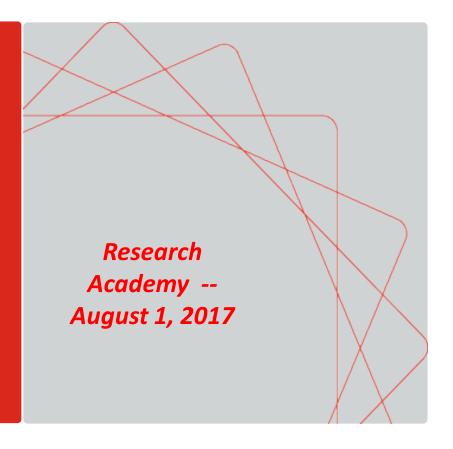


# The Origins and Payoff from the HPOG Three-Armed Experiment

presented by Stephen H. Bell

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### Acknowledgements



- HHS CHILDREN & FAMILIES funds HPOG programs
- = OPRE funds HPOG research & evaluation
- HPOG-Impact Study staff
  - Co-Principal Investigators, Laura Peck & Alan Werner, Abt Associates
  - Project Director, Gretchen Locke, Abt Associates

# The HPOG 3-Arm Experiment



- (1) Origins
- (2) Implementation
- (3) Findings
- (4) Payoff

## **HPOG & Its Impact Evaluation**



- Intake, enrollment and assessments for health sector training for low-income individuals and TANF recipients that includes:
  - (1) career pathways framework
  - (2) rich academic & non-academic support services
  - (3) connections to local employers

## **HPOG & Its Impact Evaluation**



- Intake, enrollment and assessments for health sector training for low-income individuals and TANF recipients that includes:
  - (1) career pathways framework
  - (2) rich academic & non-academic support services
  - (3) connections to local employers
- In 2010, ACF/OFA-funded 32 grantees nationwide
  - Evaluation RFP suggested "3-6 large sites"
  - Abt Associates awarded contract & suggested going "all in"
  - All grantees not part of ongoing data collection for other HPOG research (N = 20)
  - Randomize eligible applicants at each grantee to treatment and control groups

## Motivation for the 3-Arm Experiment



- 20 grantees operated 36 programs
- Lots of natural variation in program components used → potential to learn "what works"
- Opportunity to introduce even more planned variation
  - → 3-way random assignment
    - rigorously identify contribution of randomized components
- What to vary?
- Where to vary?
- How to implement?

# What to Vary Experimentally?



#### Criteria:

- prior/suggestive evidence of effectiveness
- practicality (implementable within short time, within budget)
- evaluability (feasibility of random assignment)
- grantee interest

## What to Vary Experimentally?



#### Criteria:

- prior/suggestive evidence of effectiveness
- practicality (implementable within short time, within budget)
- evaluability (randomizable)
- grantee interest

#### Selected enhancements:

- financial assistance to help with emergencies and other critical needs
- non-cash incentive program to reward behaviors and achievements
- facilitated peer support groups to create community and support retention and completion

# Where to Vary Experimentally?



	Facilitated Peer	Emergency	Non-Cash
HPOG-Impact Grantees	Support	Assistance	Incentives
Eastern Gateway Community College			
Kansas Department of Commerce			
Schenectady County Community College			
New Hampshire Office of Minority Health			
Milwaukee Area WIB			
South Carolina Department of Social Services			
Buffalo and Erie County WDC			
Gateway Community and Technical College (KY)			
Central Community College			
Suffolk County Department of Labor			
Pensacola State College			
WIB SDA-83 Inc. (LA)			
Research Foundation of CUNY-Hostos Community College			
Will County WIB			
Full Employment Council			
Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit			
The WorkPlace			
Alamo Community College District and University Health System			
Edmonds Community College			
Bergen Community College (includes 11 programs)			

# Identify Natural Occurrences



#### Already existing locations (yellow)

HPOG-Impact Grantees	Facilitated Peer Support	Emergency Assistance	Non-Cash Incentives
Eastern Gateway Community College		7.00.00000	
Kansas Department of Commerce			
Schenectady County Community College			
New Hampshire Office of Minority Health			
Milwaukee Area WIB			
South Carolina Department of Social Services			
Buffalo and Erie County WDC			
Gateway Community and Technical College (KY)			
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Bergen Community College (includes 11 programs)			

#### Add "Enhancement" Sites



#### Locations where randomly assigned (green)

	Facilitated Peer	Emergency	Non-Cash
HPOG-Impact Grantees	Support	Assistance	Incentives
Eastern Gateway Community College			
Kansas Department of Commerce			
Schenectady County Community College			
New Hampshire Office of Minority Health			
Milwaukee Area WIB			
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# "Selling" 3-Way Randomization



- Offered program \$\$ to implement selected enhancements
- Reached out to all grantees that did not already offer the enhancement component
- Helped interested grantees ...
  - consider enhancements
  - choose from among them
  - craft/submit proposals
- And then...
  - worked with grantees to implement enhancement tests

# Implementation Challenges



- Funds to do the enhancement were crucial (but not just "Fund it and they will come")
- Also took . . .
  - -- large outreach effort by the evaluation contractor
  - -- strong encouragement of grantees by ACF (OFA & OPRE)
  - -- in-depth review (& revision) of grantee proposals to ensure strong tests
- Non-trivial exercise to determine which programs did not already have a given enhancement

Fidelity of enhancement delivery achieved by <u>all</u> grantees

## Findings at 15 Months



- Emergency assistance = no impact
- Non-cash incentives = no impact
- Facilitated peer support = only impacts were negative
  - program completion -7 percentage points
  - earnings \$421

Confidence in the veracity of these findings without random assignment would surely be low

 presupposing that non-experimental analysis would have given these correct results!

# Methodological Benefits



- Believable, accurate findings on the impact of each randomized enhancement
- Opportunity to calibrate non-experimental methods to replicate experimental results
  - -- for the three program components for which both types of analysis are possible
- → Use the improved non-experimental methods to get more reliable findings for program components not varied experimentally

# Report Information



The HPOG Impact final report with these findings will be out this fall and will be available at:

 https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/research/project/healthprofession-opportunity-grants-hpog-impact-studies

http://www.career-pathways.org/

Contact:
Stephen Bell, Ph.D.
Senior Fellow
Abt Associates
stephen\_bell@abtassoc.com
(301) 634-1721



