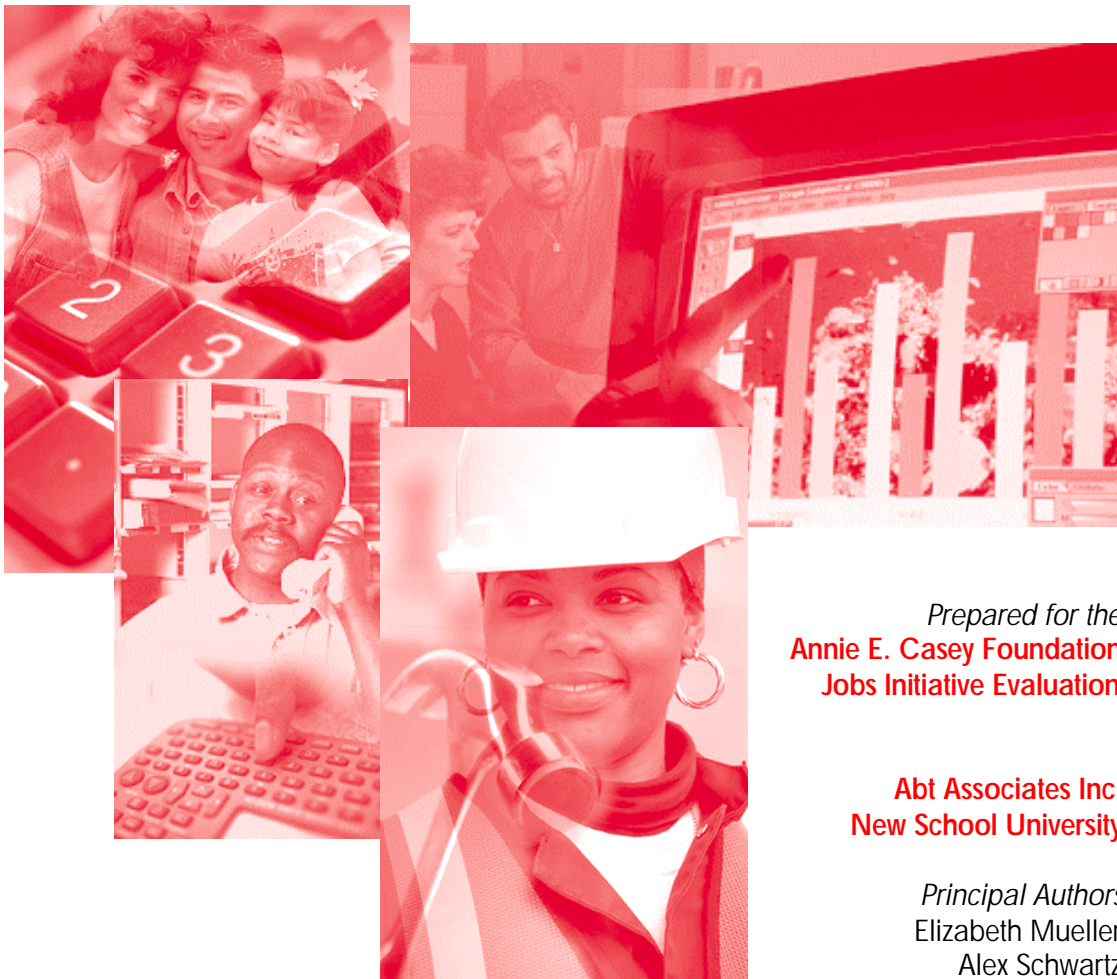



Abt

Abt Associates Inc.

Creating Change:

Pushing Workforce Systems to Help Participants
Achieve Economic Stability and Mobility



Prepared for the
Annie E. Casey Foundation
Jobs Initiative Evaluation

Abt Associates Inc.
New School University

Principal Authors
Elizabeth Mueller
Alex Schwartz

July 2002



Table of Contents

Introduction	1
The Jobs Initiative: Its Goals, Approach	1
Purpose of the Report	3
Identifying Significant Reforms	3
Key Findings	4
Common First Steps	5
Most Significant Reforms	6
Characterizing the Reforms	6
Methodology, Measures for Assessing Impact	7
The Case Studies	7
Operational competencies of workforce programs	8
Seattle: Building Capacity of Community-Based Organizations	11
Challenge: CBOs Delivering Workforce Services Perform Unevenly, No Common Standards for Key Practices, Performance	11
Strategy: Multiple Efforts to Improve and Standardize CBO Assessment and Case Management Competencies	12
Impacts: Case Management Improvements Improve Retention, Assessment and Case Management Practices, Collaboration Among CBOs	13
Seattle: Flexible Support for Job Seekers	15
Challenge: The Fragmentation of Seattle’s Human Service and Workforce Development Systems Makes it Difficult for Disadvantaged Job Seekers to Access Necessary Support	15
Strategy: The Ready to Earn Fund	15
Strategy: Human Service Realignment to Support Low -Income Job Seekers	16
Impacts: SJI has Improved Access to Human Services and Other Public Assistance for Low-Income Job Seekers	17
Milwaukee: The Workforce Attachment and Advancement Fund	18
Challenge: Public Systems Focused on “Work First,” Federal Resources for Training Shrinking	18
Strategy: MJI Targets Surplus Welfare Funds, Focuses Attention of State Policy Makers on Need for Skills Training, Connection to Prosperity of State	18
Impact: \$20 Million in TANF Surplus Funds Allocated to Sectoral Skills Training for Working Poor, Employer Services	19
Milwaukee: Creating a Model for Multi-Sector Labor Market Intermediation	21
Challenge: Entry-Level Labor Shortages Across Sectors, Cumbersome and Rigid Training System, Employer Practices a Poor Fit with New Workforce	21
Strategy: Organize Employers Around Common Concerns, Push for Changes in Training System, Employer Practices	22
Impact: Growing Membership in WRTP, Growth of “Quality” Practices Among Membership, More Flexible and Responsive Training Process	23
New Orleans: Upgrading Machinist Training at Delgado Community College	24
Challenge: Shortage of Skilled Workers, Outdated Training, Racial Exclusion	24

Strategy: Target Manufacturing’s Good Jobs, Draw on Faith Networks to Reach Employers, Work with Employers and College to Upgrade Training.....	25
Impact: State-of-the-Art Machinist Training Benefiting Delgado, Employers and Participants	26
New Orleans: The 21st Century Success Principles Pre-Employment Training Model.....	27
Challenge: Engaging Adult Learners Averse to Traditional Classroom Training, Preparing Them for Success in the Culture of Historically White Workplaces.....	27
Strategy: Rejecting Existing Soft-Skills Programs, NOJI Develops New Curriculum That Builds on Participants’ Skills, And The Realities of the Workplace	27
Impact: Training Effectiveness, Dissemination as a “Best Practice” in Pre-Employment Training.....	28
St. Louis: Organizing Providers to Change Standards and Goals	30
Challenge: Training Providers Face a Sea Change in Incentives and Policies, Changes Undermine Programs Aimed at Those with Most Barriers to Work, Providers Not Organized to Respond	30
Strategy: Nascent Provider Network Funded, Attention to Best Practices and Ties to Employers Promoted.....	31
Impact: State Changes How Providers are Funded, WP Provides Training in Best Practices, Publicizes Members’ Performance Data	32
Philadelphia: Organizing Employers for Policy Change.....	33
Challenge: Lack of Sustained Employer Engagement in Workforce Development, Lack of Sensible Welfare Reform Policy	33
Strategy: Engage Employers in Workforce Issues, Influence Welfare Reform Agenda	33
Impact: Changes in State Welfare Reform Law, Employer Engagement in Workforce Development.....	34
Lessons, Conclusions.....	36
Challenges, Strategies	36
Impact.....	37
Conclusions	38
Sources	39
Interviews	41
Appendix A:	
Overview of Case Studies.....	42

Introduction

Since 1995, the six cities participating in the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Jobs Initiative have been working to connect young, low-income central city residents to jobs that offer them decent wages and a future. Along the way, these efforts have changed aspects of workforce policies, programs, and employer practices. While not always planned for or anticipated as necessary, these initial changes are laying the foundation for system reforms—the focus of the Initiative's last phase— necessary for long-term progress toward economic stability for inner-city families. This report describes these early reforms. By looking across sites, we are able to see how local conditions, including civic relationships and existing workforce policies and programs, shape responses to common challenges. Relationships among key stakeholders and effective program models emerge as pre-conditions for progress. While sites are all aiming to push current placement-focused systems toward longer-term outcomes, sites building on strong stakeholder networks and local program models were able to turn to more fundamental changes in workforce policy goals or in the level of resources available to meet them.

The Jobs Initiative: Its Goals, Approach

The Jobs Initiative was designed and launched during a period of incredible policy ferment, when broad ranging reforms were being considered in both federal welfare and workforce programs. There was a widespread disillusionment with past programs and interest in making fundamental changes, based both on disappointing reviews of past programs and on experiments taking place around the country. Of course, debate raged as to the proper way to reform programs and, in 1995, the outcome was far from clear. In this context, the Jobs Initiative was designed to focus attention on the long-term results of workforce initiatives and on the practical steps needed to achieve systems change. The Casey Foundation has historically funded programs focused on children and family well-being; they turned their focus to an employment initiative based on the belief that helping these young workers would produce positive results for their families as well.

How to best change systems—either conceptually or practically—is part of what the Jobs Initiative aims to understand. In order to maximize experimentation and learning, six very different places were selected to participate in the Initiative. In Denver, Milwaukee, New Orleans, Philadelphia, St. Louis and Seattle, regional stakeholders have come together to create programs that work, and to develop strategies for making larger systems more effective at fostering the long-term success of these workers. The cities ranged widely in the structure and vitality of their regional economies, in the civic organizations most actively working on workforce issues, and in the degree of interest and progress being made on welfare and workforce reform efforts at the state or local level, among other factors. The groups chosen to convene initial discussions about the Initiative reflected these differences and included a local foundation, a coalition of community and labor organizations, a regional reinvestment fund, a civic organization, a regional council of governments, and a municipal agency.

The Jobs Initiative was designed to unfold in three phases—planning, capacity building and systems reform. The planning phase began in late 1995, shortly after the six sites were selected. During this phase, in each city, the convening group brought together key local stakeholders, analyzed regional barriers and opportunities, developed their initial strategies for improving employment access, and identified the projects and other activities in which they would make their initial investments. They also identified a particular area, or “impact community,” to help ground their project work and to focus their efforts to document the impact of their work.

Work during the second phase of the Initiative, officially titled “Capacity Building,” was focused on developing model jobs projects. The ultimate purpose of these projects was to lay the foundation for systems changes needed to foster long-term economic success for inner city workers and their families. In the short term, these projects were aimed at connecting inner-city residents with jobs paying at least \$7 per hour, with benefits and potential for advancement. Successful projects also helped local Jobs Initiatives to build the credibility they needed to achieve larger system changes. Capacity building also emphasized creating projects and organizations able to learn from their own work by developing strength in data collection and self-assessment. This phase lasted from April 1997 to March 2000.

For the final four years of the Initiative, the “Implementation Phase,” the local Jobs Initiatives are focusing on systems reform. During this phase, scheduled to end in Spring 2004, sites will develop a fully articulated policy reform agenda and work to achieve their goals through a range of strategies. How each site pursues systems change is expected to vary greatly and to focus not only on job training and workforce development agencies and programs but also on the broader set of agencies that affect the creation of and access to decent jobs. The focus taken in a particular site will likely reflect a mix of both general, structural problems with existing programs and issues specific to that site, based on its unique political, economic and civic character and history.

In practice, sites have moved through these phases at different paces. For example, at the close of the capacity building phase only two sites were ready to proceed to the next phase; the other four required more time to complete their work. In addition, the activities described for each phase have not, in practice, been so neatly contained. The early reforms discussed in this report are a case in point—sites often found that they could not make progress on their project work without confronting some system reform issues.

Purpose of the Report

This report describes system reform activities that took place before the Initiative had officially shifted its focus to systematically outlining and producing such reforms. The picture that will emerge of the systems reforms produced by the end of the Jobs Initiative will surely differ from what we describe here. Nonetheless, these early changes provide us with important insights regarding the process of change.

The purpose of this report is to describe systems reforms or changes that took place as sites pursued their project work. We describe these changes from a couple of vantage points. We provide an overview of the most common types of reforms occurring during this phase. For each strategy area, there are a range of possible accomplishments along a continuum. We identify common preconditions or steps that sites, despite their differences, must take before moving toward more fundamental change.

Second, using a case study approach, we detail examples of changes that we consider most significant. In each case, we describe the challenge facing the site, the strategy they chose to pursue to affect change and the impact of their work. To the extent that these deeper changes differ across sites we discuss the ways that differences in context define early steps that sites must take before moving forward.

Identifying Significant Reforms

Identifying and documenting the reforms described in this report involved several steps. We began by generating a comprehensive list of changes that key stakeholders at each site considered “system reforms.” The national evaluation team and Annie E. Casey Foundation program staff reviewed and added to this list (see Appendix A). We then sorted the list to look for patterns by 1) the activities that were the focus of reforms; and 2) the particular features of broadly defined workforce systems that were targeted by each.¹

From this long list we then identified the subset of changes that could be considered to have produced the most impact. To a large degree, deciding which changes were significant was dependent on understanding the context in which they occurred. To the extent possible, we sought changes that we could document well and for which quantitative measures of change (number of participants affected, funds allocated or spent, impacts on earnings) were available. This, as it turned out, was an ambitious goal. In cases where reliable quantitative indicators were not available or appropriate, we focused on documenting changes in relationships or processes with the greatest potential to move systems toward the Jobs Initiatives goals.

¹ These features include relationships, resources, power and authority, policies, operational competencies, and information signals or transparency.

Key Findings

Steps in a new direction. These early reforms represent a departure from current national welfare and workforce policies, with their emphasis on rapid placement as the policy goal, and a job (any job) as the cure for those marginally attached to the labor force. These reforms push systems toward new policy goals, and reflect a long-term definition of success. They reflect an understanding that the barriers to work are complex and multifaceted—going beyond individuals’ motivation to work. They recognize that employers should be engaged stakeholders in training systems. They challenge the view that work itself is curative by recognizing and addressing *post placement* supports for workers and employers to enable workers to retain their new jobs and advance to other, better positions over time. Instead, placement is pursued as one step on the long path toward economic success for families.

Goals clear, change complex. While there is broad consensus about the outcomes that sites want for disadvantaged job seekers, there is no such consensus about how to go about achieving these goals. The diversity seen in the particular programs being mounted across sites, leading to differing emphases in their early reform efforts, reflect the complexity and diversity of problems faced by job seekers, and the need for flexible responses to a wide range of issues and contexts.

Common challenges, local differences. Reforms build on local conditions. For this reason, those reforms that have had the greatest impact so far strongly reflect differences in local conditions, particularly in the strength of local civic or institutional infrastructure. To push for system change sites need organized advocates for change and successful examples to point to. Sites lacking either strong civic organizations or workforce programs tended to focus on building them. Sites with relatively strong civic organizations or workforce programs made use of them to push for policy changes, and worked to develop the resources needed to support reforms.

Common First Steps

From the long list of reforms generated through discussions with stakeholders and Foundation staff, a handful of common strategies emerged, aimed at common targets (see Appendix A). This suggests that, despite the many important differences in economic structure and conditions and in the lead institutions and key players across the cities, their common challenges still stimulated some common first steps. In this section, we briefly characterize the list, drawing out commonalities and differences. The following section on most significant reforms provides a deeper look at those reforms that have had the greatest impact thus far.

Changes viewed as reforms by local stakeholders can be grouped into a short list of four strategy areas:

- Fostering relationships and collaborations among stakeholders;
- Lobbying for changes in programs rules and policy;
- Fostering and rewarding model training programs; and
- Increasing resources available for skills training, participants support.

How sites went about this work varied according to local conditions and starting points. From our review, it is clear that a few pre-conditions exist for work in each area. A strong base of relationships among key stakeholders is a pre-condition for fostering collaborative practices among them or for lobbying for changes in program rules or policies in which the stakeholders have a strong interest. Similarly, successful local program models are a pre-condition for success in pushing for more resources for training or associated supportive services.

Sites faced different starting points for this work. For each strategy area, there are a range of possible accomplishments along a continuum:

- Sites with weak relationships among key stakeholders began by building these ties; sites with strong networks could work on building collaborative practices among them.
- For most sites, changing program rules, building on relationships with the PIC or other funding agencies, was easier than pushing for policy changes. Sites with advocacy coalitions could begin this work.
- Strengthening local training options must begin with transparent indicators of and incentives for good performance. Several sites began by putting such incentives and indicators in place; sites with strong program models were able to focus on fostering best practices among providers.
- Sites with strong local program models pushed for more resources for these programs and for associated support services. One shot funding wins are a first step; longer-term gains will be harder to achieve and require shifts in on-going funding streams.

Most Significant Reforms

From our review of the most common types of reforms produced by sites, we now turn to description and analysis of those reforms that have produced changes judged to be most significant—as viewed in their local context.

Our working definition of significant reforms is change that has affected the greatest number of people or has the greatest potential to produce long-lasting change. Impacts are measured, to the extent possible, using evidence on the number of people served, funds spent or allocated as a result of the reform, or changes in outcomes for participants. In the absence of such quantitative evidence, we document and discuss the meaning of changes in processes and relationships. As noted earlier, our short list of significant reforms was developed giving the most weight to the views of those most familiar with that specific context.

Characterizing the Reforms

It is harder to characterize these reforms as a group since they strongly reflect the variation in local context and challenges. What is an important change in one place might not appear very important in another context. For example, in Philadelphia, bringing together previously disconnected employers, in the context of a workforce system that is also disconnected from employers, was an important change. In contrast, in Milwaukee, where employers in key sectors were already organized and where unionization provides a means of representing workers, reform meant pushing employers to change workplace practices. Other differences reflect the different institutional homes for the Jobs Initiative across sites. In Seattle, where the JI is housed in a city agency, progress was made in reallocating funds and changing program rules to make services more flexible and better coordinated. In contrast, in New Orleans, where a new organization was set up to run the JI and where local programs are extremely weak, progress was creating a new service model that could set a new standard for public programs.

Nonetheless, some common themes can be identified. Relationship building *within* stakeholder groups is a theme across sites, whether of employers or service providers (Philadelphia, St. Louis, Milwaukee, Seattle.) Pushing for increased resources for skills training happened in two very different sites—Milwaukee and New Orleans. The scale at which the effort was made again illustrates differences in context: in Milwaukee, stakeholders participated in a successful effort to make more state funds available for skills training. In New Orleans, stakeholders pushed for improvements in skills training offered in one program at the region's largest community college. Finally, several sites focused on increasing the operational competency of training institutions or community-based service organizations. In Seattle and St. Louis, these efforts were facilitated by the groups' membership in a network or umbrella organization.

Methodology, Measures for Assessing Impact

As noted, while we sought to measure the magnitude of reforms, the diversity of the reforms resulted in a diversity of measures. For this and other reasons, impacts cannot be directly compared across sites. Cases emphasize understanding the meaning of changes in local context. Measures used to illustrate these impacts include changes in funding (one time changes, changes in funding streams) and changes in practices (numbers actually or potentially affected).

The Case Studies

The following section presents the stories of these significant reforms. For each case, we present the context for the reform, the strategy used by the local Jobs Initiative, and the impact of the reform. The chart below provides an overview of the cases.

Jobs Initiative System Reforms During Capacity Building: 1996-2001

Reform target	Jobs Initiative site	Specific systems reform/innovation achieved
Operational competencies of workforce programs		
Assessment	Denver	Creation and broad use of Work Readiness Index for assessment of participants' barriers—adopted by programs in several other cities.
Pre-employment training	Seattle	Recognition by WFD system of need to address non-training related employment barriers before participants enter training; has caused some training organizations to change their practices, stop referring those with unmet barriers to training.
Soft skills training	Seattle	Increased awareness of need for soft skills training on part of vocational training organizations.
Pre-employment training	New Orleans	21 st Century employment principles training curriculum sets standard, adopted by main training institutions in NO.
Retention performance	St. Louis	Established emphasis on retention as key performance indicator for WFD system.
Pre-employment training	Denver	DWI's cognitive training curriculum adopted by organizations around the country.
Retention strategies	St. Louis	Convinced WFD system of necessity of post-placement, wrap-around services.
Retention strategies	St. Louis	Increased awareness of WFD funders relative to value of IDAs as a retention strategy (and how to use them as such).
Sectoral workforce strategies	Milwaukee	Sectoral model expanded into Hospitality sector.
Sectoral workforce strategies	St. Louis	Brought awareness of value of sector-focused efforts to WFD system.
Workplace changes	St. Louis	Made WFD system aware of need for training on the demand side (that is, employers) re cultural competence, etc.
Measuring performance	Denver	DWI pushed training organizations to collect data on client outcomes, including wage progression and retention.

Reform target	Jobs Initiative site	Specific systems reform/innovation achieved
Performance contracting	St. Louis	Promoted performance-based contracting. Brought attention to the importance of MIS/data in measuring activities/outcomes of the WFD system.
Measuring performance	Seattle	Brought greater acceptance within WFD community of need to document program results, hold organizations accountable, document what works and what doesn't.
Best practice standards adopted	Seattle	Collaboration in developing work readiness standards, case management standards enabled CBOs to adopt best practices.
Policy changes		
Integrated services	Seattle	Human service integration—providing better, coordinated supports to job seekers and low-income workers.
Retention measured	Seattle	Made job retention a critical element of workforce development programs throughout State. Now common practice to track retention, provide more intensive post placement support.
Long-term outcomes measured	Seattle	Helped win passage of legislation requiring State to report on long-term employment outcomes of Work-First participants.
Expanded access to training	Seattle	Helped persuade state to modify requirements for Pre-Employment Training (PET) to support training for low-income residents in community colleges.
Funding process	Milwaukee	A series of innovations at MATC and the PIC resulted in a streamlined process for funding and delivering training, with implications for all CST courses funded by the PIC
Program rules	Milwaukee	Advocated for more training under W2 by front-loading hours; advocated for more training support as W2 system is revised.
Wages	Milwaukee	Pushed PIC to raise minimum acceptable wage for placements from \$7 to \$8 per hour.
Resources		
Funds extended to broader groups, services	Seattle	a) Created a "Ready to Work" fund (now called Career Investment Fund); b) Extended City's child care subsidy program to cover those not eligible for state funds.
Access to WFD services for working poor (and others)	Denver	DWI's work with welfare board pushed them to expand TANF grant for training, housing, transportation, emergency cash to 225% of poverty. Also helped push PIC to expand JTPA eligibility to low income working families.

Reform target	Jobs Initiative site	Specific systems reform/innovation achieved
Resources for quality training	New Orleans	Delgado Community College has allocated significant resources to workforce training programs, particularly in machining, facilitates location of state-of-the-art equipment on site for training.
Resources for training	Milwaukee	MJI board members succeed in getting TANF surplus funds set aside for new workforce advancement fund (WAA).
Relationships		
CBO — Community College partnership	St. Louis	Building on experience with WorkLink project, promoted partnerships between CBOs and St. Louis Community College to support career advancement programs (course offerings, location/times of training, etc.).
Links between trainers and employers	Seattle	Key core of vocational service providers more attuned to needs of employers, see need to tailor training to their needs, involve them in curriculum development.
Links between workforce programs and employers	Denver	DWI's focus on employers as customers motivated Denver Mayor's Office of Workforce Development to view employers as customers. Employer Services Division established by new director who is DWI board member. Employer specialists identify training needs of specific sectors, work with companies to tailor programs to meet their needs.
Business-labor relationships	Milwaukee	Built relationships of trust between leaders of the business community and organized labor
Expand skills training	Seattle	Helped persuade state to extend PET training from 12 weeks to one year for high-demand occupations.
Policy reform vehicles	St. Louis	Established the importance of having an entity to serve as a WFD intermediary to promote innovation and reform.
Employers organized around training needs	Philadelphia	Jobs Policy Network was created, bringing together broad coalition of employers, service providers at regional level for first time to identify and advocate for training issues.
Advocacy coalition built	Philadelphia	JPN efforts helped to form statewide advocacy coalition (Pennsylvania Welfare Coalition)

Seattle: Building Capacity of Community-Based Organizations



Challenge: CBOs Delivering Workforce Services Perform Unevenly, No Common Standards for Key Practices, Performance

Community-based organizations have always played a pivotal role in the Seattle Jobs Initiative. From its beginning in 1997, the Seattle Jobs Initiative (SJI) has relied on community based organizations (CBOs) for recruitment and retention services. The Initiative viewed CBOs, with their strong connection to inner-city and ethnic communities, as the best way of bringing disadvantaged residents of inner-city Seattle to its employment programs and to help them complete their training and retain their jobs.

SJI also recognized that CBO ability to help residents succeed in the labor market was highly uneven and in need of improvement. Soon after the Initiative began in March 1997, SJI saw that the shortcomings of CBOs contributed to its difficulties helping residents obtain and retain employment. SJI staff and partners noticed that a significant number of residents CBOs recruited to SJI's jobs projects did not possess the minimum basic skills and/or confronted serious issues, such as homelessness, domestic violence, inadequate childcare, and unreliable transportation, that severely impaired their ability to complete training successfully and retain employment. This led SJI to promote work readiness assessment and case management as crucial skills for CBOs to develop.

SJI's experience managing the Ready to Earn Fund further underscored the need for improved assessment and case management. As explained in the next case study, the city created this fund to help residents access resources quickly to help them overcome specific employment barriers. SJI soon discovered that CBO case managers often requested funds for needs that did not pose a barrier to employment, or that could be readily addressed by other government programs. The point of the fund was to provide help when other programs could not; it was not designed to duplicate them. SJI soon found itself providing informal guidance to case managers at most of its CBO partners.

As the only Jobs Initiative site based in city government, SJI was uniquely positioned to influence CBO practices. As a government agency, SJI had financial resources to use as incentives for change. Moreover, SJI was able to build on pre-existing relationships the city had with most of the participating CBOs.

Strategy: Multiple Efforts to Improve and Standardize CBO Assessment and Case Management Competencies.

Soon after the Initiative's start, SJI sought to help CBOs improve their delivery of employment and training services, develop quality standards and accountability systems, and become valued partners in the workforce development system. These goals remained constant, though SJI periodically adjusted how it pursued them during the capacity building period. Its work in this area involved collaboration with CBOs in each of its "sector teams," development of assessment and case management standards, and sponsorship of workshops and discussions on human service resources and practices. The Initiative also experimented with different ways of providing financial incentives to improve CBO performance.

Sector Teams. In 1998 SJI moved to an organizational structure based on "sector teams." Under this model, CBOs collaborated directly with industry brokers, and training providers under the leadership of a "sector manager."² The idea was to bridge the perspectives of residents, employers, and trainers within the context of specific jobs projects and to develop a sense of shared responsibility for the projects' success. CBOs were responsible for resident recruitment, assessment, case management, and retention support. Case managers and other staff met regularly with industry brokers, trainers, and sector managers to discuss "short-term issues, performance, and long-term planning."³ The topics of discussion ranged from the problems confronting individual jobs-project participants to broader issues involving the curriculum design and ways of increasing placements and retention. There was a lot of discussion at sector team meetings about how to include case managers in discussions with instructors. Specific topics included:

- Monitoring trainees' productivity and attendance
- Compiling progress information from instructors and writing reports
- Maintaining case management files
- Addressing issues with trainees, and
- Discussing improvement plans.

It was under the sector-team approach that CBOs made significant strides in becoming more effective players in the city's workforce development system. In working to improve training completion rates, job placement rates, and job retention rates, CBOs and SJI became increasingly aware of the importance of job readiness assessment and case management in identifying and addressing barriers to successful employment. Sector teams, for example, noticed that participants with unstable housing situations were less likely to graduate than their

² In addition to sector- or occupational-based sector teams which involved vocational training, SJI also operated a "direct placement" (later renamed individualized placement programs) in which CBOs were responsible for resident recruitment, case management and job placement; unlike SJI's other projects, direct placement did not involve formal vocational training.

peers. Discussions at sector team meetings highlighted the need for improved methods of identifying potential obstacles to success and to help residents overcome them. In order to achieve higher completion rates for sector training and to improve job placement and retention rates, the sector teams and SJI stressed the need for CBOs to develop more reliable ways of assessing the likelihood residents will be able to succeed in a given jobs project and to provide more effective case management to increase the likelihood of success.

Job readiness training standards developed. In response to these concerns about assessment and case management, SJI sought to standardize job readiness training. The CBOs requested that SJI allow them to develop job readiness training standards together. The CBOs, with support from SJI staff, identified a set of job readiness competencies and case management practices, listing them in a document that SJI distributed to all of its CBO contractors. When the CBOs' performance measures did not improve to SJI's satisfaction, the Initiative decided in December 1999 to work directly with four of the CBOs to develop a revised set of job readiness standards and measures. SJI required that the resulting retaining involve a minimum of five days and 20-30 hours, that it build on the CBOs' best practices that have shown good results, and that it incorporate "cultural competence." By the end of 2000, SJI had developed a curriculum designed to fully prepare residents for training and job placement and to meet the expectations of employers.

Contracts reward retention performance. Besides working with CBOs to improve their procedures for address job readiness, SJI also structured its contracts to promote job retention. In order to receive the full amount of the contract, CBOs were required to meet minimum standards for job placements and job retention. If placements or retention fell short of the specified milestones, compensation was reduced accordingly.

Impacts: Case Management Improvements Improve Retention, Assessment and Case Management Practices, Collaboration Among CBOs

The capacity building phase not only laid the groundwork for the Initiative's current focus on case management, but also led to significant improvements in the capacity of CBOs to serve the vocational aspirations of disadvantaged residents. These improvements are evident in, among other areas, their focus on retention, their integration of best practices in job readiness assessment and case management, and in their growing inclination to work together. Enhancement of case management practices is one of the SJI goals for the final three years of the Initiative. More work remains to be done for CBOs to become more consistently effective members of Seattle's workforce development systems. Moreover, several of SJI's CBO contractors, most of which were small, failed to meet the Initiative's placement and retention milestones and were eventually dismissed as "full service" CBOs (some continued to provide recruitment services).

Job Retention. Prior to SJI, few if any employment programs required CBOs or other agencies to track job retention beyond 90 days—much less provide supportive services to promote retention. SJI, with its emphasis on long-term retention, forced CBOs to change their approach

to case management. They realigned their staff both to track their clients' progress on the job but also to help them address any problems that pose a threat to their continued employment. As a result of SJI, CBOs are far more responsive to the challenge of supporting job retention.

Job Readiness Assessment and Case Management. There is broad consensus within SJI and its CBO partners that CBOs benefited greatly from the development of job readiness standards and the discussion of case management—the latter of which began during the capacity building phase and continues to the present. CBOs have become more selective in referring people to training programs, looking first to see if they face any problems that are likely to interfere with their ability to attend class regularly and participate fully. According to the director of a CBO, “CBOs used to think that people are always ready for employment...with a job, the rest of their lives will fall into place. Now, CBOs accept that you need to have the rest in place before you can succeed in work.” Most of SJI's CBO partners said they were incorporating SJI's assessment standards and case management practices in all of their employment programs.

Collaboration. SJI brought CBOs together to discuss common concerns. This occurred at sector team meetings and at sessions focused on the development of job readiness standards and case management practices. Over time, CBOs showed a greater willingness to talk about their weaknesses, becoming less defensive. They increasingly share information on how they can address various barriers (e.g., homelessness, domestic violence, mental illness). The dialogue SJI fostered among participating CBOs led to a much greater appreciation of the importance of case management. It built a consensus that case managers needed to have training in effective practices. It created ways for case managers to get recognized for their work, and most importantly, recognized case management as a profession that needed to be supported and developed.

Seattle: Flexible Support for Job Seekers



Challenge: The Fragmentation of Seattle's Human Service and Workforce Development Systems Makes it Difficult for Disadvantaged Job Seekers to Access Necessary Support

The Seattle Jobs Initiative pursued its objective of helping low-income city residents obtain and retain living-wage jobs in two distinct ways. Like the other Jobs Initiative sites, it developed job projects offering vocational training, job placement and retention assistance. But unlike the other sites, it also attempted to assist low-income job seekers by realigning human service and employment programs to better meet their needs. SJI saw the fragmentation of services as a major impediment to the employment of disadvantaged residents and sought to improve the situation.

The Initiative approached the problem of program fragmentation in several ways, some of which proved more successful than others. The most prominent dimension of this effort was the creation of the multi-million dollar "Ready to Earn" Fund (later renamed the Career Investment Fund). Established as part of the city's response to the federal overhaul of welfare legislation in 1996, the fund helps low-income job seekers address specific employment barriers. It does not so much reduce the fragmentation of government services as provide a way to compensate for it. SJI also attempted to reduce fragmentation of services by securing commitments from other agencies to provide resources to assist low-income job seekers.

Strategy: The Ready to Earn Fund

The City of Seattle, under the leadership of Mayor Norm Rice, launched the Ready to Earn Fund in April 1997, soon after SJI began operations. Capitalized with an initial appropriation of \$5 million, the city created the fund to help welfare recipients and other low-income residents overcome specific barriers that prevent them from obtaining or retaining a job. Residents are eligible for up to \$3,000 in assistance over a three-year period.

The fund is administered by SJI (in collaboration with the city's Department of Human Services). A portion of the fund covers the tuition and other training expenses associated with SJI's jobs projects. In addition, the fund helps SJI participants quickly obtain a wide range of assistance to complete training and secure employment. The fund was not designed to replicate existing human service programs but to provide resources that are not easily accessed through the existing set of categorical government programs.

Residents access the RTE/CIF fund through case managers employed by a number of community-based organizations (CBOs). Originally, the fund’s administrator was required to authorize every request for funds. Later, SJI allowed CBOs to provide residents with up to \$100 in assistance without prior approval. In addition, the fund provided CBOs with bus passes and vouchers (including gift certificates) to help residents obtain gasoline, clothing and food.

The Fund assisted more than 5,700 residents during the three years of the capacity-building phase, disbursing more than \$1.1 million. The majority of the recipients were participants in SJI’s sector training programs, many of whom needed financial assistance while in training. The primary expenditures are shown below:

RTE/CIF EXPENDITURES AND CLIENTS		
March 1997-April 2000		
Service Type	Total Expenditures	Total Clients
TOTAL	\$1,154,403	5,780
Most Common Services:		
Housing	419,506	556
Childcare (includes childcare subsidy and referral services)	192,493	524
Public Transportation	152,656	1,642
Food	114,714	1,008
Clothing	103,097	801
Private Transportation (mostly auto repairs, tires, and gas)	44,501	567
Work Related	39,301	169
Medical	23,799	102

Source: SJI.

Strategy: Human Service Realignment to Support Low-Income Job Seekers

In addition to the RTE/CIF Fund, SJI also secured additional resources from other government agencies to help low-income residents address employment barriers. SJI negotiated agreements committing other agencies to reserve a portion of their funds to help SJI participants obtain necessary services. These agreements covered the areas of housing, childcare, transportation and vocational training.

Housing. Housing assistance was a critical need for many SJI participants, some of whom were homeless. In response to these needs SJI obtained \$235,999 in 1998 in city funds to

obtain transitional housing. In addition, SJI received more than \$60,000 annually in federal funds earmarked for the city's homeless programs to help operate its transitional housing.

Childcare. SJI received \$40,000 annually from the city to help cover the childcare expenses of SJI's training program participants who do not qualify for the state's childcare subsidy program because of its work requirements.

Transportation. Seattle's Department of Health and Human Services provided SJI with \$12,000 in transit vouchers for its participants.

Vocational Training. SJI, as part of the city government, helped negotiate agreements with the state of Washington in 1997 and 1998 to allow TANF clients to participate in pre-employment training. This enabled welfare recipients to receive training from SJI and other programs while still receiving public assistance. The maximum amount of pre-employment training was extended from 12 weeks in 1998 to 22 weeks in late 1999 to one year in late 2000. These agreements constituted a major realignment of social welfare policy in support of vocational training.

Impacts: SJI has Improved Access to Human Services and Other Public Assistance for Low-Income Job Seekers.

The creation of the RTE/CIF fund, coupled with agreements with other government agencies to meet specific needs of low-income job seekers, constitutes a major improvement in access to services for low-income job seekers. Before SJI, low-income residents could only rely on the categorical programs operated by separate agencies and could not readily access resources to help them address particular barriers to employment, even if the necessary assistance involved only a modest amount of money. The RTE/CIF fund and SJI's funding agreements enable more residents to sustain themselves while in training and during their job search. It also prompted other government agencies to think more strategically about how their human service programs can better support the employment goals of low-income residents. SJI does not contend, however, that it fully accomplished its goal of realigning human service and workforce development programs to better serve the needs of low-income job seekers. Indeed, human service integration remains a high priority for the final three years of the Initiative.

Milwaukee: The Workforce Attachment and Advancement Fund



Challenge: Public Systems Focused on “Work First,” Federal Resources for Training Shrinking

Wisconsin was one of the first states to replace Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) with a work-based assistance program called Wisconsin Works (W-2). Part of the national welfare reform effort, W-2 was passed by the state legislature in 1996 and officially replaced AFDC in every county in the state in September 1997. Participants are not able to pursue long-term training or higher education while receiving benefits. Allowable training is usually restricted to a two-month preparation course for the high school equivalency test, English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) courses, soft skills training in job preparedness, and on-the-job training. Those assigned to subsidized jobs and the employment transitions program report receiving little or no skills training.

The federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) further diminished support for pre-employment vocational training. Instead, it promoted a “work first” approach to service delivery consistent with welfare reform. Under this new approach, substantive job skills training is reserved for those individuals not able to find employment. Previously, it had been the centerpiece of the federal approach to workforce development. Significant changes were also made in the administration of the program, with responsibility increasingly shifted to local workforce boards with discretion to set rules for eligibility for training. Early studies from around the country have found that the level of training taking place has declined considerably.

Strategy: MJI Targets Surplus Welfare Funds, Focuses Attention of State Policy Makers on Need for Skills Training, Connection to Prosperity of State

In Wisconsin, as elsewhere, the shift from cash assistance to a work-based program was accompanied by a sharp reduction in the number of aid recipients. Most of the decline in the welfare caseload in Wisconsin occurred before 1997, and can be attributed to the effects of a strong state economy, reduced benefit levels, and more restrictive eligibility requirements under the state’s own reform program, which included aggressive sanctions for those violating rules. The number of recipients fell 67% between 1986 and 1997, from 300,017 to 98,317. By January 2002, only 38,168 recipients remained. Unfortunately, there has been no

comparable decline in the size of the state's poverty population, indicating that many former TANF recipients remain in poverty.

The sharp drop in the number of W-2 participants left the state with surplus TANF funds during the initial years of program operation. The availability of those funds and the growing shortage of skilled workers experienced by state employers gave added impetus to efforts to provide greater training opportunities to disadvantaged workers.

These efforts were spearheaded by the Governor's Task Force on Technical Education, co-chaired by Dave Eberhardt of Tecumseh Products Company and Phil Neuenfeldt, Secretary/Treasurer of the Wisconsin State AFL-CIO. Both men sit on the board of the Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership; Neuenfeldt is also a member of the MJJ board. Tecumseh also has strong ties to MJJ, having trained several cohorts of entry-level workers through MJJ's manufacturing program. As members of the task force, Eberhardt and Neuenfeldt were instrumental in convincing officials at the DWD to reallocate a portion of the TANF surplus to skills training for the TANF-eligible population. MJJ's work on skills training was an important part of the discussion behind the Task Force findings.

Impact: \$20 Million in TANF Surplus Funds Allocated to Sectoral Skills Training for Working Poor, Employer Services

Drawing from the recommendations of the Governor's Taskforce, Wisconsin's Department of Workforce Development requested that \$20 million in TANF surplus funds be allocated to a new Workforce Advancement and Attachment (WAA) program in late 1999. Their request was included in the state's 1999-2001 biennial budget; \$19.7 million was divided equally between W-2 agencies and the state's local workforce boards (WDBs.) Both were required, under the new legislation, to submit plans for programs funded under WAA, identifying the specific populations or industries/occupations targeted, describing how the WAA program would fit into their local Job Center networks, and how they would ensure employer input on employer services and incumbent worker training. Agencies were also to clarify how they would ensure that funds did not duplicate existing services but actually reached beyond existing clientele to bring in the working poor. Persons served by WAA funds can have family incomes of up to 200% of the poverty level, but need not be current or former participants in W-2. Given the large reduction in the welfare caseload, this expanded eligibility was crucial to ensuring that the program served the far larger population of disadvantaged workers with children.

The mix of services supported by the WAA program reflects a greater emphasis on long-term employment outcomes than is found in either W2 or WIA. While the range of allowable services is broad, the primary emphasis falls on services or skills that help persons advance to higher paying employment. These services include 1) job readiness and placement services; 2) basic skills development; 3) services to assist with job retention; 4) skills training for incumbent workers; and 5) services to employers for employee retention and advancement. Training can take the form of classroom training, customized training, on-the-job training with employers, or other worksite-based training. However, the WAA funds can also be used to provide job

retention services (mentoring, job coaching, counseling, etc.), and job readiness and placement services designed to place persons in more stable employment at wages higher than they have previously received. (Although requested in the initial proposal, wage subsidies were not included in the final legislation.)

The goals of the WAA program represent a reversal, or at least a modification, of the “work first” focus of the state’s welfare reform program. Under W-2, participants are assigned to one of several rungs on a “employment ladder” and are expected to progress up that ladder into unsubsidized employment within two years with little or no additional education or training. The WAA program, in contrast, was intended to provide the TANF-eligible population with the skills training needed to increase individual earnings and to meet the needs of employers for a skilled workforce. As DWD Secretary Stewart noted, an “expansion of training capacity and new innovative approaches may be needed to provide occupational skills training and customized training, and expand employer training partnerships.” By funding expanded training opportunities for the TANF-eligible population, the WAA program represents an expansion, and partial reform, of the state’s workforce development system.

More concretely, the WAA program brought an additional \$4.1 million to the Milwaukee region for 1999-2000. By September 2001 close to 4,000 had received services through the program statewide. MJI’s own projects were among the first recipients of these funds. Through its jobs projects, it has used the WAA program not only to provide services to a larger population of disadvantaged workers, but also to deepen its work in employer services to promote worker retention as demand for entry-level workers has declined with the economic slowdown.

Milwaukee: Creating a Model for Multi-Sector Labor Market Intermediation



Challenge: Entry-Level Labor Shortages Across Sectors, Cumbersome and Rigid Training System, Employer Practices a Poor Fit with New Workforce

In the early 1990s, research by the University of Wisconsin's Center on Wisconsin Strategy (COWS), revealed two key challenges facing the region's manufacturing sector. First, manufacturing employers were reporting difficulties filling entry-level positions, despite the high wages offered relative to other available entry-level jobs. Manufacturing employers were losing or projected to lose a significant portion of their skilled workforce to retirement due to the high average age of workers in the industry. At the same time, their traditional sources of workers had dried up and they were increasingly willing to look to new groups, not traditionally part of their labor force. However, employers often complained that these new workers, more often minority than in the past, lacked appropriate work attitudes. The racial divide between incumbent workers and supervisor, and new, largely minority, entry-level workers was likely contributing to workplace tensions and high turnover of entry-level workers. Retention of these "good jobs" would require bridging the gap between the perceptions and needs of both employers and central city job seekers.

Second, despite employer complaints about the lack of skills found among current employees and job applicants, they were not investing much in training. In addition, employers were wary of existing publicly-funded training programs.

There were good reasons for employers' skepticism about available training programs. The process for approving funding for the state's "customized skills training" program was extremely cumbersome and often took as long as nine months to complete. For each course, a new curriculum had to be developed, with input from employers and training providers. Next, the curriculum would be submitted for approval to the Private Industry Council. This was often a very slow process, commonly delayed by a missing signature or for other procedural reasons. Employers who had identified training needs generally were interested in meeting those needs quickly. They were frustrated by the long waits produced by this process. In response, many chose to hire workers without the training, with the idea of training them on the job. Given the barriers mentioned above, this was not ideal.

Policy makers were also realizing the need for changes in training programs. In January 1990, Governor Thompson appointed a commission to study the status of Wisconsin's workforce and

to make recommendations for state skill development policies. The Commission's 1991 report, *A World Class Workforce for Wisconsin*, was based on surveys and interviews with 1850 firms. The commission concluded that public efforts were unlikely to lead to better jobs or more competitive firms without substantial changes in work systems and greater employer investment in training.

Strategy: Organize Employers Around Common Concerns, Push for Changes in Training System, Employer Practices

In the early 1990s, the Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership (WRTP) was formed in part to address the need for greater investment in training. WRTP's early work focused on the establishment of workplace education centers, as an issue that could unify labor and management interests while addressing the industry's long-term need for investment in training and modernization. The Milwaukee Jobs Initiative built on the early work of the WRTP, bringing increased attention to harder to employ job seekers and funding its expansion in manufacturing and the hospitality sector. In 1995, when Milwaukee was designated for inclusion in the Jobs Initiative, WRTP had 30 member firms. They had intentionally targeted large, union firms for early membership since they set the standards for regional employers. With MJI's support, WRTP began assessing employer needs in five sectors (manufacturing, hospitality, health care, information technology and construction) through periodic Industry Needs Assessment Surveys. The surveys identified workforce needs by gathering information on firms' workforce size, skill level, hiring and layoff levels, recruitment strategies, use of outsourcing and temporary workers, labor relations and changes in equipment or in the organization of work, worker training, retention issues and health and safety. This information enabled them to approach firms to discuss workforce needs and ways WRTP might help bring labor and management together to address them.

Initially, when the economy was strong, MJI/WRTP focused a great deal of attention on changing the process for mounting customized skills training courses. This meant working closely with employers, the Milwaukee Area Technical College, and the Private Industry Council. As originally set up, in order to gain approval for a customized training course, a curriculum must first be submitted to the PIC for approval. WRTP worked to identify employers who could benefit from the training and bring them together with MATC staff to develop each curriculum. As noted above, this process was fraught with long delays and employers were less and less interested in taking part, particularly as the economy slowed down. WRTP, working with its employer and MATC partners, developed a standard core curriculum in manufacturing and gained PIC approval for it. In addition, they pushed for changes in procedural rules that often delayed the start of training. As a result, groups of classes could be approved jointly, and the process for recruiting and beginning training flowed more smoothly, dramatically cutting the time needed to mount a course.

Over time, as shifts in the economy and ongoing difficulties navigating the training system prevented MJI/WRTP from achieving the scale they had hoped for, WRTP began focusing more on changes in the workplace. They sought to develop a range of services to improve employer

practices. The areas of work and specifics of the curriculum were developed jointly with employers and representatives of workers, with MJI/WRTP staff playing a facilitating role in the process. As a result of this work, a number of handbooks were developed, facilitating expansion of this work. These included: *Careers in Manufacturing: A Training Guide for Career Opportunities in Manufacturing*, *Essential Job Skills: A Pre-employment training guide for participants*, *Mentor Training Guide: Helping Manufacturing Companies Train Workplace Mentors*, *Shopfloor Training Guide: Training the Trainer* and the *Advisor Training Guide*. MJI/WRTP staff were also piloting changes in employee assistance programs aimed at giving workers facing dismissal for attendance problems a “last chance” training opportunity aimed at helping them overcome problems causing them to be absent from work.

Impact: Growing Membership in WRTP, Growth of “Quality” Practices Among Membership, More Flexible and Responsive Training Process

By 2000, WRTP had made significant progress in changing the climate for entry-level workers in the manufacturing sector. It had increased its membership to 67 manufacturing firms, with members at various stages of participation in MJI programs. Of these, 25 firms had participated in WRTP programs aimed at entry-level workers. For example, five firms implemented new workforce initiatives targeting Spanish-speaking workers, four firms had established new, functioning mentoring systems. Mentoring systems—designed with buy-in from firm leadership, supervisors, and labor leaders—were announced and publicized to the entire plant, and involved participation by a majority of new hires.

Stories from a handful of early member firms provide greater insight into the meaning of these changes. At Tecumseh Products, for example, the share of the workforce comprised by people of color increased from zero to 33%. Union membership rose and the first African-American labor leaders were elected. Finally, as it expanded, the company was able to successfully bid on a new product line. At Gerret Products, the company reported a 75% reduction in turnover, resulting in an annual savings equivalent to 25 to 50% of the firms’ wage bill. The firm was then able to raise wages for new employees and reduce their reliance on temporary workers.

Work in the traditionally low-wage Hospitality sector was underway and already producing changes in wages and employer practices, albeit at a small number of employers at this early stage. An employer needs assessment had been completed by hotel managers. The Hospitality steering committee had reached consensus on the importance of raising starting wage rates to improve hiring and retention results and the four largest properties had agreed to a timetable for raising starting wages to at least \$7 per hour. A mentoring network was established at one property, with plans underway for networks at other properties. Working with member properties, the Hospitality Partnership had documented career ladders available to entry-level workers and begun work to ensure that all new employees were aware of the potential for career advancement from their positions.

New Orleans: Upgrading Machinist Training at Delgado Community College



Challenge: Shortage of Skilled Workers, Outdated Training, Racial Exclusion

Delgado Community College (DCC), as the region's largest public training institution, faces a tremendous challenge in addressing the educational needs of adult learners and of local employers. Like many community colleges, it struggles internally with its dual mission of serving college bound youth who are not yet ready to enter a four-year higher educational institution, and serving adult youth in need of help mastering basic English and math skills and preparing for a job in the local economy.

While in the early post World War II period Delgado had been an important source of skills training for manufacturers, in the years since it was widely viewed by employers as not keeping pace with the current production technologies and demands of industry. Their machinist training, in particular, had fallen behind the times. In fact, when the New Orleans Jobs Initiative (NOJI) was established, Delgado still offered the machinist training curriculum developed in 1921 and focused on manual machining techniques, with no training in computerized numerical control, the industry standard. This curriculum was in greatest demand decades ago, during and after the second World War when there was high demand for technically-skilled workers in aircraft construction and in the metalworking trades in New Orleans. By the 1990s the program was moribund, with few trainees and was poorly regarded by local employers. The two tenured faculty members on staff were also part of the problem: both refused to teach non-degree, vocational courses.

Although manufacturing in New Orleans started to regain employment in the 1990s, reversing many years of job loss, employers faced difficulties finding entry-level and skilled workers. In response, some had begun to import workers from other countries to meet their skilled labor needs. Employers cited both the lack of skilled workers and the lack of appropriate training options locally as causes of the shortage.

Part of the disconnect between the local workforce and entry-level manufacturing jobs was also clearly racial: the local industry has traditionally been owned and dominated (in terms of employment) by whites. This is particularly true of machine shops, only one of which is known to be black-owned. The industry is also not known to be receptive to workforce programs, weakening that as a point of leverage to get minority workers in the door.

Creating Change:

Pushing Workforce Systems to Help Participants Achieve Economic Stability and Mobility

Strategy: Target Manufacturing's Good Jobs, Draw on Faith Networks to Reach Employers, Work with Employers and College to Upgrade Training

Manufacturing was identified early on as a target sector by NOJI. It fit the organization's interest in gaining access to well-paying jobs for central city workers of color. NOJI sought to create an employer network as part of its agenda for this sector. Toward this end, the Acting Director spent an entire year building a relationship with the one minority machine shop owner and, through one of NOJI's congregational networks (the Jeremiah Group), identified another employer representative who was then added to the group. In the end, a committee of three employer representatives came up with the initial plan for a machinist training program. These individuals were instrumental in rallying support from other employers to push for the program.

Employers were initially skeptical of focusing their strategy on Delgado. NOJI's commitment to soft skills training and desire for industry involvement were critical factors in gaining their support. They developed a plan for a training program that would serve employer needs through a phased approach. The first component was to be a job-readiness program; this evolved, with input from many others, into the 21st Century Success Principles (see following case study.) In the area of skills training, employers agreed that unless the Community College's program could be updated and linked directly to employer needs, it would not be a viable option. They developed a curriculum based on materials available from the National Association of Manufacturers.

While DCC clearly presented some serious challenges to NOJI's machinist training agenda, there were also reasons to think that change would be possible. First, college leaders had been active members of NOJI's board since the Initiative's start. For DCC's leadership, becoming a more central player in vocational education made sense for other reasons. Louisiana has a large incumbent worker training fund available to fund investment in equipment. To access these funds, training institutions must work with employers to identify training needs and associated equipment needs. Access to these funds would ensure that Delgado was able to upgrade its facilities and receive continued funding. In 2000/2001 Delgado received nearly \$12 million from the state's \$50 million Incumbent Worker grant fund—the largest amount given to a single source/training provider.

All of these elements came together when a representative of Haas Automation, Inc., a leading American machine tool builder, approached the committee about entrusting machining equipment to the college for this program. Haas has a corporate policy of entrusting machine tools to schools. The committee's work developing a state-of-the-art training curriculum, along with the state funds available for incumbent worker training, was attractive to Haas. Delgado's decision to reallocate funds internally (from Pell grants and student technology fees) to support development of this program was also important. Several machining employers (ranging from smaller shops to large institutions hiring machinists) sent letters of support to Delgado for the entrustment plan. NOJI's Executive Director also wrote in support of the idea.

At the same time, in order for this to work, DCC also needed to rework their machining facilities to accommodate the new equipment. In 1999, they reallocated \$160,000 internally to

upgrade their facilities, drawn from Perkins grants and student fees. On December 9, 1999, Delgado's board voted to accept the entrustment, paving the way for the establishment of the Haas Computer Numeric Control lab. The Haas Technical Center, a 2500 square foot facility, held its grand opening on January 9, 2000.

Impact: State-of-the-Art Machinist Training Benefiting Delgado, Employers and Participants

The impact of this investment is most easily measurable by the value of the machinery entrusted to Delgado Community College and of funding allocated by the College to upgrade the machining facilities. Haas Automation, Inc., through the Haas Factory Outlet Division of Machine Tools, Inc. provided a Computer Numerically Controlled (CNC) Lathe, a Vertical Machining Center and a Horizontal Machining Center to the Center. The total value of these machines was estimated to be \$250,000. Delgado also invested over \$100,000 in additional tools and machinery to complete the Center. They allocated \$160,000 of college funds to the upgrading of the facilities where the new machines would be housed. Delgado also shifted funds internally to support this program within the Division of Occupational Studies. They continue to push tenured faculty to upgrade their skills, effectively increasing the budget in support of this program.

These expenditures are especially significant since they represent a change in college policy: traditionally, Delgado has relied on participants' tuition or employment and training funds to cover the costs of its workforce training programs. With the state's low level of funding for vocational training, this has meant that average spending per student has been very low: \$2200 per student, compared with \$3,000 in other southern states and well below the national average of \$6,000. Delgado must position itself to compete for the increasing pot of state funds available. These investments are part of that effort.

The value of the machinery is arguably much higher since, as an entrustment, it will be upgraded every two years. Thus, Delgado students will have access to state-of-the-art machinery for as long as the agreement is maintained. The value of this machinery must thus be adjusted every two years to reflect the replacement of equipment. The cost of upgrading this equipment will be born by Haas.

Haas was clearly motivated to make this investment by its belief that it would be well-positioned to become the standard for machining locally and that use of its machinery to train workers (both entry level and incumbent) would encourage more companies to adopt it. (Part of the arrangement is that Haas can use the machine shop to showcase its products to prospective buyers.) Other local industry partners, in their letters of support, expressed their hope that upgrading machining training would help the local industry expand by helping them to find skilled workers. Such training would clearly benefit workers by facilitating the skills upgrading needed to help workers advance in their careers. For NOJL participants, machining jobs have long been off limits. It is hard to put a figure on the value of training that helps open the door to well paying jobs for central city African-American workers.

New Orleans: The 21st Century Success Principles Pre-Employment Training Model



Challenge: Engaging Adult Learners Averse to Traditional Classroom Training, Preparing Them for Success in the Culture of Historically White Workplaces

In surveys, employers have consistently identified personality, attitude and behavioral traits—“soft skills”—as their most important criterion for hiring entry-level workers. Workforce programs around the country, whether focused on “hard” skills training or preparation for immediate placement, have struggled to come up with a model that gives participants these skills. The issue of “soft skills” is complicated by the fact that employers unable to continue to hire from their traditional pool, have little experience with minority workers and may be using such skills to

screen out workers they are unfamiliar with or, at worst, prejudiced against. Whatever their motivations, evidence from programs placing workers of color in workplaces historically dominated by whites suggests that soft skills training should directly address racial issues they are likely to face in the workplace.

NOJI was well aware of the need to directly address the issue of race in training for several reasons. First, New Orleans is arguably one of the most racially divided cities in the country and such divisions extend into industrial sectors and workplaces. The sectors identified as having both high wages and job openings included construction and precision machining—two areas well known to have historically excluded African-Americans. Second, NOJI is staffed by a group of people that are strongly committed to understanding and combating racism—many are graduates of an intensive “undoing racism” workshop offered by the People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond.

Strategy: Rejecting Existing Soft-Skills Programs, NOJI Develops New Curriculum That Builds on Participants’ Skills, And The Realities of the Workplace

NOJI originally planned to provide soft skills training as part of its remedial skills training and to rely on Delgado Community College to do this. However, it became evident during the implementation of NOJI’s first training program, for construction jobs, that Delgado was not ready to serve in this role, largely due to the college’s lack of experience serving NOJI’s target population of adults who would otherwise not qualify to enter their programs. This forced NOJI to think about both the curriculum and the learning model that would be most effective.

For this group, traditional classroom training was associated with their past, unsuccessful school experiences and focused them immediately on their weaknesses. Similarly, through their review of leading “soft skill” programs, and through focus groups with employers, community organizers and public housing residents, NOJI staff saw that these programs emphasized participants’ failings and correcting them. This approach was perceived as racist by staff and by members of the community from which participants would be drawn. Based on these findings, NOJI Director Darryl Burrows wanted to recast programs in a more positive frame, where participants’ would build a more positive view of their own capabilities.

Burrows was attracted to the educational model developed by Jane Vella, founder of Global Learning Partners. Her approach centers on adult learners and emphasizes learning through self-discovery and dialogue between learners and instructors. The materials and issues used in this approach are developed to be context-specific, centered on issues facing learners. This approach engages students more deeply in issues discussed and results in more profound transformation in their understanding of these issues and their own abilities.

At the same time, Burrows also drew lessons from the work of Harvard Professor William Julius Wilson regarding the effects of living in communities that are disconnected from the world of work. Young people in these communities have not been surrounded with family members and neighbors who work on a regular basis. Rather than learn the codes of the workplace, they learn the codes of the street. They build the skills and attitudes needed for survival in their world. These codes do not always transfer well to the workplace.

Based on this analysis, NOJI stakeholders decided to focus training to respond to what they believed were the missing keys to success for many young adults in such settings: knowledge of workplace culture, networks of opportunity and support, and coping skills. The 21st Century Success Principles curriculum aims to build these skills through exercises on topics such as decision-making, code-switching, coping with racism, team work, and self-efficacy. The curriculum is taught over a 21-day period and includes 100 learning hours.

Another important element of the program is reliance on a cadre of instructors trained in both the Global Learning Partners approach to adult education and in the 21st Century Success Principles approach to workforce preparation in New Orleans. NOJI decided that the most effective approach would be to rely on peer educators who could also serve as role models for participants. A formal certification process was created to train instructors. Approximately 240 people have completed the GLP course, 50 have completed the workforce course. Those completing both courses are then certified as 21st Century Success Principles trainers.

Impact: Training Effectiveness, Dissemination as a “Best Practice” in Pre-Employment Training

As of May 2001, NOJI-certified trainers had trained over 400 people using the 21st Century curriculum. The impact of this new approach to soft skills training can be measured at several

levels: 1) effectiveness with participants; 2) adoption by other agencies in New Orleans; and 3) demand from agencies around the country.

The effectiveness of the program has been demonstrated through the high rates of retention of participants throughout the 21-day training period, participant feedback and by improvements in participants scores on a measures of work readiness developed in Denver and for which norms have been developed. The cumulative retention rate for the course is 91% (5/2001.) In addition, anecdotal evidence suggests that graduates are more likely to complete subsequent technical training and remain on the job than students of similar backgrounds who have not gone through the program.

Impressed by the curriculum, the region's key workforce agencies have received or requested training for their staff or their participants. The One Stop Centers in Orleans and Jefferson parishes contracted with NOJI to train staff responsible for case management as well as business services and job development using the 21st Century Success Principles. Collectively, this group is responsible for assessing and assisting the region's adult and youth participants in the state's welfare to work and workforce programs. As of 1999, more than 12,000 TANF recipients were served by these centers in Orleans parish alone. The One Stops provide workforce services to many other residents who are eligible for workforce programs but do not receive TANF. Recently, the Work Initiative Network, a program in St. Tammany parish supported by its local workforce board to provide services to welfare recipients, requested that its staff be trained in the curriculum.

The approach taken by the 21st Century Success Principles has gained wider exposure in the local education community and has been adopted by several high schools and for some programs at Delgado Community College. NOJI conducted a full day training event, featuring Dr. William Julius Wilson and Dr. Jane Vella (originator of the learner-centered approach), followed by a series of seminars for local educators, and community organizations on the model underlying the approach and its basic principles. NOJI course leaders trained teachers from seven alternative public high schools in the learner-centered approach and worked with them to adapt the curriculum for their classrooms. As of May 2001, the revised course had been fully adapted and piloted at two schools. At the community college level, Delgado Community College made the curriculum a core course in its workforce division. They contract with NOJI to teach it.

Word of the program's fresh approach has spread in the region and, increasingly, around the country. The curriculum is also being adopted for use in a variety of nonprofit programs in the region. In addition, requests for information about the curriculum and how to contract to train in its principles from organizations around the country has been growing. For example, the Ford Motor Company adapted the program to train mechanics and now offers success seminars as part of its technical training.

In response to these inquiries, NOJI is outlining its strategy for educating individuals and organizations around the country in the success principles and its underlying educational approach. Demand from outside the region is currently pushing NOJI to develop a strategy for disseminating the program without watering down its teaching philosophy.

St. Louis: Organizing Providers to Change Standards and Goals



Challenge: Training Providers Face a Sea Change in Incentives and Policies, Changes Undermine Programs Aimed at Those with Most Barriers to Work, Providers Not Organized to Respond

By 1997, welfare reform was moving forward in Missouri and the State was designing mechanisms to move TANF recipients from public assistance rolls to employment. Important changes were being made with little input from experienced workforce development providers, knowledgeable about program elements and strategies that would offer the greatest chance for success to former recipients in terms of attachment to the workforce.

At the same time that welfare reform was occurring, the implementation of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) was resulting in dramatic changes in the way federal funding for workforce development activities was being allocated. These changes generally rewarded agencies able to show strong past performance, regardless of the population served. Prior to WIA, nonprofit providers had contracts that essentially guaranteed fixed amounts of funding to underwrite their training programs. Under WIA, individuals seeking training services are given vouchers that can be taken to any one of a number of potential training providers. They would select programs based on this performance data.

Changes in the financing of training under new programs made it difficult for many providers to survive. Under the new, “market-based” approach, training providers must be able to offer classes without knowing ahead of time how many students to expect. The financing of training services was further complicated by the implementation of performance-based contracts as part of welfare-to-work programs and establishment of performance targets as a pre-condition for remaining certified as a WIA provider. Although intended to increase accountability, these performance-based contracts often did not allow enough up-front funding to make it economically feasible for smaller, cash-strapped community-based organizations to provide training services. Moreover, the WIA placement and retention performance targets at times had unintended consequences, in terms of encouraging provider agencies to focus on easier-to-serve populations.

Finally, many area employers had a low regard for the training services provided through the publicly-financed programs. Employers found that the graduates of these training programs

Creating Change:

often did not meet the minimal skills requirements that firms were seeking, in part because employers had little or no say in training design.

These changes brought to a head concerns about how performance standards were being set and how providers might receive assistance in improving their performance. Through the years, there had been a number of attempts to create an entity that would provide a unified voice for St. Louis employment and training providers. One such attempt occurred when the City of St. Louis applied for federal Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community designation in 1994. During the planning process, the City proposed the creation of an Employment Partnership, under which the area's workforce development organizations would network together to provide coordinated services to job seekers and employers located in the Enterprise Community neighborhoods. Although this entity existed on paper following Enterprise Community designation, the networking of providers never really gelled and little coordinated activity took place.

Strategy: Nascent Provider Network Funded, Attention to Best Practices and Ties to Employers Promoted

In 1998, the idea for a collaborative effort among St. Louis's workforce development organizations was resurrected. Again, the idea was to try to get the organizations to coordinate resources to deliver services to the neighborhoods within the Enterprise Community boundaries. After a month-long planning process, the providers were still somewhat ambivalent about working with the Enterprise Community, but concluded that there were many other potential benefits that could be realized from collaborating. The providers believed that through cooperation and collective action they could:

- Achieve a much more prominent public voice;
- Serve less job-ready individuals more effectively and efficiently;
- Improve the general quality of workforce development services provided; and
- Change the perception of the business community about the efficacy of the services offered.

To lead this effort, they established a separate nonprofit organization, Workforce Partners. This collaborative effort received funding for two years from the Enterprise Community, and built a core membership of 19 local providers. However, when the EC funding ran out, the initiative began to falter.

At this point, the St. Louis Regional Jobs Initiative (SLRJI) stepped forward and provided funding to Workforce Partners to establish a call center training program for disadvantaged job seekers. SLRJI had been interacting with Workforce Partners since the latter's inception, and had been bringing various national workforce development models to the attention of the partnership and its members. Included among some of the ideas that SLRJI championed were the importance of employer engagement in the design and operation of training programs, the value of sectoral employment strategies, and long-term retention and advancement as the key performance measures on which workforce development providers should focus. In addition to its support for

the call center, SLRJI also provided funding to Workforce Partners to conduct a national search to identify the best job-readiness training approaches, and to develop a training package based on the approaches identified to offer to local service agencies and employers.

The SLRJI funding allowed Workforce Partners to put in practice both its own ideas and those from SLRJI that it had adopted. It also provided the partnership with an opportunity to establish more visibility and credibility among employers. And it allowed Workforce Partners to maintain its core staff and a sense of momentum among its members.

Impact: State Changes How Providers are Funded, WP Provides Training in Best Practices, Publicizes Members' Performance Data

In its brief history to date, Workforce Partners has already had an impact on the workforce development system. Changes have occurred in three main areas: changes in state program practices, best practices for training, and publicizing the performance of Workforce Partners' members.

In the first area, Workforce Partners convinced the State of Missouri to revise its RFP for case management services for welfare-to-work clients to ease restrictions on job readiness, work prep, and training activities. In addition, they successfully pushed for changes in the funding formula in the State's performance-based contracts to allow more compensation up-front to support recruitment activities and, at the back end, to support post-placement services such as transportation.

In terms of best practices, prompted by the St. Louis Regional Jobs Initiative, Workforce Partners has identified effective approaches to job readiness training and offered training on adopting such approaches to providers and employers.

Finally, Workforce Partners has publicized the strong performance of its members. It published a directory of services for job seekers, employers, and other customers of workforce development services, providing the actual performance records of the Workforce Partners member organizations. In addition to providing an opportunity for consumers of those services to be more informed about their choices, the directory also revealed that the Workforce Partners were achieving a much higher placement rate than the statewide average (i.e., 67% for Workforce Partners versus 45% statewide.)

Although Workforce Partners was established independently of the St. Louis Regional Jobs Initiative, SLRJI interceded at a critical juncture to shore up this reform effort and to increase its visibility and clout. In addition, as AECF funding for the Jobs Initiative begins to wind down, SLRJI is looking to Workforce Partners as a potential entity to continue the "research and development" function that the regional jobs initiative has been performing in the St. Louis region over the past six years. Accordingly, in the final phase of the Jobs Initiative, SLRJI is supporting further capacity building of Workforce Partners, to ensure that the organization is in the strongest possible position to assume this role.

Philadelphia: Organizing Employers for Policy Change



Challenge: Lack of Sustained Employer Engagement in Workforce Development, Lack of Sensible Welfare Reform Policy

In 1996 when the Jobs Initiative was established in Philadelphia, there was a noticeable absence of sustained employer engagement in the workforce development debate. While businesses were active in civic organizations such as Greater Philadelphia First and the 21st Century League, workforce issues were not a priority. Additionally, as the Jobs Initiative got under way, federal welfare reform with its emphasis on “work first,” emerged as a pressing issue for states like Pennsylvania with large welfare populations. In conjunction with federal welfare reform, the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare issued Act 35, the State’s welfare reform law, in May 1996. It also emphasized a “work first” policy over training and education, requiring all non-exempt welfare recipients who have been on the caseload for 24 months be working 20 hours per week by March 3, 1999.

Strategy: Engage Employers in Workforce Issues, Influence Welfare Reform Agenda

A top priority for the Philadelphia Jobs Initiative was to engage employers in the development of workforce development policies and programs. To do so, it organized the Jobs Policy Network (JPN). The site believed that the absence of employer voices in workforce development policy advocacy contributed heavily to the lack of attention shown by state government to workforce issues. PJI recruited employers to serve not simply as members of a civic group, but to form active committees to articulate workforce development strategies suitable for the region, develop a long-term strategy for working with training providers, and map a timetable and strategy for implementing their recommendations. The JPN also used employers’ credibility and political connections to help make PJI a significant player in the workforce policy arena. An employer-led advocacy coalition, JPN was to fill a ‘leadership vacuum in the area of workforce development.’ (1999 SIP Update).

The JPN focused on several strategies to reform workforce systems. One major initiative was to organize regional employers to better articulate their workforce needs so that training curricula would be better aligned with their needs. This led to the incubation of two timely workforce development initiatives in customer service and information technology. In addition, with the leadership of employers, the JPN published its first workforce development report that highlighted the workforce development recommendations for the city of Philadelphia and the state. *Workforce 2000: An Annual Report on Greater Philadelphia’s*

Labor Market and its companion piece, *Regional Challenges and Strategic Initiatives* form the cornerstone of employers' response to workforce needs. These reports outlined the strategic directions that employers believe are relevant for the city and the region during the systems reform phase of the Jobs Initiative.

The JPN also played a major role in reshaping the state's welfare reform policies towards job training. In response to the fact that an estimated 50% of the state's entire welfare population lived in the city of Philadelphia, and that nearly 20,000 families in Philadelphia alone would lose benefits by March 1999, the JPN decided to focus part of its policy advocacy agenda on welfare reform. The effort was led by a committee of employers and with the support of job trainers and other workforce development advocates. Employers argued that while welfare reform in principle was a good idea, resources for training needed to be part of the conversation, and that welfare recipients should not be sanctioned for participating in training that would likely improve their employability.

In 1998, a 50-member JPN committee developed an "emergency agenda" on welfare reform directly in response to the state's welfare reform plan, and specifically to what they perceived as serious challenges facing the city in light of the March 1999 deadline. The agenda included the following recommendations for the state: 1) Commit to workforce development; 2) Expand work opportunities; 3) Eliminate family sanctions; 3) Support educational opportunities; 4) Remove childcare and transportation barriers and 5) Improve Department of Public Welfare systems

To implement this agenda, between 1997 and 2001, JPN successfully organized two coalitions to advocate for changes in the state's welfare reform laws, with particular emphasis on changes regarding education and training for TANF recipients. Both coalitions—one in the Philadelphia region and the other in Harrisburg—drew on their combined strengths of grassroots community organizing, employer leadership that provided credibility, and broad-based support from workforce development stakeholders to campaign for legislative changes to Act 35, the state's welfare reform law.

Impact: Changes in State Welfare Reform Law, Employer Engagement in Workforce Development

Through the aggressive lobbying efforts of the JPN and the coalition in Philadelphia and Harrisburg, the state's welfare reform law was amended. House Bill 1266 was successfully introduced to the House. The Bill was intended to expand the definition of work to allow education and training to count towards TANF recipients' work requirements. Under Act 35, education and training was not counted. In June 1999, House Bill 1266 was passed by a unanimous vote of 200-0. Though the Bill was later tabled in the Senate, as a result of the successful bipartisan passage in the House, Governor Ridge issued a policy clarification to Department of Public Welfare regarding education options for TANF recipients, effectively eliminating sanctions. In addition, the Governor proposed, and the General Assembly approved, \$4 million in TANF funds to be used to support education. This was a significant

policy reversal for the administration. And though the Department of Public Welfare later refused to modify its position of the post-24 month work requirement, after intense lobbying by the JPN and its supporters, the administration issued a policy change in June 2000 that enabled certain TANF recipients to continue their education beyond the 24 month mandated time line.

In addition to the actual changes to welfare reform that the JPN and its allies articulated, the JPN achieved a subtler victory by effectively altering the debate on welfare reform. Initially the debate was dominated by “work first” or rapid attachment to any job. As the advocacy campaign garnered state-wide support, the debate around welfare reform was broadened to include a discussion about the importance of training and education to not only move TANF recipients off assistance, but more importantly, to move them out of poverty. As evidenced in newspaper articles in support of the advocacy campaign, public attention was swayed toward an endorsement of training.

In addition to its successful advocacy of job training for TANF recipients, the JPN (subsequently reorganized as the Regional Workforce Partnership) also established itself as a prominent actor in the broader workforce arena. By March 2001, JPN had an active membership base in excess of 200 members, including employers and community-based organizations. With the help of its members, JPN has successfully served to incubate and launch two new regional workforce initiatives that are aimed at establishing skills credentialing for customer service occupations, and creating access for non-traditional workers into the information technology field. Perhaps the most significant impact is the steady core of active regional employers that it has maintained through the capacity building phase and into full implementation.

Lessons, Conclusions

Challenges, Strategies

Despite their differences, all sites have had to contend with the sweeping changes in federal policy that have shifted the focus of programs toward short-term job placement without regard for job quality. In general, this has meant that fewer resources have been available through these systems for skills training and that systems are not rewarded for doing better for participants in the long run.

Of course, local context has either magnified or minimized the impact of these shifts. Several factors seem to have shaped sites' early reform work. Among these are the policy context (including funding) presented by states' differing welfare and workforce policies, the network of relationships among key stakeholders, the organizational vantage point that local jobs initiatives had for conducting their reform work, and the strength and functionality of local workforce programs available to build upon.

For example, since states' welfare block grants are based on historic per capita spending levels, cities in historically higher spending states, like Wisconsin, had many more resources to work with than cities like New Orleans, Louisiana, with its historically low levels of welfare spending. Similarly, local jobs initiative organizations were differently positioned to act in response to these programs. For example, Seattle, where the program was housed in city government, was able to push a reform agenda directly, by changing its own practices and those of its contractors. In contrast, Philadelphia, with its tradition of highly contentious city politics and where the initiative was housed in a well regarded community reinvestment intermediary, organized a group with surprisingly little voice in setting priorities for workforce spending—local employers.

At some level, relationship building was a focus in each of the sites. Yet starting points varied greatly. In some places, relationships among groups arguably central to the issue (employers in Philadelphia, service providers in St. Louis) were virtually nonexistent or not focused on workforce issues before the jobs initiative. In others, key groups were well organized and relationship building focused on building ties between groups that historically had few or hostile ties (business and labor in Milwaukee, community organizations following different organizing models in New Orleans.) In Seattle, community-based providers, a well-organized constituency, were collectively pushed to raise the standards for their work.

On the final point, the strength and functionality of local workforce programs, again we find great variation. Perhaps most dramatic was New Orleans, where the jobs initiative found existing pre-employment training programs such a poor fit for their community that they set about creating an alternative program to replace them. Similarly, they pushed to upgrade a seriously outdated community college program. In contrast, in other sites, the focus was on bridging the gap between employers and training providers to ensure that training was

delivered in the most effective way. Whether or not sites produced changes at key training institutions, like community colleges, was largely dependent on existing relationships. In sites where ties between colleges and employers were weak or non-existent, pushing for change will necessarily be a long-term strategy.

Again, we must caution readers that the reforms achieved during this phase of the Jobs Initiative were not formally planned to be the culmination of their “capacity building” work. Nonetheless, as their work progressed, these are the factors that sites needed to address in order to make progress, whether anticipated or not. We must wait a few more years to see how they relate to the longer-term reform agenda sites have planned to be the capstone of their efforts.

Impact

While we have documented the impact that these changes have had so far, we must emphasize that they are still young. Reforms that are grounded in new relationships are fragile and their lasting effects and growth will depend on the maintenance and institutionalization of these relationships. For example, the work of the WRTP will deepen as its newer member firms move from formal membership to adopt more “quality” workplace practices and embed them into workplace and firm culture.

Many reforms are not yet institutionalized. Changes in rules, (Philadelphia counting training as a work activity) must become permanent through changes in laws so they will outlive personnel changes. This is the task facing sites now, transforming these changes into permanent reforms.

Many sites achieved one-shot funding wins. For example, Milwaukee helped achieve an allocation of TANF surplus funds to skills training. As TANF surplus dry up (and balances shift into the red!) the challenge becomes finding more permanent sources of funding for skills training. New Orleans’ machinist training reform represents a longer term win since the machinery “entrusted” by the company will be upgraded every two years and the operating budget is in place to support the program.

Finally, we must acknowledge that the scale of these early changes is modest now. Over the longer term, gains will depend on above factors as well as how sites incorporate these into their long-term systems reform agendas.

Conclusions

In conclusion, we return to themes introduced at the start of this report.

Steps in a new direction. These early reforms represent a departure from current national welfare and workforce policies, with their emphasis on rapid placement as the policy goal, and a job (any job) as the cure to the problems of those marginally attached to the labor force. These reforms push systems toward new policy goals, and reflect a long-term definition of success. They reflect an understanding that the barriers to work are complex and multifaceted and go beyond individuals' motivation to work. They recognize that employers should be engaged stakeholders in training systems. They challenge the view that work itself is curative by recognizing and addressing *post placement* supports for workers and employers to enable workers to retain their new jobs and advance to other, better positions over time. Instead, placement is pursued as one step on the long path toward economic success for families.

Goals clear, change complex. While there is broad consensus about the outcomes that sites want for disadvantaged job seekers, there is no such consensus about how to go about achieving these goals. The diversity seen in the particular programs being mounted across sites, leading to differing emphases in their early reform efforts, reflect the complexity and diversity of problems faced by job seekers, and the need for flexible responses, responding to a wide range of issues and contexts.

Common challenges, local differences. Reforms build on local conditions. For this reason, those reforms that have had the greatest impact so far strongly reflect differences in local conditions, particularly in the strength of local civic or institutional infrastructure. To push for system change sites need organized advocates for change and successful examples to point to. Sites lacking either form of infrastructure tended to focus on building it. Sites with relative strength in civic or institutional infrastructure tried to build on it to push for policy changes, and on development of resources needed to support reforms.

Next steps: Learn from changes, push for permanence. These experiences provided sites with a good testing ground for sorting out which reforms made sense, and have helped them understand what it may take to achieve larger goals and broader systems reforms. Early reforms are fragile and not entrenched. They require nurturing through strengthening of new relationships, making rules and practices into politics, and securing permanent funding sources.

Sources

Abt Associates and New School University, Evaluation of the Annie E. Casey Foundation Jobs Initiative, Towards the Development of a Theory of Change.

Abt Associates, Inc. and New School University. *Evaluation Report on the Capacity Building Phase (March 1997- March 2000). Cross Site Report.* Draft, November 2000.

Abt Associates, Inc. and New School University. *AECF Jobs Initiative, Evaluation Report on the Capacity Building Phase (April 1997-March 2000). Draft reports, November 2000. Denver Jobs Initiative. Milwaukee Jobs Initiative. New Orleans Jobs Initiative. Philadelphia Jobs Initiative. St. Louis Jobs Initiative. Seattle Jobs Initiative.*

Abt Associates, Inc. and New School University. *Evaluation of the AECF Jobs Initiative (Planning Phase 1995-1997.) no date. Denver Baseline Report. Milwaukee Baseline Report. New Orleans Baseline Report. Philadelphia Baseline Report. St. Louis Baseline Report. Seattle Baseline Report.*

Abt Associates, Inc. and New School University. *Private Interests, Shared Concerns.* No date.

Delgado Community College. *Delgado Newscenter.* <http://www.dcc.edu/news/default.htm#job> Accessed 3/29/02.

Eric Parker and Rhandi Berth. "Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership," Presentation to the MJI board, December 15, 2000.

Philadelphia Jobs Policy Network. *Greater Philadelphia Regional Workforce Development Strategy: Building a World Class Workforce for the 21st Century.* 1999.

Joel Rogers and Eric Parker, *The Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership: Lessons For National Policy.* <http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~iir/ncw/wpapers/rogers/page2.html#1.1>

Seattle Jobs Initiative, Progress Report, July 31, 1997

Seattle Jobs Initiative, Indicators of Progress Report.

December 1998.

10/1/99-12/31/99

Seattle Jobs Initiative, Strategic Investment Plan.

January 1998

December 2001.

State of Wisconsin. Governor's Taskforce on Technical Education and Training. "Technical Education and Training: The Future of Wisconsin's Workforce"
www.dwd.state.wi.us/dwd/task.force/teched.htm.

State of Wisconsin. Department of Workforce Development. Workforce Advancement and Attachment program website. www.dwd.state.wi.us/waa.

Interviews

Milwaukee:

Laura Dresser, COWS
Eric Parker, WRTP
Robert Milbourne, Greater Milwaukee Committee
Rhandi Berth, WRTP
Brenda Campbell, MGAI
Norma Ballantine, MGAI
Carrie Hersh, WRTP
Tom Moore, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Local Research Liaison

New Orleans:

Charles LaCoste, NOJI
Jyaphia Christos-Rodgers, NOJI
Alden MacDonald, NOJI Board Chair
Mack Slain, NOJI
Ben Johnson, Greater New Orleans Foundation
Barbara Waller
Margaret Montgomery, Delgado Community College
Valerie Uccelani, NOJI
Denise Strong, University of New Orleans, Local Research Liaison

Philadelphia:

Fred Dedrick, Regional Workforce Partnership, TRF
Margaret Berger Bradley, TRF/PJI
Kevin Cavanaugh, TRF
David Thornburgh, Pennsylvania Economy League
Patrick Clancy, PWDC
David Bartelt, Temple University, Local Research Liaison

St. Louis:

Tom Rodenbaugh, SLRJI
Jim Moore, Workforce Partners
Sandy Ashurst, Workforce Partners

Seattle:

Dianne Hanna, SJI
Judy Summerfield, SJI
Annie Keeney, SJI
Willair St. Vil, SJI
Bob Falk, TRAC Associates
Laura Rowley, TRAC Associates
Harriet Hoffman, YWCA
Alan Sugiyama, Center for Career Alternatives
Annie-Laurie Armstrong, Local Research Liaison

Creating Change:

Appendix A: Overview of Case Studies

Overview of Case Studies

Site and reform	Challenge	Strategy	Impacts
Seattle			
Provide flexible support for job seekers Drivers: resources, policies	Integrate fragmented support systems to help low-income residents succeed in the labor market	Create flexible funding source to help residents address employment barriers and promote interagency collaboration	Job seekers have increased access to tuition, housing, child care, transportation, clothing, and other supports necessary to complete training and enter the labor force Metrics: new funding streams, one time funding allocations, leveraging funds
Build CBO capacity Driver: operational competencies	Improve ability of CBOs to help disadvantaged residents succeed in the labor force	Engage CBOs in collaborative process to learn about and adopt best practices in assessment, retention support, and case management	Increased commitment of CBOs to job retention, greater consistency in the effectiveness of CBOs Metrics: consistency in practices, improved performance
New Orleans			
New model for pre-employment training Driver: operational competencies	Engage adult learners with history of failure in traditional classroom, prepare for culture of historically white workplaces	Student-centered pedagogy, build on existing skills, prepare for realities of workplace	Job readiness scores slightly above norms for successful employees, model sought out by key regional institutions, national demand rising Metrics: job readiness scores, numbers served by systems adopting curriculum
Improve community college training Drivers: resources, operational competencies	Shortage of skilled machinists, outdated training at college, history of racial exclusion in industry	Work with faith networks to reach employers, work with employers and Delgado Community College to upgrade training	State-of-the-art machinist training, investment by college in facilities, in operational costs of program, industry looking to college for training for first time since 1950s, Delgado better positioned to compete for state training funds Metrics: new funding streams, value of new machinery, continual upgrading, one time investment in facilities, tools

Milwaukee			
<p>Labor market intermediation across sectors</p> <p>Drivers: relationships, operational competencies</p>	<p>Entry-level worker shortages across sectors, particularly for skilled workers, training systems cumbersome, rigid, not responsive to employers</p>	<p>Organize employers around training needs, retention and advancement of entry-level workers, push for changes in workforce systems, in workplace practices</p>	<p>Growing number of manufacturing members of W RTP. Developed array of employer services with early members. Expanded program to new sectors. Helped create more flexible, timely process for funding, mounting training.</p> <p>Metrics: size of entry level labor force in member firms, in firms with quality practices, standardized curriculum, shorter funding approval process</p>
<p>Increase resources for skills training</p> <p>Drivers: resources, policies</p>	<p>Public systems focused on work first, federal resources for training shrinking</p>	<p>Focus attention of state policy makers on need for skills training, connection to prosperity for state</p>	<p>Workforce Attachment and Advancement Fund created, \$20 million in TANF surplus funds allocated to it, aimed at families under 200% of the federal poverty level and non-custodial parents of kids on TANF</p> <p>Metrics: funds allocated for 2 year period, broader eligible group, inclusion of employer services as funded activity</p>
St. Louis			
<p>Organize providers to change standards, goals</p> <p>Driver: relationships</p>	<p>Work first world, fragmentation and hostility among regional stakeholders in the workforce system</p>	<p>Create a forum for discussion, raise awareness of best practices</p>	<p>Creation of Workforce partners, a network of providers focused on best practices, change in program goals described in state policy documents, analyses</p> <p>Metrics: program practices, provider practices</p>
Philadelphia			
<p>Employer organization for policy change</p> <p>Driver: relationships</p>	<p>Lack of employer engagement in workforce development arena, fragmentation of employer community, lack of ties to trainers and funders of workforce programs</p>	<p>Organize regional employers to identify workforce issues most relevant to them, define training needs, and advocate for sensible welfare-to-work policies</p>	<p>Helped lobby for expanded training for TANF recipients, institutionalized employer advocacy, focused attention on workforce issues through high profile reports</p> <p>Metrics: change in program rules allows participants to receive training</p>