Best Practices for Developing and Sustaining Employment, Retention and Advancement for TANF Participants & Low-Income Clients

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Chicago Jobs Council
About the Chicago Jobs Council

• CJC is a 31-year old, member-based, public policy and capacity-building organization

• Our mission is to work with our members to promote employment and career advancement opportunities for people living in poverty.
Best practice strategies: Lessons from the field

• Transitional Jobs
• Integration of: work experience; basic academic skills; and occupational skills
• Capacity: Professional development for frontline staff
• Working across systems
TJ for TANF participants

- IL pilot program ran for three years: approximately 120 TANF recipients per year
- Components: orientation, job readiness, subsidized employment, unsubsidized employment
- “pay for performance” model with experienced community-based providers
Participant Experience

• Most important “skills”?  
  – Organization  
  – Motivation  
  – Persistence

• Most important outcome?  
  – Self-confidence  
  – Attitude change

• Most important part of TJ program?  
  – Individualized help  
  – Work experience
Opportunity Chicago:
TJ outcomes of public housing residents

- **Participation:** 1,793 public housing residents participated
- **Placement:** 70% of program participants were placed in subsidized jobs; of those 80% percent made the transition to unsubsidized employment
- **Retention:** 91% of unsubsidized placements were retained for at least 30 days; and 62% were retained at least one year
- **Earnings:** 37% increase in quarterly earnings among those who worked before entering program
Opportunity Chicago: Integrated TJ and Literacy

• OC/CHA piloted a TJ program with a literacy component in 2011 for residents with reading levels between 6th and 8th grade

• Four program models were tested by four agencies: Employment & Employer Services, Heartland Human Care Services, Central States SER and TEC Services.; all produced gains in literacy.
### Educational Gains Across Programs

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<th>Average reading levels</th>
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<th>Average math levels</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Starting level</strong></td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td><strong>Starting level</strong></td>
<td>6.7</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ending level</strong></td>
<td>10.2</td>
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<td>11.0</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Change in level</strong></td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td><strong>Change in level</strong></td>
<td>4.3</td>
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“Bridge” educational programs

• Illinois’ definition:
  – Contextualized curriculum
  – Career development
  – Transition services (i.e. support services)

• Leadership is from Adult Education and WIA

• Role for TANF: assessment, support services, case management

• Cross-system example in Chicago Region: WIA, TANF, Community Colleges, CBOs
“Bridge” educational programs

- Accelerated remedial/adult basic education
- Part of an career and education pathway
- Career development embedded in all aspects of program—orientation, curriculum, work experience, employer engagement
- Strong support through: cohort models; transition services
Frontline Staff Capacity

• CJC’s Frontline Focus Training Institute

• Professional development for frontline staff that work directly with low-income job-seekers (i.e. Job Developers, Employment Specialists, Case Managers)
TANF-WIA Transitional Jobs Partnership: Los Angeles County
Greater Avenues to Independence (GAIN) is the DPSS welfare-to-work program

GAIN contracts with South Bay Workforce Investment Board, one of the local WIBs serving LA County

SBWIB manages WorkSource Centers (One-Stops) across the county to place participants in subsidized employment and offer unsubsidized job development services
Los Angeles County, continued

- State law (SB-72) directs the state to pay 50% of subsidized wages to counties that implement subsidized employment programs for TANF recipients
- The LA County Board of Supervisors is highly supportive of subsidized employment and seeks to maximize use of this funding
- WorkSource Centers are paid $400 per unsubsidized placement in addition to wages and program costs
Los Angeles County, continued

- Two subsidized employment models:
  - Fully-subsidized placements with nonprofits and public sector worksites
  - Partially-subsidized placements with private for-profit companies

- The program is being evaluated through HHS-ACF Subsidized and Transitional Employment Demonstration (STED)