkForce Central (WA)	B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case Management /Counseling/ Coaching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RCT</li> <li>Implementation</li> </ul>	Provided intensive case management, including assistance accessing relevant workforce and other services such as housing and social benefit programs, for homeless families in which the head of the household was interested in career development and employment.

Project Name	Grantee (State)	WIF Project Type	Intervention Category	Evaluation Types	Brief Description of Intervention
Housing Works	Worksystems, Inc. (OR)	B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case Management /Counseling/ Coaching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>QED</li> <li>Implementation</li> </ul>	Provided streamlined workforce services for public housing residents such as career mapping workshops, individual resource planning sessions, a life skills/basic skills course, job preparation as well as opportunities for internships and on-the-job training and to better prepare residents for in-demand careers in construction, healthcare, manufacturing, and office work.
Linking Innovation, Knowledge, and Employment (@LIKE)	Riverside County Economic Development Agency (CA)	B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case Management /Counseling/ Coaching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>QED</li> <li>Implementation</li> <li>Cost</li> </ul>	Designed collaboratively by three California WIBs, provided services through a case management approach in five general areas: life coaching, career exploration, education, employment, and work readiness preparation to low-income, disconnected youth aged 18 - 22.
Los Angeles Reconnections Career Academy (LARCA)	City of Los Angeles (CA)	C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Career Pathways</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RCT</li> <li>Implementation</li> <li>Cost</li> </ul>	Provided youth with education, training and employment services, alongside case management and other supportive services, using a career pathways model. Training in areas such as construction, green technology, and health care offered youth the opportunity to earn college credit or industry-recognized credentials. Education services (e.g., tutoring, assistance enrolling in programs leading to a secondary education credential), employment services (e.g., paid work experience, employment search and placement services), and services designed to support education, training, and employment (e.g., case management, assessments, financial literacy training, work readiness training) rounded out the program.

Project Name	Grantee (State)	WIF Project Type	Intervention Category	Evaluation Types	Brief Description of Intervention
Made Right Here	Three Rivers Workforce Investment Board (PA)	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work-Based Learning/ Subsidized Employment/ Apprenticeship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outcome</li> <li>Implementation</li> </ul>	Designed to provide participants with the skills necessary to earn a living as modern “makers” (i.e., independent inventors, designers, and artisans who often work independently to invent and create) and developed an apprenticeship program that integrated classroom and on-the-job training, organized apprentices into teams that addressed problems across specialized areas, and culminated in a Maker Professional certificate.
Managing for Success	Newark Workforce Investment Board (NJ)	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MIS Changes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outcome</li> <li>Implementation</li> </ul>	Originally conceived as an MIS that integrated data from various agency sources, the grantee was unable to build Managing for Success as planned. Instead, the grantee created a data sharing agreement with New Jersey’s Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJ DLWD) to obtain access to some individual-level customer data in order to better understand the demographic characteristics of the individuals they serve. To improve customer services and client performance, NWIB encouraged staff performance through team-building activities, sustained outreach to staff from NWIB staff, and awards luncheons.
Metro-Atlanta WIA Consortium Project to Aid the Long-Term Unemployed	DeKalb County (GA)	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work-Based Learning/ Subsidized Employment/ Apprenticeship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outcome</li> <li>Implementation</li> </ul>	Working with staffing agencies, such as Manpower, the project placed jobseekers who had been unemployed for at least a year into subsidized job placements for up to six months. The project subsidized workers’ wages as an incentive for employers to hire and train them.

Project Name	Grantee (State)	WIF Project Type	Intervention Category	Evaluation Types	Brief Description of Intervention
Ohio Business Resource Network (BRN) Expansion	Workforce Initiative Association (OH)	B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employer Engagement / Sector Strategies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>QED</li> <li>Implementation</li> </ul>	Helped businesses access critical services to maintain and/or create jobs in the local economy by: identifying area businesses either at risk of laying off workers or that had the potential to grow and fuel demand for additional workers; interviewing identified businesses to assess their strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and threats; developing a comprehensive proposal containing offers of assistance from one or more of the 200+ organizations that served as BRN partners.
Oh-Penn Pathways to Competitiveness (P2C)	West Central Job Partnership, Inc. (OH, PA)	B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work-Based Learning/ Subsidized Employment/ Apprenticeship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>QED</li> <li>Outcome</li> <li>Implementation</li> </ul>	Expanded the cross-state region's manufacturing pipeline, developed manufacturing career pathways, increased enrollment in manufacturing-related training and credential attainment, with the goals to improve employer satisfaction with job candidates, and to improve employment outcomes of job seekers.
On-Ramps to Career Pathways (ORCP)	Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (RI)	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cross-System Coordination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>QED</li> <li>Implementation</li> </ul>	Included two components: (1) a systems change effort to reallocate resources and reconfigure policies to support the implementation of this new set of services; and (2) On-Ramps Pilot aimed to develop and implement work readiness training, work experience, and career coaching.
Orange County Information Technology Cluster Competitiveness Project (ITCCP)	Orange County Workforce Investment Board (CA)	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employer Engagement / Sector Strategies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outcome</li> <li>Implementation</li> <li>Cost</li> </ul>	Implemented three pilots designed to (1) engage and educate K-12 students about IT careers; (2) provide training to meet the needs of IT employers; and (3) place students and veterans in internships.
Project Growing Regional Opportunity for the Workforce (Project GROW)	Border Workforce Alliance (TX)	B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cross-System Coordination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>QED</li> <li>Implementation</li> <li>Cost</li> </ul>	Accelerated credentialing, employment, and career advancement for in-demand occupations among low-skilled adults through local coordination among WIB training contractors, community colleges, local employers, and non-profit career training providers along the Texas-Mexico border.

Project Name	Grantee (State)	WIF Project Type	Intervention Category	Evaluation Types	Brief Description of Intervention
Silicon Valley Alliance for Language Learners' Education and Success Innovation Initiative (SV ALLIES)	San Mateo County (CA)	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross-System Coordination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outcome</li> <li>• Implementation</li> <li>• Cost</li> </ul>	Assisted adult English learners to succeed in family-sustaining careers by (1) building a system to coordinate and align the activities of multiple stakeholders that provide education, training, and employment opportunities for English learners; and (2) pilot new program services that blended English instruction and workforce readiness skills.
Skills Wisconsin	Workforce Development Board of South Central Wisconsin (WI)	B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employer Engagement / Sector Strategies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• QED</li> <li>• Outcome</li> <li>• Implementation</li> </ul>	Improved communication and coordination among workforce development stakeholders by (1) implementing a cloud-based customer relationship management application; and (2) providing training on a demand-driven approach to workforce development staff; and (3) enhancing industry partnerships and developing new training curricula.
Startup Quest	CareerSource North Central Florida (Alachua Bradford Regional Workforce Board) (FL)	C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entrepreneurship Training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RCT</li> <li>• Implementation</li> </ul>	Provided a 10-session entrepreneurial training that offered participants (1) an introduction to the process required to form a startup, and (2) the opportunity to work with a team and entrepreneurial mentor to develop and present a commercialization strategy for an innovative technology. The program was targeted at unemployed/underemployed workers with an associate degree or above to provide the knowledge, skills, and confidence to help participants start and operate their own business or find wage/salary employment.

Project Name	Grantee (State)	WIF Project Type	Intervention Category	Evaluation Types	Brief Description of Intervention
Steps Up to STEM	Fulton, Montgomery, and Schoharie Counties Workforce Development Board, Inc. (NY)	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work-Based Learning/ Subsidized Employment/ Apprenticeship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outcome</li> <li>Implementation</li> <li>Cost</li> </ul>	Increased awareness of and access to STEM careers and training opportunities and developed the key component of the approach - individualized career plans— which are three-way agreements among workforce areas, jobseekers, and employers. The career plans focused on two steps of participant training, which could include a mix of pre-hire classroom training, on-the-job training, and customized training.
TechSF Workforce Innovation Partnership	San Francisco Office of Economic and Workforce Development (CA)	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technological Innovation (New Online/Remote Services)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outcome</li> <li>Implementation</li> </ul>	Consisted of both systems-level and participant service-level projects. The systems-level projects (CoLab, txt2wrk, and an employer engagement initiative) developed new relationships among IT stakeholders and implemented improvements in the local workforce development system, such as an effort at a job-search phone app. The participant service-level project included technical training in networking, tech support, programming, and multimedia services, career management workshops, and project-based and employer-supported based learning opportunities all geared at placing San Francisco residents in local IT jobs.
Utah and Montana Next Generation Labor Exchange (GenLEX) Initiative	Utah Department of Workforce Services (UT)	B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technological Innovation (New Online/Remote Services)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RCT</li> <li>QED</li> <li>Implementation</li> </ul>	Promoted the use of self-service job matching in order to reduce reliance on staff services, lower per-participant costs, provide jobseekers with better connection to career pathways and related education opportunities, and introduce performance measures that more accurately measured the labor exchange system's success.

Project Name	Grantee (State)	WIF Project Type	Intervention Category	Evaluation Types	Brief Description of Intervention
Virginia Employment through Entrepreneurship Consortium (VETEC)	The SkillSource Group, Inc. (VA)	C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entrepreneurship Training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RCT</li> <li>• Implementation</li> </ul>	<p>Provided comprehensive entrepreneurship and self-employment training, mentoring, and technical assistance to WIA/WIOA-eligible adults and dislocated workers interested in starting small businesses and attaining long-term financial self-sufficiency through self-employment in three Virginia local workforce investment areas.</p>

## B.2 Round 2 WIF Grants

Project Name	Grantee (State)	WIF Project Type	Intervention Category	Evaluation Types	Brief Description of Intervention
Breaking Barriers in San Diego	San Diego Workforce Partnership Inc.	B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case Management /Counseling/ Coaching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RCT</li> <li>Implementation</li> <li>Cost</li> </ul>	Improved the employment outcomes of low-income individuals with disabilities in San Diego County, CA, through an Individual Placement and Support (IPS) approach. Provided program participants with career counseling, job search assistance, personalized benefits counseling, supportive services referrals, and follow-along service once participants found a job placement.
Bridge to Employment and Academic Marketplace (BEAM)	Workforce Investment Board of Herkimer, Madison and Oneida Counties (NY)	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case Management /Counseling/ Coaching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RCT</li> <li>Implementation</li> <li>Cost</li> </ul>	Assisted economically disadvantaged adults in their return to and completion of postsecondary training or education through intensive case management provided by Outreach Coordinators.
Career Jump Start Program	Northwest Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board (NWPACONNECT) (PA)	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case Management /Counseling/ Coaching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outcome</li> <li>Implementation</li> <li>Cost</li> </ul>	Provided targeted job seekers with one or more barriers to employment with intensive case management services to reduce barriers to employment, and occupational skills training offered by the Pennsylvania State University Behrend at no cost.
CareerSource Florida/Performance Funding Model	Florida Department of Economic Development (FL)	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technological Innovation (New Online/Remote Services)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outcome / QED</li> <li>Implementation</li> <li>Cost</li> </ul>	Implemented the Performance Funding Model (PFM), a resource-distribution strategy used to reward local workforce development boards (LWDBs) for their performance relative to seven performance metrics. In implementing the PFM, CareerSource Florida's aim was to incentivize change and motivate local board leadership to increase efficiency and effectiveness.
Code Louisville	KentuckianaWorks (KY)	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technological Innovation (New Online/Remote Services)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>QED</li> <li>Implementation</li> <li>Cost</li> </ul>	Provided participants with training in computer software development (coding) using online software to conduct the training, rather than the more common classroom style training, and included a mentoring component in small groups.
Los Angeles Regional Initiative for Social Enterprise (LA:RISE)	City of LA (CA)	B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work-Based Learning/ Subsidized Employment/ Apprenticeship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RCT</li> <li>Implementation</li> <li>Cost</li> </ul>	Brought together and provided supports to a network of partners who delivered training and assessment services, support services, and employment placement services to individuals facing barriers to employment.

Project Name	Grantee (State)	WIF Project Type	Intervention Category	Evaluation Types	Brief Description of Intervention
Rethinking Job Search (formerly Job Growers, Incite)	Willamette Workforce Partnership (OR)	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case Management/Counseling/Coaching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>QED</li> <li>Implementation</li> <li>Cost</li> </ul>	Facilitators provided workshops to teach the benefits of cognitive-behavioral techniques (CBT) to job seekers receiving Unemployment Insurance (UI). The aim of the 12 two-hour workshops (average class size was 8 participants) was to enhance job seeker motivation and self-efficacy related to job search activities, which would ultimately improve employment outcomes.
Southwest Michigan Employer Resource Network – Expanded (SWMERN-E)	W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research (MI)	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employer Engagement / Sector Strategies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outcome</li> <li>Implementation</li> <li>Cost</li> </ul>	Expanded its network into two additional Michigan counties, increased the number of employer members and offered services to employer members' employees such as success coaching, leadership, supervisory and occupational skills, and recruiting and training to help retain workers.
(Summer) Career Pathways	City of New Orleans (LA)	B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Career Pathways</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RCT</li> <li>Implementation</li> <li>Cost</li> </ul>	Training for lower-skilled individuals to find jobs in advanced manufacturing, energy, health care, and information technology fields. The program's main components were: (1) rigorous screening system; (2) career pathways training that incorporated stackable credentials; and (3) coordination for connecting trainees to employers.
Virginia Financial Success Network	Virginia Community College System (VA)	C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cross-System Coordination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RCT</li> <li>Implementation</li> <li>Cost</li> </ul>	Offered WIOA adult and dislocated workers a range of services at American Job Centers, including workforce and education, income support, and financial services (including access to a financial coach).
Youth Ambassadors for Peace	Monterey County WIB (CA)	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case Management/Counseling/Coaching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outcome</li> <li>Implementation</li> <li>Cost</li> </ul>	Provided a variety of services including case management, work readiness and life skills training, and other support services to youth aged 16-24 who were disconnected from education and employment in order to increase their employability.

### B.3 Round 3 WIF Grants

Project Name	Grantee (State)	WIF Project Type	Intervention Category	Evaluation Types	Brief Description of Intervention
Eastern Connecticut Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative	Connecticut Department of Labor (CT)	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work-Based Learning/ Subsidized Employment/ Apprenticeship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outcome</li> <li>Implementation</li> <li>Cost</li> </ul>	Provided quick-turnaround training and a method for recruiting, assessing, screening and preparing candidates for employment in the advanced manufacturing area, meeting the needs of employers for trained workers, and the needs of job seekers for employment.
Kansas WIF	Kansas Department of Commerce (KS)	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cross-System Coordination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outcome</li> <li>Implementation</li> <li>Cost</li> </ul>	Strengthened service delivery and improved workforce system alignment in Kansas in order to improve workforce customer experience and outcomes. Key project activities included: developed and conducted cross-system training for workforce staff, assisted job seekers with on-the-job (OJT) placements and co-enrollment in partner services, and built/launched an online portal (ReEmployKS) to support customer access to partners and their services.
Micro-credentials: Opportunity through Stackable Achievements	Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry (PA)	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Career Pathways</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outcome</li> <li>Implementation</li> <li>Cost</li> </ul>	Provided opportunities for students with barriers to education and employment to earn credentials within a short timeframe. Partnerships between community colleges and workforce development boards worked closely with local employers to develop micro-credentials programs, using a career pathways model, at each local community college. All micro-credential programs embedded instruction on technical and soft skills into the curriculum and provided students with support services.
Minnesota WIF Project (CareerForceMN.com)	Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (MN)	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MIS Changes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outcome</li> <li>Implementation</li> <li>Cost</li> </ul>	Designed and implemented a new, innovative online platform, CareerForceMN.com, a web-based one-stop-shop for labor market tools and information for both career seekers and employers in Minnesota.
Southcentral Region Free Flowing Workforce	Inter-Tribal Council of Louisiana, Inc. (LA)	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Career Pathways</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outcome</li> </ul>	Designed to provide wrap around, education based, industry focused job training services with multiple entry/exit points that align with regional employer needs. Enhanced support services were intended to provide participants with information about relocation to different regions with viable employment opportunities and to support participants in the transition to new areas so that they can pursue training and placement into employment in those areas.
Wage Pathway Model	Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (OH)	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case Management /Counseling/ Coaching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>QED</li> <li>Implementation</li> <li>Cost</li> </ul>	Offered incentives and additional support to youth aged 18- 24 to help them with a quicker route to employment, and to retain and advance in jobs.

Source: WIF Final Evaluation Reports

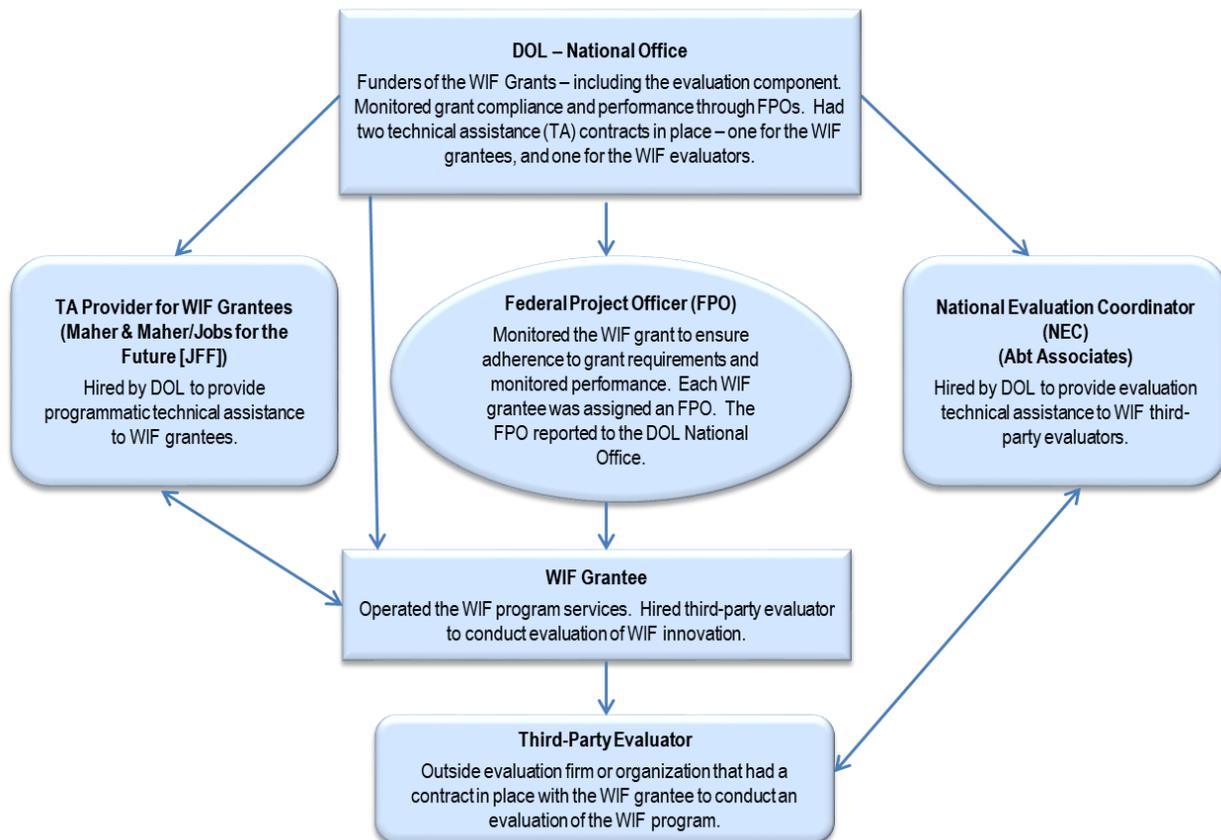
## Appendix C. WIF Background and Context Materials

This appendix provides background and context information in regard to the WIF evaluations. Included here are: 1) a description and graphic presentation on roles and responsibilities in administering WIF grants and evaluations (including provision of technical assistance), 2) excerpts concerning evaluation from the three different solicitations for grant applications (called a Funding Opportunity Announcement or FOA in Round, and 3) an overview of the WIF National Evaluation Coordinator (NEC) review of final evaluation reports, summarizing the factors the NEC used for review of each report element.

### C.1 Roles and Responsibilities in Regard to WIF Grants and Third-Party Evaluations

The WIF grants were administered under ETA's program and grants management office, which performed key policy and oversight roles, while Federal Project Officers (FPOs) in ETA's six regions were responsible for oversight of the grants. As described in Chapter 1, ETA also provided technical assistance for implementation of the intervention and for the evaluation, through two contractors: 1) Maher and Maher/Jobs For the Future and 2) Abt Associates, which served as the WIF NEC. These roles and responsibilities are shown graphically in the exhibit below:

**Exhibit C-1. Roles and Responsibilities in WIF**



## Programmatic Technical Assistance

The WIF grantees were responsible for implementing the WIF intervention, as well as procuring and overseeing the WIF evaluation. To help grantees implement their projects, ETA selected the team of Maher & Maher and Jobs for the Future (JFF) to serve as the technical assistance provider. The Maher/JFF team consisted of subject-matter experts, who provided programmatic technical assistance in regard to a variety of challenges related to recruitment and enrollment, service design and implementation, and sustainability, among other topics. Technical assistance was provided through site visits and webinars, as well as through presentations and by facilitating dialogue and information exchange among grantees, at several ETA-sponsored grantee conferences.

## Evaluation Technical Assistance

In addition to implementing the intervention, WIF grantees were also responsible for funding (through their WIF grant) and overseeing the third-party evaluations. This required grantees to develop an initial evaluation design in their grant application; solicit and procure a third-party evaluator; and support evaluation activities, such as providing data and assuring that critical evaluation documents (including a design report and final evaluation report) were produced during the grant's period of performance. The WIF grantees had varying levels of experience with evaluation. Some grantees had overseen numerous evaluations; for others, WIF was their first experience with program evaluation.

To support the evaluation activities associated with WIF, ETA selected Abt Associates to serve as the National Evaluation Coordinator (NEC). In this role the Abt team, comprised of evaluation experts, provided assistance to ETA, WIF grantees, and the third-party evaluators, with the overarching goal of promoting evaluations of the highest possible quality and rigor. The NEC was involved in multiple activities related to implementation of the evaluation component of the WIF grants, including:

- Clarifying standards of rigor appropriate for the different types of evaluations in the WIF Solicitation for Grant Applications. Since no set of evaluation standards for workforce development research existed at the time the WIF grants, the NEC developed a set of standards, using the What Works Clearinghouse and i3 standards as a guide.<sup>44</sup>
- Reviewing and providing advice to ETA on the quality of proposed evaluation plans in the first two rounds of grant proposals;
- Delivering webinars and in-person presentations on various aspects of evaluation, including on different types of evaluations according to the level of rigor (i.e., guidelines or expectations for evaluation practices) and on methods and issues that evaluators needed to address, such as data privacy and security, informed consent, and dissemination options.
- Producing a multi-chapter guidebook on evaluation for WIF grantees and evaluators, and creating a dedicated web page for sharing the guidebook, as well detailed briefs on different aspects of evaluation, recorded webinars and slides, and a place for posting and sharing comments.

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<sup>44</sup> At the time of WIF Round 1 grant awards, DOL was developing but had not yet announced the Clearinghouse for Labor Evaluation and Research (CLEAR). Launched in July 2014, CLEAR is an archive of workforce evaluations and research. For impact studies, CLEAR uses a set of standards to assess the strength of the evaluation methodology design and execution.

- After award, assisting WIF grantees in regard to “Request for Proposal” language that could be used to solicit secure third-party evaluators;
- In addition, the NEC provided evaluators with several written guides, including a reference list and brief literature review describing the evidence base for each intervention category, and guidance on production of a final report.
- Reviewing and providing feedback to ETA on *Evaluation Design Reports* for each grant, in order to support and strengthen the designs that all third-party evaluators were required to submit. Draft evaluation design reports were reviewed by a team of two NEC evaluation experts, on a set of predefined factors (such as scope, logic model; data sources; sampling plans, and analytical methods) and the reviews were shared with the evaluators and ETA. When necessary, the NEC asked evaluators to address the concerns it identified and resubmit their report for re-review. Once the reports were approved—or approved with minor “reservations” (how the What Works Clearinghouse describes concerns)—then evaluators could begin their evaluation activities.
- Providing one-on-one technical assistance, upon request. Some evaluators took up the offer of technical assistance and worked closely with the NEC, others did not.
- Monitoring and documenting each evaluation’s progress, and updating ETA on problems with evaluation design, implementation, analysis methods, and timing; and provide guidance and support to address problems. The WIF NEC monitored progress of the evaluations through periodic emails and calls with evaluators, also sometimes providing specific technical assistance and guidance to address issues or questions. Evaluators were not required to report to the NEC, however; it had to rely on them to disclose problems or deviations from the approved evaluation design.
- Providing guidance to evaluators on production of the final report, including key dates for completion and on elements of quality reports.

In sum, the WIF NEC worked closely with ETA, and with evaluators and grantees to provide evaluation technical assistance to promote development of quality evaluations of WIF grants. Ultimately, each third-party evaluation firm was responsible for conducting the evaluation and producing a final report, as required under the contract with its WIF grantee, who was responsible, under the grant agreement with ETA, for ensuring that there was an adequate *Final Evaluation Report* on their WIF project.

## C.2 Excerpts from Solicitation for Grant Applications (SGAs) and Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA)

The excerpts below from the Round 1, 2 and 3 solicitations and are offered here to provide background information on project types, and evaluation requirements.

### WIF Round 1<sup>45</sup>:

#### I. Funding Opportunity Description...

##### D. Integrating Evaluation into Grant Activities: Three Project Types

One of the overarching goals of the Workforce Innovation Fund is to build evidence-based practices in the workforce development field. Therefore, every grant application must include a budget, design, and implementation plan for an appropriate third-party evaluation to be funded as part of the grant. We expect that the innovation strategies proposed under the Fund will fall on a continuum – some might be new ideas that have never been tried, while others might be well-tested ideas that applicants plan to adapt to new contexts. Since the appropriate evaluation strategy will depend on the degree to which the strategy has previously been tested, we have created three project types. Applicants must identify the project type in their technical proposal and include an evaluation strategy that falls into one of the following three project types:

**Project Type A: New and Untested Ideas** – If you are proposing new or emerging structural and/or service delivery reform ideas that have been tried in limited circumstances (if at all) but are supported by strong logic models and/or successful outcomes data, you should apply as Project Type A. ETA and the public workforce system will want to learn whether or not such ideas can be implemented, how, and at what cost. In proposing such a project, it will be particularly important that you construct a strong logic model showing the underlying theory of how your strategy will produce your intended outcomes and how you will demonstrate cost savings or cost effectiveness. You should also describe any prior implementation of the idea if the idea has been carried out in any manner. The proposed evaluation strategy should consist of at least collection and analysis of process, output, and outcome data, and if feasible within the financial constraints, a rigorous method to evaluate impact.

Proposals under Project Type A must range in size from \$1 – 3 million dollars, and evaluation costs must be no more than 20 percent of the total.

**Project Type B: Promising Ideas** – If you are proposing structural and/or service delivery reform ideas that have been implemented and tested previously, and the testing indicates some potential for success and that more rigorous evaluation is needed, you should apply as Project Type B. ETA and the workforce system will want to learn more about the strategy's effectiveness. In proposing such a project, you must include positive evidence of effectiveness and past success. The cited evidence may consist of a variety of studies ranging from a simple pre-post data analysis or return on investment analysis to a study that includes an impact evaluation that employs a comparison group design. Your proposed evaluation strategy should be of a higher level of rigor than the evidence cited in the proposal, and should include the most rigorous strategy available to demonstrate impact given the financial constraints; such as a comparison group or random assignment (where applicable).

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<sup>45</sup> This can be found at: <https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ETA/grants/pdfs/SGA-DFA-PY-11-05.pdf>

Proposals under Project Type B must range in size from \$3 – 6 million dollars, and evaluation costs must be no more than 20 percent of the total.

**Project Type C: Adapting Proven Ideas** – If you are proposing structural and/or service delivery projects that a) further develop ideas that are already supported by strong evidence and/or b) take ideas supported by strong evidence to a larger scale, you should apply as Project Type C. For example, you may propose a service, product and/or a system change previously shown to be effective for one target group that you might now plan to offer to additional groups. In your application, you must cite existing evidence showing a positive significant effect and provide compelling arguments for the need and potential for success in expanding the scale of the proposed service, product and/or system change for a broader customer base. Your proposed evaluation strategy must consist of the highest level of evaluation rigor that is applicable to the proposed project. For example, the highest level of rigor for a service delivery innovation that is directly focused on participant outcomes is a random assignment study, while the highest level of rigor for a structural innovation may be a quasi-experimental evaluation. All proposed evaluations under project type C must include designing and conducting a minimum 12-month follow-up of program participants upon completion of services.

Proposals under Project Type C must range in size from \$6 – \$12 million dollars, and evaluation costs must be no more than 20 percent of the total.

## **WIF Round 2 SGA<sup>46</sup>**

### **I. Funding Opportunity Description...**

#### **D. Tiered Evidence Framework for Fund Allocation and Required Evaluation Activities**

A critical design element of the WIF is its tiered structure that links the amount of funding that an applicant may receive to the amount and quality of existing scholarly, research-based evidence to support the efficacy of the proposed project. Applicants proposing new and untested practices are eligible to receive relatively small grants that support the development and evaluation of promising practices and help to identify new solutions to pressing challenges; applicants proposing practices supported by existing evidence from rigorous evaluations, such as large randomized controlled trial studies, are eligible to receive sizable grants to support significant expansion of those practices. This structure encourages applicants to build evidence of effectiveness of their proposed projects and supports evidence-based Federal investments.

All WIF projects are required to evaluate the effectiveness of the innovation proposed. All WIF grantees must use part of their budgets to conduct independent evaluations (as defined in this notice) of their projects. The projects and their evaluations must build upon and expand the current research literature by evaluating the proposed innovation using methods of higher rigor than the current evidence base for the innovation. This ensures that projects funded under the WIF contribute significantly to improving the information available to practitioners and policymakers about which structural and service delivery strategies work, for whom they work, and in what contexts they work.

The Department awards three types of grants under this program as described below:

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<sup>46</sup> The solicitation can be found at: <https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ETA/grants/pdfs/SGA-DFA-PY-13-06.pdf>

Project Type A: New and Untested Ideas – Grants awarded for Project Type A provide funding to support the development of service delivery or system reform ideas that are supported by a strong logic model but whose efficacy has not been systematically studied. Projects proposed under this category should support new and more effective strategies for addressing widely shared challenges, and proposals and project documents should clearly state how the reform is a departure from existing workforce strategies. Type A projects are innovative, relatively untested, and significant to the broader workforce investment system.

Project Type B: Promising Ideas – Grants awarded for Project Type B provide funding to support structural and/or service delivery reform ideas that either 1) have been implemented and evaluated previously, where evaluation results indicate some potential for positive impacts on participant or system-wide outcomes; or 2) are supported by strong evidence of positive change, but have never before been implemented by the applicant. Projects that are new to the applicant, but have been implemented elsewhere and evaluated using: 1) pre-post data analysis showing statistically significant positive change; 2) quasi-experimental evaluation showing statistically significant positive change; and/or 3) random assignment impact evaluation showing statistically significant positive change should be proposed as Project Type B. These grants will expand knowledge about the projects' efficacy and provide more information about the feasibility of implementing proven projects in different contexts.

Project Type C: Adapting or Scaling Proven Ideas – Grants awarded for Project Type C provide funding to support significant expansion of structural and/or service delivery reform ideas that are supported by strong evidence of positive change from randomized controlled trial studies. Please note that applicant must demonstrate prior experience implementing the proposed ideas to qualify as Project Type C.

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### C. Two Phases of Award

All grants awarded under this Solicitation will be funded in two parts. Upon notification of selection, grantees will receive an initial partial award. The remaining balance of the award will be made available no later than September 30, 2015, contingent upon grantee completion of the start-up activities outlined below. Grantees that do not satisfy these Phase I requirements within the set timeframes may not receive the remaining balance of their grant funds. In this circumstance, a grantee would be required to work with ETA to modify the scope of the grant or the grant will be terminated.

1. Required Start-Up Activities and Documentation: In the first twelve months of grant award, grantees must satisfy a start-up series of requirements.

a. Grantees must submit a copy of the executed contract with a qualified third party evaluator (as defined in Section VIII.E.).

b. Grantees must submit an Initial Evaluation Design Report prepared by the evaluator, and a performance data template that lists the performance and evaluation measures and key milestones of the project that is consistent with the program evaluation plan submitted as part of the application, pursuant to Section IV of this SGA. Required elements of the Initial Evaluation Design Report are included in Section VIII.C. The quality, content, and methods of the Initial Evaluation Design Report must be in line with WIF evaluation standards, which are based upon best practices in evaluation. These standards will be provided early in the grant period. Grantees are expected to submit their Initial Evaluation Design Report as early as possible, but no later than nine months after grant award. The WIF National Evaluation

Coordinator (NEC) will assess the quality and content of the Initial Evaluation Design Report to ensure that it meets all standards. The WIF NEC and DOL will provide comments on the Initial Evaluation Design Report and performance data template.

c. Grantees and their third party evaluators must work with the NEC and DOL and respond to comments and direction from the NEC and DOL to strengthen the evaluation design. Grantees and their evaluators are further expected to participate in WIF NEC technical assistance webinars, discussion forums, and to take advantage of the NEC for evaluation technical assistance to support evaluation activities in Phase I and Phase II.

d. Grantees must submit a Final Evaluation Design Report, final performance data template, and final evaluation budget as early as possible, but no later than eleven months after grant award. Grantees must resolve all comments and concerns identified by the WIF NEC and DOL in these final documents.

## 2. Determining Compliance with Phase I Requirements:

Grantees must submit all documentation related to satisfying Phase I requirements to their Federal Project Officer in a timely manner. Grantees are expected to submit their Initial Evaluation Design Report as early as possible, but no later than nine months after grant award, to allow time for the NEC to review and provide comments so the grantee may respond to those comments and integrate them into the final evaluation design report and final performance data template. ETA will confirm that the grantee has met all Phase I requirements, including both submitting the materials on time and in compliance with the WIF NEC evaluation standards specified above, before making available the balance of the grant funds. Grantees that can complete Phase I requirements sooner than the prescribed deadlines are strongly encouraged to do so.

### **WIF Round 3: Funding Opportunity Announcement**

*Evaluation:* As with the prior WIF grants, all grantees in this round are required to evaluate the effectiveness of their project, using part of their budgets for an independent evaluation. The purpose of the evaluation is to ensure that states gain meaningful information about whether their approach worked well and which aspects worked best, and to inform other states' future workforce system changes. This round of projects will focus on exploring innovative strategies or interventions, whether new, expanded in size, scope or scale, or significantly changed from what was previously tested or implemented, either by the applicant or others. All projects will still need to be based on a "logic model" and proposals also will need to include a short Preliminary Evaluation Design, Budget and Procurement Plan (described in section below on required attachments). As in previous rounds of WIF grants, a qualified third-party evaluator must be used, and high-quality data and evaluation practices will continue to be required.

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***Preliminary Evaluation Design, Budget, and Procurement Plan:*** This attachment does not impact scoring of the application. This attachment is limited to five (5) pages, 12-point font with one inch margins. The plan must include the following:

- Brief statement describing the innovation;
- Overview of preliminary ideas for the evaluation design;
- Brief list of the key questions or issues that the evaluation will address;

- Short description of the types of analysis that will be conducted, including, for example, a Cost Allocation Analysis and Cost-Effectiveness Analysis (see the Attachment B for descriptions);
- Description of the data to be used and their sources;
- Preliminary milestones for conducting and completing the evaluation within the grant period of performance;
- List of deliverables and dissemination activities, including, for example, interim and final reports, briefings and presentations;
- Budget for the evaluation in tabular form; and
- Brief description and timeline of the planned procurement that demonstrates how they will assure that:
  - A qualified third- party evaluator will be procured; and
  - The grantee conforms to the assurances in Attachment A (e.g., timely submission of their draft and final Evaluation Design Report).

**C.3 Summary of WIF NEC Final Report Review Factors**

The NEC used a Final Report Review Form to critique a range of evaluation characteristics that could affect a report’s readability and an evaluation’s reliability. The table below displays the factors included in that form to assess the *WIF Final Evaluation Reports* within five broad categories: (1) report organization, clarity, and readability; (2) intervention overview and context; (3) outcome/impact study; (4) implementation study; and (5) cost study. For each factor, the NEC reviewers assessed whether the report sufficiently addressed or met the factor, and provided comments or recommendations for improvement where relevant.

**Exhibit C-2. Review Factors – WIF Final Evaluation Reports**

Review Form Category	Factor from Review Form
<b>Report</b>	
<b>Organization, Clarity, and Readability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report includes a table of contents.</li> <li>• Report contains a clear and concise executive summary and an abstract.</li> <li>• Report chapters and/or sections are properly introduced, well organized, and easy to follow.</li> <li>• The report is free of major spelling and grammatical errors.</li> <li>• Report is accessible to a non-technical audience.</li> <li>• Where relevant, claims are substantiated with empirical evidence and/or citations to relevant literature.</li> <li>• The report includes the required DOL disclaimer.</li> </ul>
<b>Intervention</b>	
<b>Intervention Overview and Context</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elements of the intervention that are included in (and excluded from) the evaluation are described. For any elements not evaluated, reasons for exclusion are provided.</li> <li>• Eligibility/exclusion criteria for program participants are detailed.</li> <li>• The report includes a discussion of the implementation and evaluation timeline(s).</li> <li>• If the timeline in the final report differs from the <i>Evaluation Design Report</i>, NEC Assessment of timeline used in Final Report.</li> <li>• For RCT and QED designs, the report provides a description of the counterfactual condition and describes what it means to be in the treatment or control group (e.g., “control groups cannot access program services but can access other services in the community”).</li> <li>• Report includes and describes the logic model or theory of change.</li> </ul>

Review Form Category	Factor from Review Form
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report includes an appropriate summary of relevant past research (i.e., literature review).</li> </ul>
<b>Outcome/Impact Study</b>	
<b>Study Design</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The report lists and describes all research questions.</li> <li>If the research questions in the final report differ from the <i>Evaluation Design Report</i>, NEC Assessment of research questions used in Final Report.</li> <li>The report identifies outcomes of interest.</li> <li>If the outcomes in the final report differ from the <i>Evaluation Design Report</i>, NEC Assessment of outcomes used in Final Report.</li> <li>The report describes the unit of analysis.</li> <li>The report describes and explains the evaluation design type (e.g., pre-post outcome, QED, RCT).</li> <li>For RCT designs, the report includes a description of the random assignment procedures.</li> <li>For RCT designs, the report discusses fidelity to the random assignment process and discusses any occurrence(s) of cross-overs or other non-random entry into the experimental group.</li> <li>Where relevant, the report demonstrates that the control/comparison group was comparable to the treatment group prior to service delivery, based on relevant participant characteristics (i.e., demonstrates baseline equivalence).</li> </ul>
<b>Data Sources, Collection, and Analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data sources are listed and described for each outcome being measured.</li> <li>If the data sources in the final report differ from the <i>Evaluation Design Report</i>, NEC Assessment of outcomes used in Final Report.</li> <li>Data collection methods—including any primary data collection instruments—are described.</li> <li>For designs with control/comparison groups, outcome data or observations were collected identically for all research groups (i.e., data were collected consistently across the treatment and control groups).</li> <li>The report includes sample sizes. For QEDs and RCTs, sample sizes are provided by group. If subgroup analyses are included, sample sizes are provided by subgroup, and if applicable, by subgroup and treatment group.</li> <li>For QEDs, the report describes comparison group sampling and formation.</li> <li>The report describes the sampling plan.</li> <li>If the sampling plan in the final report differs from the <i>Evaluation Design Report</i>, NEC Assessment of sampling plan used in Final Report.</li> <li>For RCTs, the report addresses attrition—overall and in treatment and control groups.</li> <li>Impact model specifications are clearly described and are appropriate.</li> <li>If the analysis plan in the final report differs from the <i>Evaluation Design Report</i>, NEC Assessment of analysis plan used in Final Report.</li> <li>The report addresses and uses appropriate strategies for dealing with non-response and missing data.</li> <li>Multiple comparisons issues are sufficiently addressed, if appropriate.</li> </ul>
<b>Validity and Threats</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Threats or confounds to validity and their implications are addressed. For example, attrition or non-response bias, selection bias, cross-overs.</li> <li>For QEDs, are there any systematic differences between the treatment and comparison groups?</li> <li>Appropriate strategies to mitigate selection bias were used.</li> </ul>
<b>Findings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Findings are clearly presented for each research question.</li> <li>Findings/conclusions are supported by evidence.</li> <li>Inferences are appropriately made given the level of rigor afforded by the evaluation design.</li> <li>The report describes generalizability of findings and acknowledges any restrictions on generalizability.</li> <li>The report includes a conclusion that summarizes findings and discusses implications of findings.</li> </ul>
<b>Implementation Study</b>	
<b>Study Design</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The report lists and describes all implementation research questions.</li> <li>If the research questions in the final report differ from the <i>Evaluation Design Report</i>, NEC Assessment of research questions used in Final Report.</li> </ul>
<b>Data Sources, Collection, and Analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The report describes data collection methods used for the implementation study.</li> <li>The report describes data collection instruments and data sources for the implementation study.</li> <li>If the data sources in the final report differ from the <i>Evaluation Design Report</i>, NEC Assessment of the data sources used in Final Report.</li> <li>The report describes analysis methods used for the implementation study.</li> </ul>
<b>Findings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The description of the program implementation is sufficiently detailed to understand whether the program was implemented as designed and to provide context for the outcome/impact study.</li> <li>Findings are clearly presented for each implementation research question.</li> <li>Findings/conclusions are supported by evidence (i.e., qualitative and quantitative data).</li> <li>The report includes a conclusion that summarizes findings and discusses implications of findings.</li> </ul>

Review Form Category	Factor from Review Form
<b>Cost Study</b>	
<b>Study Design</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The report lists and describes all cost study research questions.</li> <li>• If the cost study research questions in the final report differ from the <i>Evaluation Design Report</i>, NEC Assessment of research questions used in Final Report.</li> </ul>
<b>Data Sources, Collection, and Analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The report describes data collection methods used for the cost study.</li> <li>• The report describes data collection instruments and data sources for the cost study.</li> <li>• If the data sources in the final report differ from the <i>Evaluation Design Report</i>, NEC Assessment of data sources used in Final Report.</li> <li>• The report describes analysis methods used for the cost study.</li> <li>• The report describes what costs are included in, and what costs are excluded from, the cost study.</li> </ul>
<b>Findings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The cost study is clearly and correctly presented as a cost analysis, cost-effectiveness analysis, or cost-benefit analysis.</li> <li>• The extent to which reported costs are comprehensive is clearly presented. Ideally, costs are comprehensive, meaning all program inputs (administrative/overhead, capital costs, program services, direct support, in-kind and partner support) are included. If not, limitations are clearly stated and reflected in the analysis.</li> <li>• Costs are appropriately contextualized. Intervention costs are normalized to “unit costs” based on the number of participants served. The time period for costs and how this relates to duration of service receipt is specified. For cost-effectiveness and cost-benefit studies, the study outcome(s) against which costs are compared are clearly specified; for cost-benefit studies only, outcome(s) are valued.</li> <li>• The perspective of reported costs is discussed explicitly or is clear from the data collection and analysis description.</li> <li>• The analysis is appropriate for the cost study research question(s).</li> <li>• Findings are clearly presented for each cost study research question.</li> <li>• Findings/conclusions are supported by evidence (i.e., qualitative and quantitative data).</li> <li>• The report includes a conclusion that summarizes findings and discusses implications of findings.</li> </ul>

## Appendix D. Understanding WIF Evaluation Findings

This appendix provides a general overview of evaluation concepts and reviews several factors inherent in evaluation designs and implementation that can affect the findings of an evaluation. The discussion then summarizes results from WIF evaluations, and includes brief summaries of WIF evaluations, arranged in a series of tables by intervention type.

### D.1 Evaluation Concepts Discussion

Understanding and interpreting the WIF evaluation findings requires taking many factors into account, including the evaluation design type, sample sizes, data sources and follow-up periods, statistical significance of the outcome estimates, and the overall strength of the evaluations. Some definitions and discussion about evaluation concepts follow below to provide context and additional information for understanding evaluation findings.<sup>47</sup>

#### D.1.1 Evaluation Design Type

Evaluation design type affects the meaning and interpretation of the outcome or impact estimates. This describes three evaluation design types used in the WIF evaluation: randomized controlled trial, quasi-experimental, and outcome designs. While Chapter 1 discussed basic definitions of these design types, this section provides additional information on how to interpret findings from studies with these designs.

For **randomized controlled trial (RCT)** studies, the impact estimates report the average difference in the outcomes of interest between the treatment group and the comparison group. Because individuals are randomly assigned to either the treatment or control group, they are assumed to be equivalent in both observable and unobservable characteristics. When properly implemented, RCTs estimate the average impacts of the program under study and the impacts can be directly attributed to the program. That is, RCTs allow researchers to examine whether “program X *caused* outcome Y.” Well-run RCTs inform policymakers and practitioners about the effectiveness of a program and allow them to reasonably expect that similar impacts will occur again if the same program is implemented with fidelity with a similar population.

For **quasi-experimental design (QED)** studies, impact estimates are also the difference between and treatment group and comparison group. However, unlike a RC, study participants are not randomly assigned to one of groups—making it likely that there are differences between the groups. Even if it is possible for the groups to be similar among some observed characteristics, there remains a possibility of differences between the two groups in unmeasured or unobservable characteristics. As a result, any observed impact may be due to differences in the composition of the treatment and control group rather than intervention under study. Researchers using a nonequivalent groups design can take steps to ensure that their groups are as similar as possible, but without true random assignment of the study participants to the conditions, the impact estimates could be biased.

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<sup>47</sup> The discussion in this section is drawn from two primary sources: Peter H. Rossi, Mark W. Lipsey, and Howard E. Freeman, 1999. *Evaluation: A Systematic Approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications and Joseph S. Wholey, Harry P. Hatry, Kathryn E. Newcomer, editors.—3rd ed., 2010. *Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

For **outcome** studies, the outcome estimates do not estimate program impact. These estimates indicate, on average, how program participant's outcomes changed over time. These type of studies do not, however, show whether the program caused the change or the change is due to other, external factors. For example, consider an outcome study that finds an increase in employment among study participants from baseline to the end of follow-up period. This increase could be due to the program, but it could also be due to other factors, such as for example changing economic conditions, new employers entering the area, or services not part of the program under study that participants receive. DOL required that Type A WIF interventions, defined as those that were "new and untested ideas" were to be assessed by this evaluation design. Outcome studies should not be interpreted as indicating program effectiveness.

### D.1.2 Sample Sizes

*Sample size* refers to the number of subjects included in the evaluation. Larger sample sizes allow for more precise impact estimates. Apart from considering the baseline sample size (i.e., the number of subjects enrolled into the study), follow-up sample sizes and the difference between the baseline and follow-up sample sizes (i.e., *attrition*) also affect the precision of the findings. If a study experiences high drop-off in the sample size for which data could be collected between baseline and follow-up, and cannot be attributed to a random reason, the estimates are less precise than they would have been if the full sample had been available. In addition, evaluators typically assess whether those subjects for whom they have follow-up data are systematically different from those for whom they do not have follow-up data, often known as response bias. If the groups are different, the study results may be biased.

### D.1.3 Data Sources and Follow-Up Periods

Across the 43 WIF evaluations, results might be based on survey data, program data, national administrative data (such as Unemployment Insurance (UI) records), or other data sources. Regardless of source, three aspects of its data should be considered:

- **Validity:** Do the data actually measure the outcome as intended/as it is defined?
- **Reliability:** Do the data consistently measure the outcome?
- **Sensitivity:** To what extent do the data measure the nuance of the outcome?

Each data source has pros and cons regarding each factor. Evaluation reports should identify the data source(s) on which the findings are based, and they should provide information about these sources.

The *follow-up period* is an important consideration not only in interpreting outcomes, but also in understanding the findings. A follow-up period should be sensible based on the timeline of the intervention. For example, if a training program lasts for 12 months, then measuring its employment effects at six months after study enrollment would be an unfair test of the program. Conversely, if a program lasts 12 months, measuring employment at 18 months could be a fair test and reasonable time frame in which to expect any employment effects to be detectable.

Some data sources are more reliable than others—for example, UI data are collected in the same manner for all individuals within a state and the data are unbiased. Conversely, program administrative data might not be collected consistently across program participants, sites, or grantees; might be incomplete; or might have human data-entry errors.

### D.1.4 Statistical Significance

Statistical significance is the likelihood that any observed impacts or pre-post differences are caused by something other than chance. If an estimate is not statistically significant, then the finding cannot be interpreted as the treatment group having fared any better (or worse) than the comparison group, or for outcome studies, that the post value is in reality different from the pre value. The significance level is an expression of how rare the results are, under the assumption that the null hypothesis (usually no difference) is true. It is usually expressed as a “p-value,” and the lower the p-value, the less likely the results are due purely to chance. Typically, researchers look for p-values of less than .05, meaning there is a less than 5 percent probability that the results are due to chance.

For RCTs and quasi-experimental studies, non-statistically significant results might not necessarily mean that the program did not have an impact. Rather, a lack of findings could be due to evaluation limitations, such as too short a follow-up time period, not enough sample members to detect an impact, or poor quality data. For outcome studies, as discussed above, even if pre-post results are statistically significant, they cannot be attributed to the program.

## D.2 Review of Evaluations Strengths and Challenges, by Evaluation Design Type

The NEC reviewed each of the evaluations to determine the overall strength of the evaluation, based on the research design and how well the evaluation was executed. The review assessed a number of evaluations as having some challenges evaluation execution that affected the reliability of the evaluations. The primary challenges included: program implementation issues which in turn affected the execution of the evaluation; small sample sizes due to recruitment difficulties; and comparison group issues for those evaluations that used a counterfactual. Each evaluation design presents some inherent degree of challenge, and these are discussed below.

### RCTs

Of the thirteen RCTs, eight are considered strong, with findings, and five are noted as having challenges. One evaluation reported substantial control group cross-over to the treatment condition, which occurred, as explained by the evaluator, as a result of a design flaw in the online system (inability to track who used what services) and because of new state policies implemented midstream; another evaluation described challenges in reporting. Incomplete implementation and small sample sizes affected the other three RCTs.

### QEDs

Evaluators experienced a variety of perceived difficulties in carrying out the QED evaluations.<sup>48</sup> Evaluators of WIF interventions reported a number of common issues with QEDs, which included the lack of availability of (useful) comparison group data sources, the way the evaluator defined the treatment group that made outcome comparisons impossible, and follow up timeframes that were too short for full implementation of the quasi-experimental design.

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<sup>48</sup> The Utah and Montana Next Generation Labor Exchange (GenLEX) Initiative Utah and Montana Next Generation Labor Exchange (GenLEX) Initiative Utah and Montana Next Generation Labor Exchange (GenLEX) is included in the count of QEDs, although they also implemented random assignment, as the analytic methods are based on a quasi-experimental design.



Project, Grantee, Area Served, Round	Evaluation Design & Evaluator	Outcomes or Impacts	Evaluation Rigor and Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Los Angeles Reconnections Career Academy (LARCA)</b></li> <li>• City of Los Angeles (CA)</li> <li>• Los Angeles, California</li> <li>• Round 1</li> </ul>	RCT  Social Policy Research Associates	At two years after random assignment, the LARCA program showed positive impacts on enrollment in secondary education, receipt of secondary education credentials, enrollment in post-secondary education, and the number of post-secondary credits attempted. Within one year after RA, participants also earned more credits than control group members. However, the LARCA evaluation did not find positive impacts for employment outcomes.	The LARCA RCT evaluation was well-executed evaluation with no significant weaknesses.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Micro-credentials: Opportunity through Stackable Achievements</b></li> <li>• Pennsylvania Department of Labor &amp; Industry (PA)</li> <li>• 7 Local Workforce Development Board areas in Pennsylvania</li> <li>• Round 3</li> </ul>	Outcome  Thomas P. Miller and Associates	The study found most participants (80 percent) enrolled in one micro-credential pathway, with a small portion of participants enrolled in two or three pathways. Approximately 92 percent of participants completed at least one micro-credential.	Some of the results included duplicate counts of the same person, potentially resulting in biased results.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Southcentral Region Free Flowing Workforce</b></li> <li>• Inter-Tribal Council of Louisiana, Inc. (LA)</li> <li>• South-central Region Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, and Texas</li> <li>• Round 3</li> </ul>	Outcome  The Pierite Group	The final report includes a short discussion of descriptive statistics from a survey conducted with the project partners. The survey results show that very few participants were opting to relocate to other areas, a goal of the intervention. The intervention also aimed to establish a centralized data system to track and coordinate services among the partners; by program end, one partner fully implemented the system.	More information on how the program was implemented is needed. The analysis provided is brief and missing many key elements needed to determine reliability.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>(Summer) Career Pathways</b></li> <li>• City of New Orleans (LA)</li> <li>• Round 2</li> </ul>	RCT  RAND Corporation	The evaluation results showed that the New Orleans Career Pathways had a positive impact on participants' earnings per quarter, with higher increases in earnings for participants in the health care pathway. The study did not find meaningful program impacts on employment, job duration, or arrests. Lastly, the results of a survey of participants suggests that treatment group members were more satisfied with their jobs than control group members.	The study was generally well-executed evaluation design. The survey response rates used to measure job satisfaction were low, with a 26 percent response for training group members and a 9 percent response rate for control group members.

Source: NEC review of WIF evaluations.

## Exhibit D-2. Evaluations of Work-Based Learning Interventions

Project, Grantee, Area Served, Round	Evaluation Design & Evaluator	Outcomes or Impacts	Comments on Rigor and Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Eastern Connecticut Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative</b></li> <li>• Connecticut Department of Labor (CT)</li> <li>• Eastern Connecticut</li> <li>• Round 3</li> </ul>	<p>Outcome</p> <p>Public Policy Associates</p>	<p>The evaluation of the program found that the MPI met the needs of employers by providing needed employees, and that the MPI was effective at transitioning job seekers with little to no manufacturing experience to manufacturing employment in a short amount of time. The study found that the engagement of employers in the design of the program and the commitment of all partners involved toward a common goal were key elements of the programs outcomes. MPI participants benefited from the program by obtaining industry-recognized credentials, employment, and increased earnings.</p>	<p>Limitations of this study were clearly noted by the evaluator, and include possible bias of the outcomes due to the systematically different method for selecting participants for the occupational skills training. Selection bias is also possible, given that participants volunteered for the study.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Los Angeles Regional Initiative for Social Enterprise (LA:RISE)</b></li> <li>• City of LA (CA)</li> <li>• Round 2</li> </ul>	<p>RCT</p> <p>Social Policy Research Associates</p>	<p>LA:RISE had a positive impact on employment during the first three quarters of the follow-up period, but there were no impacts in subsequent quarters. The impacts on employment appear to be closely related to the transitional employment provided by social enterprise (SE) partners. LA:RISE had no impact on earnings over the follow-up period. LA:RISE appears to have had an impact on employment and earnings for participants at two SEs that were part of the high-contrast subgroup (i.e., control group members were not offered any LA:RISE services) and served adults of all ages (as compared to those which served only opportunity youth, 18 to 24). For this high-contrast subgroup, impacts on employment reached a 41-percentage point difference in the quarter after RA and while they decreased, they lasted until the eighth quarter after RA.</p>	<p>The LA:RISE evaluation used a rigorous and well-executed evaluation design. Evaluation participants at three SEs were drawn from participants at programs operated by these SEs, which meant that some control group members may have received some degree of service prior to starting LA:RISE.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Made Right Here</b></li> <li>• Three Rivers Workforce Investment Board (PA)</li> <li>• Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania</li> <li>• Round 1</li> </ul>	<p>Outcome</p> <p>Keystone/ University of CA, Davis; Center for Urban Economic Development/ University of Illinois, Chicago</p>	<p>The outcomes evaluation found that 41 percent of program participants who enrolled had at least one job placement when they left the program and 42 percent of placements were the result of a referral by project staff. Employed participants had an earnings gain of \$1,445 in the quarter after exiting the program compared to the quarter prior to entering the program. 47 firms provided employment placements as part of the project. These firms varied in terms of their level of engagement with the project.</p>	<p>Although the original evaluation design called for examination of a wider range of outcomes, including additional participant outcomes related to employment and education, as well as employer outcomes, these measures were not included in the final report. In addition, the statistical significance of changes in participants' earnings was not reported.</p>

Project, Grantee, Area Served, Round	Evaluation Design & Evaluator	Outcomes or Impacts	Comments on Rigor and Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Metro-Atlanta WIA Consortium Project to Aid the Long-Term Unemployed</b></li> <li>• DeKalb County (GA)</li> <li>• 10 Counties in Georgia</li> <li>• Round 1</li> </ul>	<p>Outcome</p> <p>Research and Evaluation Group</p>	<p>The outcomes evaluation, including the pre-intervention versus post-intervention outcome analysis, was constrained by the number of study participants for whom both a baseline survey and post-intervention survey were completed; pre-intervention and post-intervention data was available for only 17 individuals. The outcome study found no statistically significant findings on employment or earnings.</p>	<p>The reliability of the study was affected by the very small sample size.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Oh-Penn Pathways to Competitiveness (P2C)</b></li> <li>• West Central Job Partnership, Inc. (OH, PA)</li> <li>• Columbiana, Mahoning, and Trumbull Counties, Ohio; Lawrence and Mercer Counties, Pennsylvania</li> <li>• Round 1</li> </ul>	<p>QED Outcome</p> <p>IMPAQ</p>	<p>The QED evaluation suggested positive impacts on employment in manufacturing, overall employment, and wages among previously unemployed men in Ohio during the first year after applying to the public workforce system, but possibly negative impacts on these outcomes for men in Pennsylvania, and women in both states. The outcome study found that the program exceeded its outreach targets, achieving their awareness goals. The follow up study indicated that employers were more satisfied with quality of job candidates than at baseline, and credential attainment generally improved employers' satisfaction with job candidates.</p>	<p>The evaluation of the P2C program is affected by the lack of records of who received P2C services. The treatment group consists of all individuals who received Wagner-Peyser or WIA/WIOA services in the five P2C counties, of whom only a very small proportion will have interacted with the P2C program. Therefore, the impact of the P2C services cannot be determined. In addition, the evaluation was affected by possible crossovers between the treatment and control groups and missing data.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Steps Up to STEM</b></li> <li>• Fulton, Montgomery, and Schoharie Counties Workforce Development Board, Inc. (NY)</li> <li>• 11 Counties in Upstate New York</li> <li>• Round 1</li> </ul>	<p>Outcome</p> <p>Thomas P. Miller and Associates</p>	<p>The outcome study found that Steps Up to STEM improved training participants' wages by an average of \$2.55/hour measured before and after training participation. 66 percent of individuals (97 of 147 individuals) attained their first of two training steps with an additional 16 percent still in the process of that training. Of the 71 participants who had a Step Two Goal, approximately half (35 individuals) obtained their Step Two goal with another 15 percent still progressing through. Steps Up to STEM did not appear to influence job retention, but the analysis was limited due to missing data.</p>	<p>This outcomes study was well executed, though there are several limitations including small sample sizes, an insufficient follow-up period, and missing data for select job retention and wages measures, resulting in biased estimates.</p>

Source: NEC review of WIF evaluations.



## Exhibit D-4. Evaluations of Case Management, Counseling, or Coaching Interventions

Project, Grantee, Area Served, Round	Evaluation Design & Evaluator	Outcomes or Impacts	Comments on Rigor and Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Breaking Barriers in San Diego: The TANF/SSI Disability Transition Project</b></li> <li>• San Diego Workforce Partnership Inc.</li> <li>• San Diego County, California</li> <li>• Round 2</li> </ul>	<p>RCT</p> <p>MDRC/ MEF Associates</p>	<p>The study found that Breaking Barriers did not have a statistically significant impact on any employment or earnings outcomes measured—including ever employed, total earnings, length of employment, hours worked, and hourly wage—or any physical and mental health outcomes.</p>	<p>Interpretations of the impact study results should be limited to the individuals who responded to the 15 month follow-up survey. Results from the survey response bias analysis indicated that: survey respondents had different baseline characteristics than non-respondents. Compared to non-respondents, survey respondents were more likely to have no work experience and be at the lower and upper end of the age range. However, differences in the baseline characteristics between respondents and non-respondents were not statistically significant. The study participants to whom the survey was fielded had statistically significant different baseline characteristics from study participants to whom the survey was not fielded. Compared to the non-fielded sample, the fielded sample consisted of individuals who were less likely to have a mental health disorder, more likely to have at least a high school diploma or GED, and more likely to have a work history.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Bridge to Employment and Academic Marketplace (BEAM)</b></li> <li>• Workforce Investment Board of Herkimer, Madison and Oneida Counties (NY)</li> <li>• 9 Counties in New York</li> <li>• Round 2</li> </ul>	<p>RCT</p> <p>Thomas P. Miller and Associates</p>	<p>The study found that the Guided Career Pipeline intervention did not have a statistically significant impact on participants' educational, employment, or earnings outcomes.</p>	<p>The impact study analysis is underpowered due to the small sample size; limiting the study's ability to detect impacts on outcomes. BEAM was originally projected to enroll 1,800 participants. However, only 401 participants were enrolled in BEAM, with 325 assigned to GCP (treatment condition) and 75 assigned to CCS (control condition).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Career Jump Start Program</b></li> <li>• Northwest Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board (NWPB Connect) (PA)</li> <li>• 6 Counties in Pennsylvania (Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Venango, and Warren)</li> <li>• Round 2</li> </ul>	<p>Outcome</p> <p>IMPAQ</p>	<p>The study found that the program had low completion rates (22 percent) during the evaluation period. A little more than half of participants earned an industry-specific occupational credential. Participants with fewer barriers to employment and better math skills were more likely to earn an occupational credential. About 39 percent of participants that were eligible for a follow-up were employed in the first quarter after exiting the program.</p>	<p>The outcomes study analysis and interpretation of the study findings are limited by the small sample size. The final sample for the outcomes study consisted of 109 participants. Of these 109 participants, 39 were still active in the program by the end of the evaluation period. The small sample size is due to a number of challenges that lead to delays in implementing the full program model.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Housing and Employment Navigator Program</b></li> <li>• WorkForce Central (WA)</li> <li>• Yakima, Whatcom, Skagit and Islands Counties, Washington</li> <li>• Round 1</li> </ul>	<p>RCT</p> <p>Marc Bolan Consulting</p>	<p>The three time points for measuring outcomes for this study indicate that the program has limited effects in the short term but provide suggestive evidence that the program may increase employment in the longer term, with the significantly higher employment rates for Navigator program participants among those who could be observed at least 24 months after randomization.</p>	<p>The evaluation report needed more information whether the treatment and control groups had baseline equivalence and how any attrition could have affected the equivalence of the two groups in the analysis sample.</p>

Project, Grantee, Area Served, Round	Evaluation Design & Evaluator	Outcomes or Impacts	Comments on Rigor and Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Housing Works</b></li> <li>• Worksystems, Inc. (OR)</li> <li>• 5 counties in Oregon</li> <li>• Round 1</li> </ul>	<p>QED</p> <p>Public Policy Associates</p>	<p>The study found that participants were 20 percentage points more likely to be employed in the first quarter after exit than public housing residents who did not participate in the program. Evaluators did not find statistically significant differences in the second or third quarters after exit. These differences may be driven in part by differences in participant characteristics between the two groups.</p>	<p>The survey, which collects data many of the implementation and outcomes, was administered at program exit rather than at a standard follow-up period. Additionally, the survey results had a low response rate of less than 50 percent of program enrollees responded to the survey.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Linking Innovation, Knowledge, and Employment (@LIKE)</b></li> <li>• Riverside County Economic Development Agency (CA)</li> <li>• Riverside, San Bernardino and Imperial Counties, CA</li> <li>• Round 1</li> </ul>	<p>QED</p> <p>IMPAQ</p>	<p>The evaluation findings show positive and statistically significant impacts on several outcomes: placement in unsubsidized employment, attainment of vocational training, completion of high school/GED, and program completion.</p>	<p>The evaluation used a QED with propensity score matching to ensure comparability between the treatment and comparison groups on observable characteristics, and the report provides evidence of this comparability. However, the data are not measured uniformly across the counties in the study or for the treatment and control group.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Rethinking Job Search (formerly Job Growers, Incite)</b></li> <li>• Willamette Workforce Partnership (OR)</li> <li>• Clackamas, Lane, Coos, Lincoln, Deshutes, Klamath, Marion, Yamhill, Jackson, Washington and Multnomah Counties in Oregon</li> <li>• Round 2</li> </ul>	<p>Outcome/ QED</p> <p>Public Policy Associates</p>	<p>The QED of participant outcomes found that Rethinking participants were more likely to be employed in third quarter and fourth quarter after the exit quarter compared to individuals in a matched comparison group. Rethinking participants had a greater likelihood of receiving UI benefits for a shorter duration than individuals in the matched comparison group. Lastly, attending a higher number of program workshops did not increase the likelihood of employment.</p>	<p>For the QED analysis, the evaluator used propensity score matching to mitigate potential selection bias. The PSM model mitigates selection bias by making sure that there is baseline equivalence on observable measures. However, there is still potential that unobserved characteristics not included in the PSM model can bias an individual's self-selection to the program, thereby biasing the results.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Wage Pathway Model to Place Low-Income, Low-Skill Youth and Young Adults in Occupations Leading to In-Demand Jobs</b></li> <li>• Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (OH)</li> <li>• Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Ottawa, Summit and Hamilton Counties in Ohio</li> <li>• Round 3</li> </ul>	<p>Outcome/ QED</p> <p>Ohio State University</p>	<p>The evaluator opted to pursue a higher level of rigor than what was required, approaching the Wage Pathway sites as "experimental" as compared to similar workforce participants in counties in the state that did not implement Wage Pathways. The evaluation found a statistically significant effect of the Wage Pathways program on participant earnings. Evaluators estimated that effect at approximately \$500 annually.</p>	<p>The evaluation report outlines some concerns about the reliability of the results. First, the labor market indicators constructed to control for the difference in labor market conditions between counties may be inaccurate. In addition, the period of the study overlaps with a period of time during which the labor market was favorable to unskilled workers and it cannot be determined that if the program were operated in different employment conditions it would achieve similar results.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Youth Ambassadors for Peace</b></li> <li>• Monterey County WIB (CA)</li> <li>• Monterey County, CA</li> <li>• Round 2</li> </ul>	<p>Outcome</p> <p>Social Policy Research Associate</p>	<p>The study found that a small percentage of youth in the study either received incentives for obtaining a high school diploma or equivalent or enrolling in college (26 percent) or obtained unsubsidized employment (39 percent). Approximately 20 percent of youth in the study (24 out of 120) had arrests records, with fifteen of the youth arrested after enrolling in the program.</p>	<p>The very small sample size is a clear limitation of this study. In addition, the data used to measure criminal justice outcomes was only available for a small number of participants and post-program survey response rate were low.</p>

Source: NEC review of WIF evaluations.

## Exhibit D-5. Evaluations of Cross System Collaboration Interventions

Project, Grantee, Area Served, Round	Evaluation Design & Evaluator	Outcomes or Impacts	Comments on Rigor and Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Chelsea CONNECT</b></li> <li>• Metro North Regional Employment Board (MA)</li> <li>• North of Boston, Massachusetts</li> <li>• Round 1</li> </ul>	<p>Outcome</p> <p>Mt. Auburn Associates</p>	<p>The CONNECT outcomes study found that 60 percent of participants reported being employed at the end of the 18 month follow-up period compared to 44 percent at program entry. 73 percent reported being better able to meet their living expenses than they were at program intake. 60 percent said CONNECT improved on their financial stability. Participants reported an increase in average annual income between intake and 18 months. 15 percent of participants reported receipt of, or enrollment towards, a degree or certificate. 55 percent reported that CONNECT helped improve their education.</p>	<p>The sample for the outcomes analysis was relatively small and represents a small portion of those served by CONNECT (follow-up data was available for 150 of 2,820 study participants). The evaluation also found those 150 participants to be statistically significantly different from non-respondents. Finally, although some of the outcomes related to participant satisfaction included those with statistical significance, the report did not include this for several other of the key outcomes, including changes in employment status and education level.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Kansas WIF</b></li> <li>• Kansas Department of Commerce (KS)</li> <li>• Kansas</li> <li>• Round 3</li> </ul>	<p>Outcome</p> <p>Public Policy Associates</p>	<p>The ReEmployKS online portal, including a mobile app, for job seekers was successfully developed and launched. A total of 19 in-person cross-system trainings were conducted. Staff who attended the training reported being satisfied with the training and found it valuable. Program enrollment and on-the-job training (OJT) placements were highest toward the end of the grant period. Enrollments exceeded the planned goal, with 240 participants enrolled. However, the percentage of participants who started and completed an OJT placement was 43 and 58 percent, lower than the planned targets of 80 and 70 percent. Of employers interviewed, 21 of 27 reported that the OJT placement met their performance standards. However, less than half of employers interviewed (41 percent) reported that they still employed their OJT placement.</p>	<p>As noted by the evaluator, potential measurement error related to the employment outcomes raises concerns about the estimates of program impact on employment. If employment was not recorded in the service data system for a participant, they were considered unemployed. However, it is possible that the person was employed, but not in the system.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>On-Ramps to Career Pathways (ORCP)</b></li> <li>• Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (RI)</li> <li>• Rhode Island</li> <li>• Round 1</li> </ul>	<p>QED</p> <p>Public Policy Associates/ Brandon Robert Associates</p>	<p>The ORCP achieved some notable milestones in its systems change goal, particularly related to career pathways, which continued to be a focus within the state beyond the grant. The other systems change activities were not fully adopted within the workforce system. The ORCP did not improve participant employment rates or wage gains; however, it did have a positive effect on employment retention among participants who were employed. The analysis detected a small, positive impact on employment rates in the second quarter after program exit, but a negative impact of more than \$1,000 on earnings within a two quarter follow-up period and a negative impact on employment rates in the first quarter of follow-up.</p>	<p>Sufficient information was not provided to determine if the propensity score matching produced treatment and comparison groups that were similar. In addition, the follow-up period may be too short to detect the full program impacts, and a negative impact during the initial months after program enrollment may be expected while participants are attending training.</p>

Project, Grantee, Area Served, Round	Evaluation Design & Evaluator	Outcomes or Impacts	Comments on Rigor and Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Project Growing Regional Opportunity for the Workforce (Project GROW)</b></li> <li>• Border Workforce Alliance (TX)</li> <li>• Texas-Mexico border region: Cameron, Lower Rio Grande, Middle Rio Grande, South Texas, and Upper Rio Grande, Texas</li> <li>• Round 1</li> </ul>	<p>QED</p> <p>Jobs for Future/ Ray Marshall Center</p>	<p>Project GROW enrolled 425 individuals, 64 percent of their original enrollment target. 64 percent of Project GROW participants completed the training program, but only 24 percent completed their occupational vocational training. The evaluation found, overall, that the Project GROW model was not implemented as envisioned. The project did not have any statistically significant impacts on participants' employment and educational outcomes.</p>	<p>The evaluation's ability to detect statistically significant results was limited by lower than anticipated sample sizes. The evaluation relied on data that had a number of quality issues, including missing data. The amount of missing data could have affected the balance of the matched sample. Finally, information on whether the propensity score matching used to create the comparison group included geographic area as a matching criterion was not available.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Silicon Valley Alliance for Language Learners' Education and Success Innovation Initiative (SV ALLIES)</b></li> <li>• San Mateo County (CA)</li> <li>• Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties, CA</li> <li>• Round 1</li> </ul>	<p>Outcome</p> <p>WestEd</p>	<p>The study found that the majority of program completers in each of the four SV ALLIES pilots demonstrated gains based on pre- and post-assessment tests of their English language skills. Within 60 days after program end, 28 percent of participants had obtained a new job. The evaluation reported a positive association between the number of job advising sessions that participants attended and their likelihood of obtaining a new job. Results from the participant survey suggested that the pilot projects increased participants' confidence to succeed in their jobs and advance in their careers. Finally, employers involved in the pilots reported observing gains in their employee participants' English abilities and confidence.</p>	<p>The outcomes study findings are limited by small sample sizes driven by low survey response rates. In addition, the evaluation did not address survey non-response bias.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Virginia Financial Success Network</b></li> <li>• Virginia Community College System (VA)</li> <li>• 8 workforce regions in Virginia</li> <li>• Round 2</li> </ul>	<p>RCT</p> <p>Public Policy Associates</p>	<p>The evaluation found that while many aspects of the project were implemented as designed, VFSN had challenges: the program operated at a somewhat smaller scale than planned (falling short of the 1,800 enrollment goal by approximately 300); one of the financial tools – The Benefit Bank® - was delayed and not all components were developed; support services were underutilized; and the take-up of financial coaching was much lower than expected with only 57percent of participants meeting at least once with a coach. The program did not have an impact on education attainment, employment, wages, or net worth.</p>	<p>Additional information on the sample composition is needed. When reported, the sample sizes for the treatment and control groups are inconsistent across different analyses in the report.</p>

Source: NEC review of WIF evaluations.

## Exhibit D-6. Evaluations of Management Information Systems Interventions

Project, Grantee, Area Served, Round	Evaluation Design & Evaluator	Outcomes or Impacts	Comments on Rigor and Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Career Connect</b></li> <li>• Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership (IL)</li> <li>• Cook County, Illinois</li> <li>• Round 1</li> </ul>	<p>Outcome</p> <p>Heartland Alliance Social IMPACT Research Center</p>	<p>Implementation required more time and staff resources than anticipated and a lengthy process of trial-and-error to establish appropriate roles, responsibilities, and levels of effort for all players involved; Identifying requirements to be included in a Request for Information for the system was critical to gathering stakeholder input and helping the mostly non-technical project team develop an understanding of the technical needs, timeline, and costs; Stakeholder engagement was necessary for understanding key perspectives and potential for identifying challenges.</p>	<p>The outcomes study was not completed during the grant period. The implementation study included useful findings and observations about the challenges involved in completing a project the scope of the original Career Connect project, including the need to clearly define roles and responsibilities of all parties involved, building in a significant amount of time upfront to fully define the new systems requirements, and clearly understanding the existing systems before moving forward with new systems.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Managing for Success</b></li> <li>• Newark Workforce Investment Board (NJ)</li> <li>• Newark, New Jersey</li> <li>• Round 1</li> </ul>	<p>Outcome</p> <p>Heldrich Center, Rutgers University</p>	<p>The outcomes evaluation on the alternative intervention conducted by the grantee explored the extent to which jobseekers were satisfied with the services they received. While the outcomes survey data suggest that customer satisfaction increased during the intervention period, findings were not statistically significant. Customer satisfaction was found to decline after the end of the intervention period.</p>	<p>The evaluation did not produce findings on many of the intended outcomes: data availability, use of data in decision making, completion rates of training programs, employment, and retention. Findings for the survey-based customer satisfaction outcomes had a very low response rate (4 percent). Additionally, because the modified study design measured outcomes for two different cohorts of customers, it is not possible to know if the measured changes are due to service changes or differences in the customers studied.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Minnesota WIF Project (CareerForceMN.com)</b></li> <li>• Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (MN)</li> <li>• Minnesota</li> <li>• Round 3</li> </ul>	<p>Outcome</p> <p>IMPAQ</p>	<p>The outcome study found that the percent of staff serving employers who reported ease in serving employers increased by 7 percentage points, from pre-launch to post-launch of the platform. There was a decrease in the percent of workforce staff who reported being satisfied with available tools and resources. The percentage of employers who reported that it was easy or very easy to communicate with workforce staff declined slightly from 69 percent pre-launch to 66 percent post-launch; and the percent of career seekers who had some interaction with the workforce system increased. However, the proportion of career seekers who were satisfied with the system decreased from 60 percent to 37 percent, statistically significant at the 5 percent level.</p>	<p>The evaluation is well executed, with no significant issues.</p>

Source: NEC review of WIF evaluations.

## Exhibit D-7. Evaluations of Technological Innovation Interventions

Project, Grantee, Area Served, Round	Evaluation Design & Evaluator	Outcomes or Impacts	Comments on Rigor and Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Performance Funding Model</b></li> <li>• Florida Department of Economic Development (FL)</li> <li>• Florida</li> <li>• Round 2</li> </ul>	<p>Outcome/ QED</p> <p>Policy &amp; Research Group</p>	<p>The evaluation found that the PFM produced mixed results: a marginal positive effect on employment outcomes, marginal negative effect on wage outcomes, and negligible effects on employment for who were unemployed at time of enrollment. The evaluation noted that the mixed results on the outcomes were not surprising given the complexity of this systems-change project, and a number of issues during implementation.</p>	<p>The project experienced a number of challenges that affected implementation of the program and the evaluation, including turnover of key staff and delays in significant segments of the intervention. Other issues included two natural disasters and an observation period that may have simply been too short to realize the full effect of the intervention. The evaluation used a QED-like approach with a naturally occurring comparison group.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Code Louisville</b></li> <li>• KentuckianaWorks</li> <li>• Louisville, Kentucky</li> <li>• Round 2</li> </ul>	<p>QED</p> <p>University of Kentucky</p>	<p>The overall completion rate for Code Louisville was 58 percent, lower than the completion rate for comparable training programs. Nevertheless, participants had rising earnings post program. In addition to a series of descriptive statistics about program participants, the evaluation used a matched comparison to other WIOA participants in comparable training programs. Program participants typically had lower employment rates than those in comparison groups during the year post program entry. In terms of earnings, program participants had higher earnings post program initially as compared to the comparison groups, but the difference declines over time.</p>	<p>The follow-up period study for this study was likely too short to observe intended outcomes, as the training aimed to prepare participants for entry level jobs in career tracks that have earnings growth and advancement potential.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Electronic Ohio Means Jobs (OMJ)</b></li> <li>• Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (OH)</li> <li>• Ohio</li> <li>• Round 1</li> </ul>	<p>RCT</p> <p>Ohio State University</p>	<p>Because the study experienced high crossover and attrition rates, the RCT findings are essentially not valid. The process study found that over 78 percent of customers agreed that services were accessible with the exception of “assessments.” Implementation study participants rated two-thirds of services as “useful,” and over 70 percent gave the system an overall rating of “very” or “somewhat” useful. Users’ ratings of the system (as helpful, easy, of high quality, personal, clear, engaging, user friendly, available and new) while somewhat lower, approached designers’ ratings. 11 out of 12 OMJ Center staff were “very” or “somewhat” confident that the system was working as intended.</p>	<p>Approximately 80 percent of control group members had access to OhioMeansJobs.com to conduct their job search. Thus, the study does not provide an accurate estimate of the impact of OhioMeansJobs. In addition, the study was also affected by attrition with less than half of study participants responding to the three-month follow-up period with further declines by the 12-month follow-up period.</p>

Project, Grantee, Area Served, Round	Evaluation Design & Evaluator	Outcomes or Impacts	Comments on Rigor and Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Employment Support Center (ESC)</b></li> <li>• Pasco-Hernando Workforce Board, Inc. (FL)</li> <li>• Pasco and Hernando Counties, Florida</li> <li>• Round 1</li> </ul>	<p>QED</p> <p>University of South Florida</p>	<p>The evaluation found that the use of remote services increased program staff's capacity to deliver services, collect accurate data, and follow-up on customer's outcomes. The study also found that participants who engaged in particular remote services (such as recruitment events, job fairs, online orientation, resume completion, training search, and/or follow-up from ESC workers) were more likely to become employed than job seekers that engaged in traditional in-person services. Engaging in career guidance, assistance with job search, or referrals to WIA did not increase employment levels.</p>	<p>The primary concern for this evaluation was that the "no services" group was not comparable to the self-assisted or staff-assisted group. Evaluators used propensity score matching to create the no services group; however, the report does not provide whether this worked as designed. In addition, evaluators acknowledged that cross-overs were a potential problem. Finally, the report does not address the extent to which outcomes are influenced by selection and non-response bias. Another concern is a lack of adjustment for non-response bias in the survey data.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>TechSF Workforce Innovation Partnership</b></li> <li>• San Francisco Office of Economic and Workforce Development (CA)</li> <li>• San Francisco, CA</li> <li>• Round 1</li> </ul>	<p>Outcome</p> <p>WestEd</p>	<p>With generally positive results, the evaluation had small sample sizes. The outcomes evaluation examined the employment and earnings outcomes of the technical training participants who attended career management workshops, and included participants' perceptions of the workshops. There was a positive association between the number of career management workshops that participants attended and their likelihood of obtaining a new job. Among participants who obtained a new job after receiving services, 59 percent were employed in contract positions. According to participants and program staff, attending the career management workshops improved their interviewing skills, ability to identify job leads, and helped create resumes that communicated their skills.</p>	<p>The sample sizes were small, and many of the interventions were not implemented for sufficiently long periods or with sufficient sample sizes to detect statistically significant changes.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Utah and Montana Next Generation Labor Exchange (GenLEX) Initiative</b></li> <li>• Utah Department of Workforce Services (UT)</li> <li>• Utah and Montana</li> <li>• Round 1</li> </ul>	<p>RCT/ QED</p> <p>Social Research Institute</p>	<p>The impact evaluation found, overall, that the new system did not result in any statistically significant changes in job seeker outcomes. Job seeker satisfaction with the system was statistically significantly lower for the new/test system compared to the standard system. In addition, employer usage generally did not change. The implementation of the GenLEX initiative was hampered by personnel changes and shifting priorities.</p>	<p>The evaluation had a number of methodological issues. The phased implementation of the intervention had negative consequences on the impact evaluation. The RCT was implemented for the TC-1 group but the assignments to TC-2 and TC-3 were not random. The NEC review found that the evaluators did not appropriately account for this issue. A few other issues undermine the findings of the report, including the presentation of the impact analyses: the key findings in the Executive Summary do not correspond with those in the body of the report; lack of correspondence between the table text and regression models, and lack of definitions of some variables.</p>

Source: NEC review of WIF evaluations.

## Exhibit D-8. Evaluations of Employer Engagement Sector Strategies Interventions

Project, Grantee, Area Served, Round	Evaluation Design & Evaluator	Outcomes or Impacts	Comments on Rigor and Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accelerated Training for Illinois Manufacturing (ATIM)</li> <li>Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (IL)</li> <li>5 regions in Illinois covering 62 of 102 counties</li> <li>Round 1</li> </ul>	RCT  Social Policy Research Associates	ATIM had a positive and statistically significant impact on enrollment in and completion of occupational skills training and completion of multiple (stacked) certificates for ATIM participants relative to the control group, as well as positive impacts on earnings and, in select quarters, employment, during the second year following random assignment.	The primary limitation of the evaluation, which the evaluators address in the final report, is that it did not measure training activities by the control group that occurred outside the public workforce system. Therefore, evaluation may overstate the true impacts of the ATIM program on training and certificate receipt and underestimate total training costs for the control group.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ohio Business Resource Network (BRN) Expansion</li> <li>Workforce Initiative Association (OH)</li> <li>13 Counties in Ohio</li> <li>Round 1</li> </ul>	QED  Public Policy Associates	The analysis found no evidence of a positive effect on business's number of full time employees or wage levels for employers who acted on at least one of the BRN-proposed business services as compared to those who did not take up any of the services.	The report also does not describe the timing of the employer survey which could possibly enter bias into the estimated effect of the program. In addition, the report does not compare the characteristics of treatment and comparison employers in order to assess balance. Finally, the 6-month follow-up is likely too short given the nature of the intervention.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Orange County Information Technology Cluster Competitiveness Project (ITCCP)</li> <li>Orange County Workforce Investment Board (CA)</li> <li>Orange County, California</li> <li>Round 1</li> </ul>	Outcome  WestEd	The studies of the pilots implemented by the grantee generally found positive results, though these were limited by small sample size. The Training Programs Pilot Project evaluation found that 67 percent of participants unemployed at enrollment were employed at follow up.	The evaluation had small sample sizes which limit the ability of the evaluation to detect statistically significant changes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skills Wisconsin</li> <li>Workforce Development Board of South Central Wisconsin (WI)</li> <li>Wisconsin</li> <li>Round 1</li> </ul>	QED Outcome  IMPAQ	The program was able to exceed all but one of its performance targets (e.g., number of businesses served, number of employer profiles, number of jobseekers trained and served, number of times Salesforce was accessed) while operating as a relatively low cost-program. The impact study results suggest that Salesforce implementation in pilot areas led to an increase in the likelihood of employment for job seekers but had no effect on job retention or earnings, after controlling for observable differences among jobseeker cohorts. In the outcomes analysis, the evaluators found that employer opinions of the workforce system did not change in a meaningful way, though employers with more direct contact with the program had slightly more positive feelings about the workforce system.	The evaluation used a rigorous and well-executed evaluation design with no significant issues.

Project, Grantee, Area Served, Round	Evaluation Design & Evaluator	Outcomes or Impacts	Comments on Rigor and Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Southwest Michigan Employer Resource Network – Expanded (SWMERN-E)</b></li> <li>• W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research (MI)</li> <li>• Branch, St. Joseph, Kalamazoo and Calhoun Counties, Michigan</li> <li>• Round 2</li> </ul>	<p>Outcome</p> <p>Social Policy Research Associates</p>	<p>The outcomes evaluation found that the expanded ERN model provided necessary resources that employers could use to aid their workforce. Participants were satisfied or very satisfied with the training and resources. Employers also reported value in networking with one another and working collectively across firms to identify retention challenges in the local community.</p>	<p>The study was well-executed and included a number of solid findings, as well as a number of suggested areas for future research.</p>

Source: NEC review of WIF evaluations.