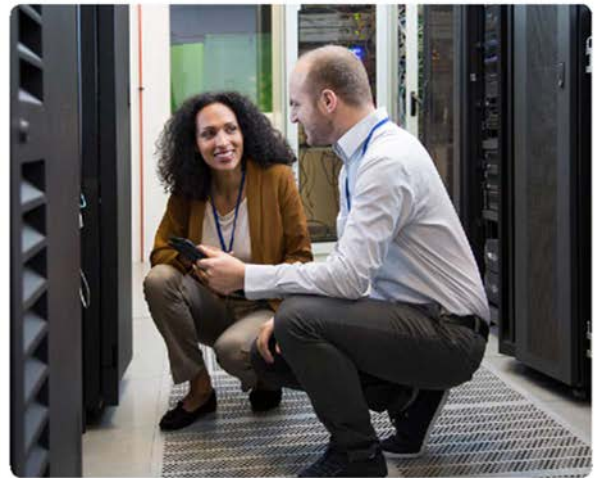


# Evaluation of the Ready to Work Partnership Grant Program

Findings from the Implementation Study of  
Four Training Programs for Long-term Unemployed Workers



Mike Fishman

NAWRS, July 31, 2017



# Agenda



- Policy Context
- Evaluation Overview
- Ready to Work (RTW) Grantee Programs
- Key Findings
- Questions



# Policy Context

# Policy Context



- Large job loss and long unemployment spells during 2008-2009 recession
- Unemployment and underemployment continued for some even as the economy recovered
- Continued interest in training for high-growth industries and occupations
  - In particular, those using H-1B visas to hire foreign workers

# RTW Partnership Grants Sponsored by U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)



- **Goals:** employment in middle-to-high skill jobs where employers use H-1B visas
- **Target population:** long-term unemployed workers but with prior work experience and education
  - Jobless for 27+ weeks
  - Including not currently employed or underemployed
- **Awards:** DOL awarded RTW grants in 2014
  - 23 grantees, totaling \$170 million (four-year grants ranging from \$3-10 million)
- **Grant recipients:** partnerships of workforce agencies, training providers, employers (three required), other organizations

# DOL's RTW SGA Service Approach



- DOL's SGA-specified RTW services include an **assessment** of participants' skills and needs, and customized services along three tracks:
  - **Staff guidance**, e.g., intensive coaching, direct job placement assistance
  - **Short-term training** leading to direct job placement
  - **Longer-term training** leading to an industry-recognized credential and employment

# DOL's RTW SGA Service Approach (continued)



- Work-based training where employer pays participants
  - **On-the-job training**
  - **Paid work experience**
- Services addressing the unique barriers facing long-term unemployed workers
  - **Financial counseling**
  - **Behavioral health counseling**



# Evaluation Overview



# RTW Evaluation



- DOL contracted with Abt Associates and its partner MEF Associates to conduct a rigorous evaluation of RTW grantee programs.
  - **Implementation study** to examine how grantees implemented their RTW programs
  - **Impact study** to examine effects on participants' educational and economic outcomes

# Purposively Selected Grantees



- In consultation with DOL, evaluation team purposively selected four grantees for study
- Based on:
  - Strength of the services
  - Program size and sufficient demand to create a control group
  - Ability to accommodate the study procedures
- Site-specific estimates for impact study; sample sizes range from (1,000 to 1,800 per site)

***Purposive selection of sites means that they are not representative of all grantees***

# Evaluation Timeline



2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021 2022



Random Assignment (RA)  
July 2015 to July 2018

Site Visits  
Summer  
2016

Site Visits  
Summer  
2017

Site Visits  
Summer  
2018

Follow-up survey and UI  
employment and earnings data  
Jan. 2017 to Jan. 2020  
*(approx. 18 months post-RA)*

Early  
Impl.  
Report  
5/2017

Interim  
Report  
2021

Final  
Report  
March  
2022

# Early Implementation Report



- Describes for four grantees:
  - Program context
  - Target population
  - Organizational structure and staffing
  - Recruitment
  - Specific services and supports
- Through first year of program operations: Summer 2016



# Overview of RTW Grantee Programs

# Four Grantees in Evaluation



Grantee	Program
Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation (AAWDC)	Maryland Tech Connection
Jewish Vocational Service (JVS)	JVS Skills to Work in Technology
RochesterWorks!	Finger Lakes Hired
Worksystems	Reboot Northwest

# Study Grantee General Characteristics



	Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation (AAWDC)	Jewish Vocational Services (JVS)	RochesterWorks!	Worksystems (WSI)
Target Industries	IT and Bioscience	IT	IT; Healthcare; Advanced Manufacturing	IT; Advanced Manufacturing
Location	Maryland: Baltimore-DC Corridor, including Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Calvert, Carroll, Cecil, Charles, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George's and St. Mary's Counties	California: San Francisco and Contra Costa Counties	New York: Rochester metropolitan area, including Monroe County	Portland-Vancouver Metropolitan Region, including Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington Counties (Oregon); Clark, Cowlitz, and Wahkiakum Counties (Washington State)
Study Target Enrollment	900 program group; 900 control group	500 program group; 500 control group	610 program group; 610 control group	500 program group; 500 control group

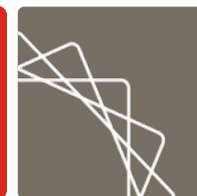
# Treatment Group Characteristics



Characteristic	AAWDC	JVS	RochesterWorks!	WSI
Male	53%	32%	44%	74%
Average Age	47	47	46	46
Children in Household	36%	23%	47%	48
Unemployed at time of enrollment	89%	78%	89%	79%
Unemployed 12 months or longer	32%	35%	22%	33%
BA or MA	65%	81%	45	54%
Received public benefits	42%	25%	53	48%



# Study Grantee Training Programs



	AAWDC	JVS	RochesterWorks!	WSI
Job readiness workshop	2 weeks; includes mental health and financial counseling; public benefits screening	Job search and confidence-building activities continue through training	Priority enrollment in existing one-week that is open to all workforce center participants	“Boot camp” designed to promote peer support, increase work readiness, and introduce industry experts
Assessment and ongoing one-on-one support	Career Coach staff work one-on-one to assess participant, customize employment plans, and provide individualized services.	Each training program starts with “Foundation Week” with team building and personal and career exploration. One-on-one support coordinated with training.	Education and Employment Specialist staff provide tailored support and goal planning. For those in community colleges, access to grant-funded “college liaison” to provide on-site support assistance	Career Coach staff provide individualized support, coordinate services, and assist participants in employment goal planning. Assessment includes “career mapping” session
Occupational training	Tuition for training in IT or bioscience	IT technical skills training in Microsoft Office programs; Digital Marketing; Salesforce Administration	Tuition assistance for training in IT, manufacturing, and health care	Tuition assistance for training in IT and manufacturing

# Study Grantee Training Programs (continued)



	AAWDC	JVS	RochesterWorks!	WSI
Work experience	OJTs and paid work experience	Paid work experience (“fellowship” part of Salesforce Administration program)	OJTs and paid work experience positions	OJTs and paid work experience positions
Job search assistance	Group job club, dedicated job developers	Job search instruction by JVS instructor as part of all three training programs	One-on-one support and guidance	One-on-one job search assistance and support, access to Reboot Network alumni group
Support services	Financial assistance for books, certification exam fees, transportation, needs-based payment for those enrolled in training	Peer group activities where participants support each other in job search and networking	Transportation assistance and needs-based payments for low-income individuals enrolled in training	Support and assistance for behavioral health issues, transportation and access to housing vouchers



# Key Findings

# Services Targeted to Long-Term Unemployed Population



- Employment readiness activities, typically workshops to:
  - Reorient participants back to the world of work
  - Build job search skills and industry knowledge
- Access to specialized assistance
  - Mental or behavioral health issues
  - Sessions/courses developed by outside organization
- One-on-one assistance from grant-funded staff during all phases of the program (3 grantees)

# Services Targeted to Long-Term Unemployed Population (continued)



- Occupational training program typically provided through existing programs
  - Often community colleges, and tuition paid by the grant
  - Typically short-term certificate programs (less than 6 months) but longer-term available (up to two years)
- Paid work-based training positions available
  - But less frequently used
  - Time needed to develop connections with employers and identify short-term training positions

# Overall Operations



- Recruitment was challenging and grantees made outreach a priority
  - Dedicated grant-funded staff
  - Hiring of external resources to support staff
  - Use of social media
  - Engagement of community partners with similar constituents
  - Use of unemployment insurance system
- Grantees worked with employers
  - Supported program design
  - Helped to identify employment opportunities
- Grantees generally served wide geographic areas (up to 12 counties)
  - Helped with recruitment, but required attention to coordination and consistency

# Questions?

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# Thank you!

