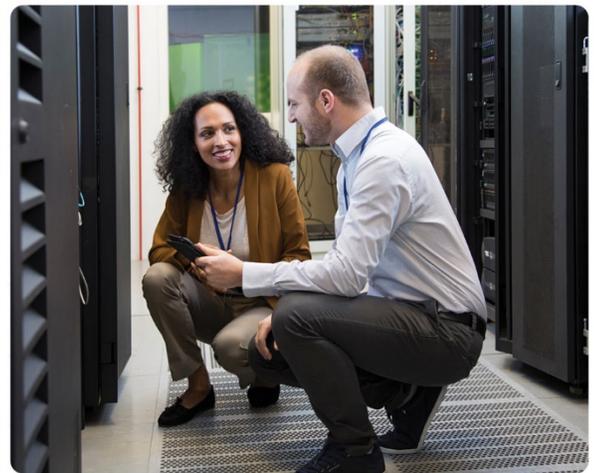


Providing Employment Services to the Long-Term Unemployed: Implementation and Sustainability of the Programs in the Ready to Work Partnership Grant Evaluation

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Executive Summary

The Ready to Work (RTW) Partnership Grant program, funded and administered by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), was designed to assist those experiencing long spells of unemployment as a result of the 2008-2009 recession to find jobs and succeed in the labor market. The RTW grant program also aimed to establish programs that might prove effective in preparing U.S. workers for employment, particularly in occupations and industries being filled by foreign workers through the H-1B visa program. In 2014, 24 partnerships of workforce agencies, training providers, employers and other organizations received RTW grants to provide customized employment services to long-term unemployed workers.¹ While the economy improved through the four-year period of program operations, even in the strong economy, workers with long spells of unemployment continued to constitute a substantial share of those who were unemployed.

DOL sponsored an evaluation of the RTW grant program that is being conducted by Abt Associates in partnership with MEF Associates. The evaluation includes an implementation study and an experimental impact study of four purposively selected grantees. This report documents findings from the implementation study, and future reports will present the impact findings. This report describes how the four grantee programs were implemented over the grant period, the institutional benefits the grantees anticipated would be sustained after the grants ended, and the lessons for current workforce programs.

The Ready to Work Partnership Grant Program and Evaluation

Overview of the RTW Grant Program. DOL specified that RTW-funded programs should focus on preparing long-term unemployed workers for employment, particularly in high-growth industries and occupations. Specifically, DOL guidance detailed that RTW programs should target long-term unemployed workers, defined as those who had been jobless for 27 weeks or more. Grantees were to provide customized services including: (1) *job placement* services for those who had the skills to be placed directly into employment; (2) *occupational training* that led to direct job placement or an industry-recognized credential for those who needed to refresh or gain new skills, (3) *work-based training* for those who could benefit from on-the-job experience; and (5) *services that addressed the unique barriers* facing long-term unemployed workers, such as financial and behavioral health counseling.

Evaluation of the RTW Grant Program. The implementation study presented in this report examines the design and operation of the four selected programs (see Exhibit ES-1), and is primarily based on in-person interviews with program staff and partners and grantee program administrative data. The impact study, using a random assignment research design, will estimate program effects on participant outcomes of interest, including educational attainment, employment, and earnings.

¹ Originally, DOL made awards in 2014 to 23 grantees totaling \$170 million. In 2015, DOL awarded an additional RTW grant bringing the total number of grantees to 24. The grant period for this grantee ended in 2020.

Exhibit ES-1: Grantee Programs in the Ready to Work Evaluation

Grantee Lead Agency and Service Area	Target Industries
Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation , 12 counties in MD	Advanced manufacturing, bioscience, cybersecurity, healthcare, information technology
Jewish Vocational Service , San Francisco, CA	Information technology
RochesterWorks! , Monroe County, NY	Advanced manufacturing, healthcare, information technology
Worksystems Inc. , Portland, OR and Vancouver, WA	Advanced manufacturing, information technology, and software

SOURCE: Staff reports and RTW program materials.

Key Findings from Implementation Study

This section first summarizes the operational experiences of the four RTW grantees over the four-year grant period and then describes plans for sustaining grant-related activities after the programs ended.

Operating the RTW Grant Programs

The grantee programs provided a similar range of services, but they varied substantially in the types of services they emphasized. DOL's guidance for the RTW grant program gave grantees substantial flexibility in designing their programs. Consistent with that flexibility, while all grantees provided the range of services specified by DOL, they adopted different approaches to service provision. Occupational training (largely in IT) was the primary focus of two programs, another focused primarily on employment readiness activities, and the fourth used these activities more equally. The occupational training programs were short-term ranging, from 3 to 5 months across the sites. For all grantees, work-based training was the least common service used by participants.

As the economy improved over the four-year grant period, grantees reported that they served workers who faced greater barriers to employment than originally envisioned and adjusted their programs to better serve this population. Grantee staff reported that the economic recovery resulted in many of the long-term unemployed workers targeted by the RTW grant, particularly those with higher levels of education and work experience, finding jobs on their own. As a result, staff reported that many of those who enrolled in the RTW-funded programs had lower skill levels and less work experience than grantees had anticipated when originally designing their programs. In response, grantees made a range of program modifications, including new recruitment methods, greater use of occupational training to address skill deficits, and strengthening employment readiness activities.

Aggressive recruitment strategies were needed to meet the programs' enrollment targets. All four RTW grantees reported that, over the term of the grant, it became increasingly difficult to identify potential participants who met the grant's eligibility criteria, that is, experiencing long-term unemployment or underemployment but with the educational background required for middle-skill positions. Staff reported that enrollment was slowed by the improving economy, which shrank the pool of applicants. To ensure an adequate number of participants, all programs used multifaceted recruitment strategies that had been successful in the early years of the grant combined with new strategies.

Despite the recruitment challenges, grantees enrolled the population targeted by the grant. Overall, participants were generally well educated but not working when they entered the program. More than 80 percent of participants were unemployed when they enrolled in a program, and about one-third had been

unemployed for a year or more. One-third to one-half of participants had a bachelor's degree, and most others had some college or a technical or associates degree. Because the RTW grants focused on those with prior work experience and education, most enrollees were older, with an average age of around 45. Reflecting their long periods of unemployment, about half of the participants were receiving some type of public benefit, primarily Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Unemployment Insurance.

The programs established strong connections with employers, which supported several aspects of the program operations. Consistent with the sectoral emphasis of the RTW program, all grantees prioritized developing industry connections. Specific activities included developing work-based training options, securing guest speakers and providing employer visits, and making participants aware of current or pending job opportunities. To facilitate these connections to industry, the four grantees reported that staff engaged in developing employer relationships with sector-specific employers, with some having staff in roles dedicated to developing relationships with employers.

Developing work-based training positions took time and remained a relatively small component of the grantee programs compared to the other activities. Staff at all grantees reported that they were committed to and saw the value of work-based training, but they found they had to invest substantial time to develop these positions. In particular, it took time to understand the labor and skill needs of individual employers and establish a level of trust before an employer was comfortable offering work-based training. Some employers were also reluctant to complete the documentation necessary to sponsor the position.

Staff reported that employment readiness activities were a central element of the RTW programs in large part because the programs served workers with more barriers to employment than anticipated. The emphasis that programs gave employment readiness activities differed by grantee. Some grantees required these activities for all participants, while others required them for participants deemed most in need of the services. Despite these differences, grantee staff reported that activities to reorient participants to the world of work as they built job search skills were critical program elements.

Sustainability of RTW Grant-funded Activities

Grantees reported that they did not have resources to continue the four-year RTW programs in their entirety. However, the grantees reported that they planned to integrate some components of their RTW program into future initiatives, either by finding new sources of funds or reallocating existing funds.

All grantees planned to continue using material developed for the employment readiness activities assisting other unemployed populations. As part of their RTW grants, each of the grantees offered employment readiness services that in part addressed the importance of motivation and self-confidence to participants' job search efforts. Grantees planned to continue offering this material as part of other job search workshops they offered, in addition to the more standard curriculum emphasizing job search skills such as resume development and interview skills.

Some grantees developed occupational training programs for cohorts of participants, and hoped to continue this training model. In addition to or in place of making individual-level referrals to training providers, three grantees adopted a cohort training strategy. Grantee staff reported that cohort trainings were a way to train small groups of individuals with the skills and credentials that were in demand from one or more employers, with the training courses sometimes tailored to specific employer needs.

Grantees identified ways to sustain the employer relationships that had been established under the RTW grants. Grantees adopted staffing arrangements and practices to help them maintain employer relationships developed during the grant period even after the grant ended. This included presenting their workforce agency as a single cohesive identity to employers, giving the grantee name recognition beyond the life of their RTW grant. In addition, two grantees rearranged their staffing to allow non-RTW-funded staff at the workforce agency to take over and maintain the established employer relationships.

Regional partnerships developed or advanced under the grants continued after the grants ended. Two grantees established partnerships with other workforce development agencies in their region in order to serve a large region of their respective states. Both grantees were interested in continuing this partnership, finding that some large employers have a presence across county lines. By sharing resources and labor market information across workforce agencies, grantee staff reported they could better meet employers' skill needs and place individuals in jobs.

1. Introduction

A key challenge facing policymakers and program administrators is how to develop effective strategies to help Americans facing economic challenges, particularly the “long-term unemployed,” to succeed in the labor market. During the deep recession of 2008-2009, an unprecedented number of workers lost their jobs (Kosanovich and Sherman 2015) and even as the economy recovered, those experiencing long-term unemployment represented a substantial portion of all those who were unemployed (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities 2019). Identifying strategies that help the long-term unemployed regain their economic footing has been a priority, with a particular interest in those that can help workers obtain employment in the higher-paying, middle- and high-skill jobs that are in demand by American employers.

To assist those experiencing long spells of unemployment as a result of the recession, in 2014 the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) funded the Ready to Work (RTW) Partnership grant program that is the focus of this report. The program’s grants went to partnerships of workforce agencies, training providers, employers, and other local organizations, to improve the employment prospects of their area’s long-term unemployed. Grantees were to use the funds to design and operate a program to provide a range of customized services including staff guidance on career planning and appropriate program activities, occupational training, employment readiness and job search assistance, and work-based training. The goal of the grants was to establish programs that would prove effective in preparing U.S. workers for employment, particularly in industries and occupations being filled by foreign workers through the H-1B visa program.² In October 2014, DOL awarded four-year grants totaling \$180 million to 24 grantees, with individual awards ranging from \$3 to \$10 million.³ The RTW-funded programs operated from 2015 to 2019.

To document the design and implementation of programs implemented with grant funds and estimate their effectiveness, DOL’s Employment and Training Administration (ETA), in collaboration with its Chief Evaluation Office (CEO), contracted Abt Associates and its partner MEF Associates to conduct a rigorous evaluation of RTW grantees’ programs. Four grantees were purposively selected for the evaluation based on program design and scale.⁴ The evaluation comprises two major components:

- An **implementation study** that examines program design and operation; specifically, the services provided by each grantee program and participation patterns of program enrollees; and
- An **impact study** that uses a random assignment design to determine program effects on participant outcomes of interest, including employment, earnings, and educational attainment after 18 months (relative to the control group).

² The H-1B visa program allows qualified nonimmigrant aliens to temporarily work in the United States when employers cannot otherwise obtain needed business skills and abilities from the U.S. workforce (<https://www.dol.gov/whd/immigration/h1b.htm>).

³ Originally, DOL made awards in 2014 to 23 grantees totaling \$170 million. In 2015, DOL awarded an additional RTW grant bringing the total number of grantees to 24. The grant period for this grantee ended in 2020.

⁴ The evaluation will describe the implementation and impacts for selected grantee programs separately. It will not estimate the overall implementation or impact of the RTW grant program.

This report provides findings from the implementation study. An earlier report on the implementation study documented the operations of the grantee programs early in the grant period (Martinson et al 2017). This report describes the experiences of the four grantees in operating their programs over the entire four-year grant period and discusses institutional benefits grantees anticipated would be sustained after the grants ended. It includes an analysis of participants' participation in program activities based on program administrative data, as well as key findings across the grantees. Two future reports will document findings from the impact study. It should be noted that the RTW grantee programs operated and data collection took place before the COVID-19 pandemic occurred.

This chapter provides background on the RTW grant program, including its origins, goals, and requirements (Section 1.1). The chapter then provides an overview of the four selected grantees (Section 1.2) and describes the evaluation design, including the methodology and data sources for the implementation study and the design of the impact study (Section 1.3). The concluding section outlines the structure and content of the rest of this report (Section 1.4).

1.1 The Ready to Work Partnership Grant Program

The RTW grant program was designed by DOL to assist those experiencing long spells of unemployment as a result of the 2008-2009 recession to find jobs and succeed in the labor market. In particular, the RTW program was spurred by the level of long-term unemployment observed following the recession (DOL/ETA n.d). While the unemployment rate had declined from 9.3 percent in 2009 to 6.2 percent by 2014 when the grants were awarded,⁵ over one-third of those who were unemployed had been out of work for six months or more and one-fourth had been unemployed a year or longer.⁶ The overall economy continued to improve through the four-year period of program operation, with an unemployment rate of 3.7 percent in 2019, but still with a significant portion of the unemployed facing long-term unemployment.⁷

The RTW program was also designed by DOL to focus on high-growth industries and occupations where employers often cannot find sufficiently trained American workers to fill these jobs.⁸ Historically, the H-

⁵ Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, Table A-1, <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat01.pdf>

⁶ Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, Table A-30, <https://www.bls.gov/cps/aa2014/cpsaat30.htm>

⁷ Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, Table A-1 and A-30, <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat01.https://www.bls.gov/cps/aa2018/cpsaat30.htm>

⁸ A competing argument is that no skills gap exists; employers could eliminate the gap by raising wages. At higher wages, employers would demand fewer workers, more workers would apply, and more workers would seek the training (and be available soon) (Burtless 2014). From either perspective, however, an increased supply of trained workers would arguably be better for both employers and workers.

1B visa program has been an important means for U.S.-based employers to address such skills gaps.⁹ To use that program, employers seeking to hire foreign workers who require an H-1B visa pay fees; those fees then fund initiatives to prepare and place American workers into jobs within occupations and industries where H-1B visas are used.¹⁰ The RTW grant program was one such initiative funded through H-1B visa fees.

The RTW Solicitation for Grant Applications (SGA) specified that the grantees should focus on designing their programs to support industries and occupations in demand in their regional economy and for which employers are using H-1B visas to hire foreign workers. Specifically, grantees should assist long-term unemployed workers to gain employment in industries and occupations that were projected to add substantial numbers of new jobs to the economy, were in new or emerging industries that are expected to grow, or were being transformed by technology and innovation requiring new skill sets for workers (DOL/ETA n.d.). The SGA identified a set of demand occupations within the following industries: professional, scientific, and technical services; manufacturing; educational services; healthcare; and information technology (IT). The SGA indicated that grantees could not target entry-level occupations, but rather should provide training and services that promoted employment in higher-skilled occupations.

As described in DOL's SGA, the services provided by grantees were to be customized to the different circumstances facing long-term unemployed workers after the recession. This included services for skilled workers who needed to upgrade or adapt their skills and experience to new jobs or industries. It also included services for workers at lower skill levels who could benefit from longer-term training (depending on their skill level and employment objective) to obtain jobs that can match their previous earnings. In addition, as a result of their long-term unemployment, some workers may have been burdened by debt or struggling with psychological difficulties such as depression (Borie-Holtz, Van Horn, and Zukin 2010). In response, DOL's approach also included services that could address the emotional consequences of long-term unemployment.

DOL funded RTW grantees to provide a range of training and other services to equip enrollees with the skills and competencies in demand by employers in high-growth industries, particularly those using H-1B visas to hire foreign workers. The American Job Centers already provide the public with employment services, such as job search assistance and access to occupational training programs, as required by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Thus, DOL developed the RTW program to provide

⁹ Since 1990, the H-1B visa program has enabled U.S.-based employers to hire highly educated, highly skilled foreign workers. Individuals with H-1B visas can work in the United States for three years (extendable to six) under the sponsorship of a specific employer. Initiated as part of the Immigration Act of 1990, the visa program emphasizes hiring foreign workers for "specialty occupations" that "require theoretical and practical application of a body of highly specialized knowledge" in which there is a shortage of U.S. workers with the requisite skill base. Generally, foreign workers must have a bachelor's degree or its equivalent to qualify for an H-1B visa.

¹⁰ In 2016-2017, the occupation with the highest concentration of H-1B workers was systems analyst and programmer, followed by computer programmer, college and university educator, electrical engineer, and accountant. In fiscal years 2014-2017, some 45 percent of approved visa applicants had a bachelor's degree; 54.5 percent had a master's, professional, or doctoral degree (U.S. Department of Homeland Security 2018).

additional resources targeted to those facing long-term unemployment, with the services tailored to their needs and circumstances. As shown in Exhibit 1-1, DOL’s SGA for the RTW program set certain parameters:

- Grantees were to target **long-term unemployed workers**, defined as those who had been jobless for 27 consecutive weeks or more. This included workers who had lost their jobs during or after the 2008-2009 recession (commencing from December 1, 2007) and remained *unemployed*; and those who were *underemployed* (meaning those who had lost their job during or after the recession and had obtained short-term or part-time employment but had not yet found full-time jobs in line with their previous level of skill or earnings). Grantees could also accept a small share of “other unemployed workers,” meaning those without a job for fewer than 27 consecutive weeks and not underemployed.¹¹
- RTW grant-funded services were to include an assessment of participants’ skills and needs and customized services along three tracks: (1) staff guidance, including intensive coaching and specialized services, and other **direct job placement services**; (2) **short-term training** that leads to direct job placement; and (3) **accelerated training** that culminates in an industry-recognized credential and employment. Individuals could receive services in more than one track.
- In addition to these tracks, DOL had a specific interest in **work-based training** where participants were paid, such as on-the-job training and paid work experience; and in services that address the unique barriers facing long-term unemployed workers, such as **financial counseling, behavioral health counseling, and other employment readiness activities**.

Exhibit 1-1: Overview of the Ready to Work Partnership Grant



SOURCE: Developed by Abt Associates based on the DOL SGA for RTW Grant Program.

¹¹ The SGA also allowed incumbent workers to be served by the grant. *Incumbent workers* are defined as those who are in need of skills upgrades to obtain a new job or retain a current job that is requiring new or different skills in an H-1B industry/occupation, and where training is developed with an employer or employer association to upgrade those skills. Program enrollees in incumbent worker training funded by the grant are not included in the evaluation.

1.2 Grantee Programs Included in the Study

In consultation with DOL, the evaluation team purposively selected four grantees for the study based on the strength of their program services, program size, sufficient demand to create a control group, and ability to accommodate study procedures (see Martinson et al 2017). Exhibit 1-2 below provides an overview of the four grantees: the lead agency in each partnership, its RTW-funded program, and locale:

- ***Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation (AAWDC)***—**Maryland Tech Connection (MTC)**, in the Baltimore (Maryland)/Washington, D.C. region.
- ***Jewish Vocational Service (JVS)***—**Skills to Work in Technology (STW-T) and Job Search Accelerator (JSA)**, in the San Francisco Bay Area (California).
- ***RochesterWorks!***—**Finger Lakes Hired (FLH)**, in Monroe County (New York), including the city of Rochester.
- ***Worksystems Inc.*** —**Reboot Northwest**, in the Portland (Oregon)/Vancouver (Washington) metropolitan region.

The selected RTW grantees are located in different urban areas, but each serves a relatively large geography that includes suburban and rural communities. JVS is a non-profit organization; the others are workforce agencies that provide services under WIOA. Three of the four grantees focused on employment in more than one industry. All included IT, three also included advanced manufacturing, and two included healthcare. As required by the SGA, all the grantees targeted long-term unemployed populations.

The four grantee programs all provided activities and services in line with the three tracks specified by the RTW SGA (i.e., staff guidance and direct job placement, short-term training, longer-term training) as well as work-based training options, financial and behavioral health supports, and other employment readiness activities. However, while the RTW programs generally provided the same set of services, grantees had discretion to tailor the program design and content based on their specific needs and interests. As a result, as discussed in this report, grantees varied in terms of how they targeted and sequenced services and the content of the program services provided. After the grants were awarded in fall 2014, the grantees used the initial months to plan their programs. Programs started providing services in spring or summer 2015, and continued operating through summer or fall 2019.

As shown in Exhibit 1-2 (second column), as part of the requirements of grant award, each grantee had an established enrollment goal they were expected to meet over the four-year grant period, ranging from about 800 at JVS to 1,500 at RochesterWorks!. All the grantees except RochesterWorks! met their enrollment targets, and all the grantees served over 1,000 participants over the course of the four-year grants (the experiences of each grantee in recruiting participants for the study is discussed in the subsequent chapters). This table also shows the number of study participants for each grantee (the study design is discussed in Section 1.3 below).

Exhibit 1-2: Overview of Grantee Programs in the Ready to Work Evaluation

Grantee Lead Agency	Program and Enrollment	Target Industries	Overview of Grant-Funded Services
<p>Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation (AAWDC) 12 counties in Maryland</p>	<p>Maryland Tech Connection (MTC)</p> <p>Enrollment goal: 975 Actual enrollment: 1,254 Sample for RTW evaluation: 1,029 program and control group members</p>	<p>Advanced Manufacturing Bioscience Cybersecurity Healthcare Information Technology</p>	<p>Maryland Tech Connection staff assessed enrollees to determine their interest and aptitude in the program's target industries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All participants attended a two-week group job search skills and employment readiness workshop developed for the grant program. • Subsequent services included job search assistance, occupational training in target industries funded through the grant, and work-based training with an employer. • Participants received a screening to determine their eligibility for public benefits programs. • An MTC partner provided information and resources on behavioral health issues. • Transportation assistance in the form of gas and bus cards and, on a case-by-case basis, short-term needs-based financial assistance was available.
<p>Jewish Vocational Service (JVS) San Francisco, CA</p>	<p>Skills to Work in Technology (STW-T) / Job Search Accelerator (JSA)</p> <p>Enrollment goal: 801 Actual enrollment: 1,006 Sample for RTW Evaluation: 994 program and control group members</p>	<p>Information Technology</p>	<p>JVS's initial Ready to Work program, Skills to Work in Technology, combined job search and employment readiness activities and different technical skills training classes. It comprised three courses, each beginning with an employment readiness Foundation Week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A five- to six-week "bootcamp" focused on employment readiness, supplemented with training on software useful for an office environment; • An 11- to 12-week program providing training in digital marketing; and • A 16-week program providing training on administration of the Salesforce® platform. <p>Partway into its grant, JVS added a second program, Job Search Accelerator. This two-week program provided only job search and readiness activities.</p>

Exhibit 1-2: Overview of Grantee Programs in the Ready to Work Evaluation (continued)

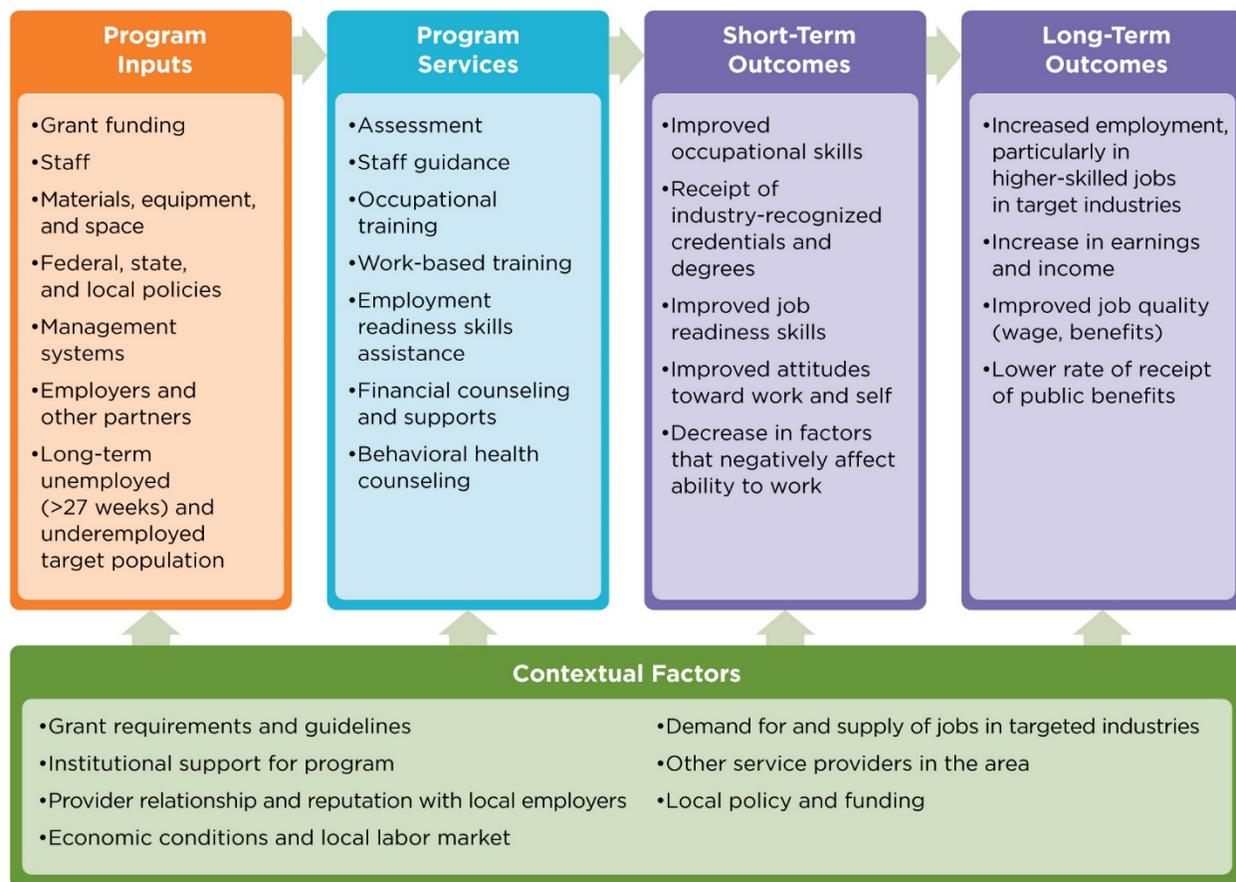
Grantee Lead Agency	Program Name and Enrollment Levels	Target Industries	Overview of Grant-Funded Services
RochesterWorks! Monroe County, NY	Finger Lakes Hired (FLH) Enrollment goal: 1,500 Actual enrollment: 1,007 Sample for RTW Evaluation: 610 program and control group members	Advanced Manufacturing Healthcare Information Technology	Finger Lakes Hired staff assessed participants to develop a customized set of program services that included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occupational training in advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and IT programs funded by Finger Lakes Hired; • Employment readiness activities, primarily one-week job search workshops; • Work-based training with an employer; and • Individual job search assistance provided by grant-funded staff. Finger Lakes Hired program staff provided guidance on employment-related issues, and for participants enrolled in a training program at a partnering community college, on-site assistance with academic issues. Finger Lakes Hired also provided participants enrolled in occupational training with financial assistance for transportation, tuition, training-related materials, and needs-based payments.
Worksystems Inc. (Worksystems) Portland, OR and Vancouver, WA	Reboot Northwest Enrollment goal: 1,000 Actual enrollment: 1,348 Sample for RTW Evaluation: 980 program and control group members	Advanced Manufacturing Information Technology Software	Reboot Northwest staff assessed participants' skills, work experience, and career goals to develop an individualized training plan in advanced manufacturing, IT, or software. The plans could include the following activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occupational training programs with tuition paid by grant; • A two- to three-week employment readiness class designed for the grant to build soft skills, strengthen professional networks, and enhance job search strategies; • Work-based training with industry employers; and • Job search activities. Reboot Northwest also offered assistance on behavioral health issues, provided by organizational partners. Participants enrolled in occupational training programs received financial assistance for transportation, training materials, and needs-based housing and utility payments.

SOURCE: Staff reports and RTW program materials.

1.3 Evaluation Design and Data Sources

The evaluation of the RTW grant program is based on a logic model depicted in Exhibit 1-3, that describes how the grant-funded programs are hypothesized to produce the expected short- and long-term changes in participant outcomes. This logic model guides both the implementation study (e.g., defines what program services are expected to improve outcomes), and the impact study (e.g., defines which outcomes are expected to change because of the program and therefore should be measured, and which measurements should be used to estimate impact).

Exhibit 1-3: Ready to Work Logic Model



SOURCE: Developed by Abt Associates based on the DOL SGA for RTW Grant Program.

The RTW logic model begins with inputs, which include the grantees' funding, staff and physical resources, and management structure, including input from employers and other partners. Continuing from left to right in the exhibit, the next box shows what those inputs provide: the program services. These include assessment, staff guidance, occupational training, work-based training, employment readiness activities, job search assistance, as well as other supports such as financial assistance.

The next columns show the short-term and long-term outcomes the program services are expected to produce. In the short run, participation in services is expected to increase participants' educational attainment, particularly credential and degree receipt. In addition, participants should experience fewer barriers to their ability to work. In the longer term, participants are expected to have increased earnings,

particularly in better jobs as indicated both by wages earned and job benefits. With increased levels of employment and earnings, reliance on public assistance is hypothesized to decrease. As shown (at the bottom of the figure), the grantee programs and participants' outcomes also are influenced by the context and environment in which grantees operate—including the local economic conditions and the community characteristics.

The remainder of this section discusses the evaluation design and data sources. Section 1.3.1 considers the implementation study that is the focus of this report. Section 1.3.2 considers the impact study to come.

1.3.1 Ready to Work Implementation Study Goals and Data Sources

The RTW implementation study documents the program implemented by each grantee using its RTW grant funds and describes that program's operating experiences. The first RTW implementation report focused on the initial year of program operations and how the grantees translated the RTW resources and guidance provided by DOL in the SGA into operational programs. Specifically, this included the target population served, how they recruited and enrolled participants, the staffing and organizational partnerships they established, and the specific services and supports provided (including assessment, employment readiness activities, occupational training, work-based training, job search assistance, and financial and other supports).

This report on RTW program implementation examines how each grant-funded program evolved and operated over the four-year grant period, including the partnerships established and services provided in the areas covered in the first report, changes made over time, participation patterns in program activities, and overall implementation experiences, including plans for sustaining program elements after the grants ended.

The primary data source for this report is three rounds of in-person interviews conducted with grantee program administrators, line staff, and organizational partners between 2016 and 2018. For each grantee, the evaluation team interviewed staff in all grant-funded positions where the grantee's program operated. The Appendix provides a list of all staff positions interviewed. The report also uses information on participants' demographic characteristics, employment and education history, and receipt of public assistance, all information collected at enrollment in the program.

Finally, to examine participation patterns, the study analyzed program administrative data obtained from each grantee on individuals assigned to the program group (see below). Although the available administrative data varied by grantee, the information generally included dates of participation in the program, types of activities attended, and completion status. The report uses these data to describe participation in the grantee services in the 16 months following each participant's enrollment in the program. This time period was selected as it was the longest period for which there was a uniform follow-up period across the four programs.

1.3.2 Ready to Work Impact Study Design

To estimate the impact of each grantee's program, the RTW evaluation is using an experimental research design. This design involves assigning eligible program applicants through a lottery-like (random) process to one of two groups and then comparing average outcomes for the two groups. They are

- a **program group** that are offered the chance to participate in the grant-funded training and other services (whether or not they actually participate); and

- a **control group** that cannot participate in the grant-funded training and other services, but can access other similar services available in the community.

With half of eligible applicants going randomly to each group, with sufficient sample sizes, any differences between the two research groups' outcomes (known as impacts) that emerge over time can likely be attributed to the grant-funded program, because the two groups of participants are statistically similar when they enter the program. Exhibit 1-2 above shows the sample sizes achieved for each of the grantee programs in the study. In general, for the evaluation, the sample goal was 1,000 program and control group members. Each grantee met this sample goal target, except for RochesterWorks! (see Chapter 4).

Depending on the grantee, program staff started random assignment in summer or fall 2015 and continued for approximately three years, ending across the sites in August 2018. Grantees served some participants that were not randomly assigned and not included in the study, specifically before the evaluation began and after random assignment ended. The first RTW implementation report describes the random assignment procedures in each of the four sites.

Data sources for the impact study will include a survey administered to all study participants (program and control group members) 18 months after random assignment and administrative records (data from the National Directory of New Hires on quarterly earnings in jobs covered by Unemployment Insurance). Information on the impact study, including additional information on its methodology and the results, will be discussed in two forthcoming reports. The first will look at the effects of the RTW grantee programs on short-term outcomes within an 18-month follow-up period. The specific outcomes are the receipt of training and other program services, the attainment of educational credentials, and short-term employment and earnings. The second report will examine the longer-term outcomes within a 30-month follow-up period, specifically employment and earnings.

1.4 Overview of the Report

The remainder of this implementation report is organized as follows:

- **Chapters 2 through 5** present the implementation study results, separately, for each of the four grant-funded programs. Each of these chapters has a common structure. Each chapter begins with the context in which the program operated, its organizational structure and staffing, the population targeted for services and the characteristics of program enrollees, and the program's recruitment strategies. Next the chapter describes the grant-funded trainings, supports, and assistance provided to participants and participation patterns in program services. Finally, each chapter discusses key findings from the implementation study and the institutional benefits grantees planned to sustain after the grants ended.
- **Chapter 6** examines key findings and lessons related to the implementation and operation of the programs across the four grantees.

2. Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation—Maryland Tech Connection

This chapter describes the Maryland Tech Connection (MTC) program. Led by Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation (AAWDC), the MTC program was offered by seven Career Centers across Maryland. The program provided job search and readiness assistance, occupational training, and work-based training to assist long-term unemployed and underemployed workers with finding employment in the sectors of advanced manufacturing, bioscience, cybersecurity, health, and IT. MTC participants began the program with a two-week employment readiness workshop called Career ReStart, and then moved to other activities based on their needs and interests, most commonly occupational training. MTC began enrollment in May 2015 and served a total of 1,254 participants, exceeding their target enrollment of 975 individuals, before the program ended in October 2019.

2.1 Program Context

AAWDC is a non-profit that provides workforce development services for Anne Arundel County in Maryland. It serves job seekers and employers in the county through its American Job Centers, known as Career Centers in Maryland, under WIOA.

For the RTW grant, AAWDC, the lead grantee, partnered with six other workforce agencies. Together, these agencies served residents of Baltimore City plus 12 of Maryland's 23 counties: Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Calvert, Carroll, Cecil, Charles, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George's, and St. Mary's. Residents of other Maryland counties could also participate by going to one of the Career Centers participating in MTC. The service area for the program focused on the Interstate 95 corridor and Capital Beltway near Washington, D.C., where a concentration of the population and jobs are located.

Maryland's economy improved over the course of the grant period. The state's unemployment rate decreased from 5.1 percent in 2015 to 3.4 percent at the end of 2018. Between 2015 and 2018 the unemployment rate in Anne Arundel County fell from 4.4 percent to 3.3 percent.¹² Though the economic conditions varied across the MTC service area, other counties experienced similar improvements.

At the outset of the grant period, MTC focused on the bioscience, cybersecurity, and IT industries, as they were projected to be key growth areas in the state due to strong demand from federal government agencies, contractors, and universities.¹³ However, the economic environment and jobs in demand varied across the region the grant served, not all of the areas had employers or job opportunities in bioscience, cybersecurity, or IT. In the final year of the grant, MTC expanded to include the advanced manufacturing and health industries, which were also experiencing growing demand for workers. The addition of these industries enabled MTC to serve a broader population with interests and skills in these areas across the grantee's service area.

¹² U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Labor Force Data by County*, see <http://www.bls.gov/lau/#tables> and <https://data.bls.gov/map/MapToolServlet?survey=la>.

¹³ Maryland Department of Commerce, see <http://commerce.maryland.gov/about/key-industries>.

2.2 Organizational Structure and Staffing

AAWDC and its six workforce agency partners operated a total of seven Career Centers in the region. RTW funds supported several MTC positions:

- **Project Director and Project Coordinator.** The full-time Project Director managed the overall operations of the MTC program and acted as the fiscal agent. The Project Coordinator, also full-time, served as a central resource for the various staff across the Career Centers, facilitated communication across staff, coordinated many of the logistical pieces of the regional grant, and assisted with recruitment and enrollment as needed.
- **Career Coaches.** Career Coaches recruited applicants, conducted MTC information sessions, assessed and determined eligibility, instructed the Career ReStart workshop, and provided one-on-one job search assistance. There were seven Career Coaches (four full-time and three part-time) housed within the seven Career Centers, and they carried out their grant responsibilities relatively independently.
- **Industry Talent Consultants.** The primary responsibility of the Industry Talent Consultants was to develop relationships with employers that would lead to jobs or work-based training experiences for MTC participants. Each of the five liaisons focused on a specific industry or industries: one each focused on IT and cybersecurity, one focused on advanced manufacturing and IT, and two focused on bioscience. They each had prior work experience in their particular focus areas. They worked with Career Coaches across the Career Center locations to identify participants to refer as job candidates to employers. They also worked with training providers to design and implement cohort trainings, tailoring the training to focus on participant needs and business trends.
- **Recruiter.** A part-time Recruiter, hired in the second year of the grant, was responsible for outreach and identifying potential program participants across all of the counties, but with a particular focus on the more urban areas.

AAWDC also partnered with a range of organizations to provide services to MTC participants. Seedco, a non-profit economic development organization, met with participants during Career ReStart to conduct a public benefits screening and assisted participants who chose to apply for benefits with their applications. Arundel Lodge, a non-profit behavioral health provider, ran a stress management program during Career ReStart. It also developed a screening tool that MTC staff used during intake to assess an applicant's suitability for the program and ability to commit to finding employment. The screening tool helped to identify mental health and substance abuse issues and other potential barriers to participation in the program. Workforce Excellence Group helped develop the curriculum for and run Career ReStart (see Section 2.5.2). The Creating Assets, Savings and Hope (CASH) Campaign of Maryland, a non-profit that assists low-income individuals with financial screenings and counseling, developed a financial education component for Career ReStart and trained Career Coaches at the start of the grant to teach this component. AAWDC also partnered with organizations to provide occupational training (see Section 2.5.3) and to recruit participants.

2.3 Target Population and Program Group Characteristics

MTC was available to all Maryland residents who were at least age 18, had a high school diploma or equivalent, and were long-term unemployed or underemployed workers, following the grant guidelines. In addition, applicants must have had education and/or experience relevant to the advanced

manufacturing, bioscience, cybersecurity, health, or IT occupation they intended to pursue. Applicants who were changing careers needed to demonstrate having some skills or prior experience applicable to the new field and an interest in pursuing it further, as demonstrated through assessments or conversations with Career Coaches at the time of application. AAWDC initially targeted older workers¹⁴ with advanced degrees who had difficulty finding a job after the 2008-2009 recession.

Exhibit 2-1 shows the demographic characteristics of members in the study's program group (see Chapter 1 for information on the evaluation design), using self-reported data collected at program enrollment ("baseline"). MTC enrolled an almost equivalent number of men and women. More than half were Black or African American and about one-third were White. A reflection of MTC's emphasis on serving older workers, the average age of program enrollees was 45, and approximately 60 percent were age 45 or older. About three-fifths of participants did not have children living in their household.

MTC enrolled fairly well educated workers. About 40 percent of enrollees had a bachelor's degree and about one-quarter had a master's degree. As expected given the eligibility criteria, most participants (84 percent) were not employed at the time of enrollment. Of them, almost one-third had not worked for more than a year. For the 16 percent who were employed at the time of enrollment, weekly earnings were relatively high, averaging \$461 (or about \$1,800 per month). More than 40 percent were receiving some type of public benefit at the time of enrollment, the most common being the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Unemployment Insurance (23 percent each).

¹⁴ Older workers were defined as age 50 or older.

Exhibit 2-1: Selected Characteristics of Program Enrollees at Baseline, Maryland Tech Connection

Characteristic	Distribution
Gender (%)	
Female	51.5
Male	48.5
Race (%)	
Asian	8.2
Black or African American	56.2
White	30.9
Hispanic ethnicity (%)	3.3
Age (%)	
24 years or younger	4.1
25 to 34 years	15.2
35 to 44 years	24.8
45 to 54 years	32.2
55 years or older	23.7
Average age (years)	45.3
Marital Status (%)	
Married	44.8
Widowed/divorced/separated	21.3
Never married	32.1
One or More of Own Children in Household Age 18 or Younger (%)	42.4
Education Level (%)	
Less than high school or GED	0.6
High school diploma	6.6
Technical or associate's degree	11.1
Some college credit but no degree	15.2
Bachelor's degree	40.7
Master's degree or higher	25.9
Employment Status (%)	
Currently employed full-time (30+ hours)	9.2
Currently employed part-time (<30 hours)	7.2
Currently unemployed, but employed in last 12 months	51.6
Currently unemployed, and longer than 12 months since last worked	32.0
Weekly earnings (\$)	461.40
Receiving any public benefits (%)	42.1
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	1.6
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	23.2
Unemployment Insurance (UI)	23.2
Section 8 or public housing assistance	3.9

SOURCE: RTW Baseline Information Form (BIF).

NOTE: Percentages do not sum to 100% for race and marital status because not all response categories are included. Sample size is 540 and includes all program group members randomly assigned. Statistics in this table are computed based on the AAWDC program group members who completed the BIF for the given question (e.g., gender). Weekly earnings are calculated for those working at baseline.

2.4 Recruitment

As discussed, AAWDC and its partners succeeded in meeting their RTW grant enrollment goals and used a variety of recruitment strategies:

- ***MTC Website.*** AAWDC developed a logo and a website to brand MTC and make the program recognizable across the various Career Centers. Throughout the grant period, the website provided information on program eligibility and requirements, the services and trainings offered, and a schedule of and link to register for upcoming information sessions. Career Center websites linked to the MTC website, the address of which also was included in social media advertisements and printed materials. MTC staff reported that the website generated steady interest in the program.
- ***Career Center and partner referrals.*** MTC Career Coaches were located within Career Centers, which helped facilitate referrals by other Career Center staff. Career Coaches and the Recruiter contacted local organizations, including community- and faith-based organizations, to inform them about MTC and encourage referrals. Partway through the grant period, MTC began a referral partnership with the International Rescue Committee, an organization that provides services to refugees and immigrants.
- ***Outreach by MTC staff.*** Career Coaches and the Recruiter participated in job fairs held at the Career Centers or by outside agencies, delivered presentations about MTC at libraries and faith-based organization events, and distributed information to local news media and local government officials.
- ***Social media.*** The MTC Recruiter advertised MTC on Facebook, Craigslist, and LinkedIn. The Recruiter reported that LinkedIn was the most active social media campaign.
- ***AARP Foundation referrals.*** Early in the grant period, the AARP (formerly the American Association of Retired Persons) Foundation operated an initiative that helped connect unemployed workers who were age 50 and older with resources that may help them in their job search effort. It advertised MTC through this initiative using the Foundation website and in local newspaper advertisements.

Management and recruitment staff reported that the multifaceted approach to recruitment was important. Because the program covered a large geographic region, it needed efforts with a broader reach, such as the website, social media, and printed fliers, as MTC staff could not recruit in person consistently throughout the service area. In addition, staff found that many higher-skilled long-term unemployed workers had not traditionally used Career Center services, where they might have come across the MTC program, and that it was useful to market the program through sources other than the local Career Centers.

2.5 Program Services

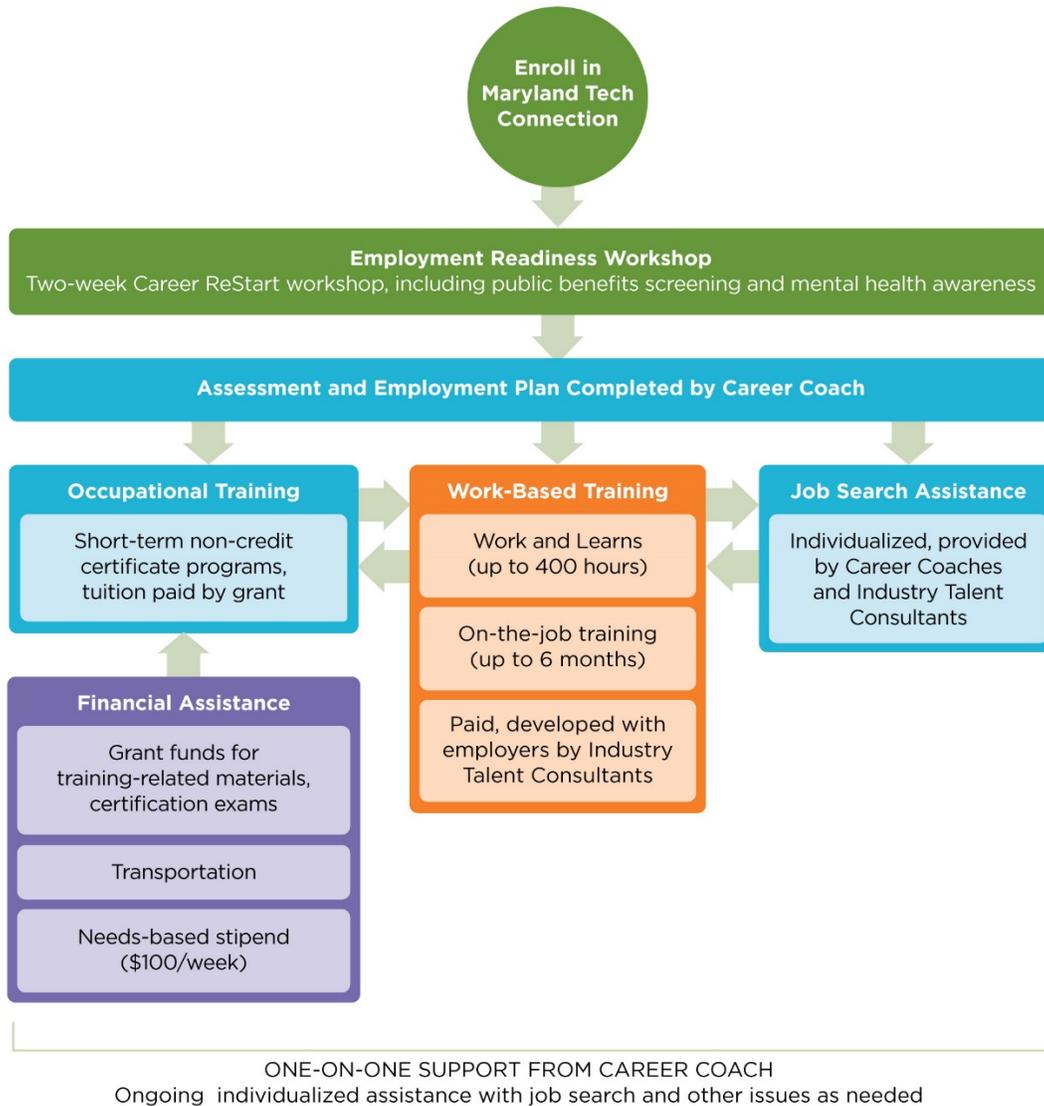
This section describes the activities available through MTC. As shown in Exhibit 2-2 below, in the flow of services after enrollment, program participants typically began with Career ReStart, a two-week job search preparedness workshop designed to provide them with the tools necessary for a job search. Additional MTC activities were tailored to the needs and interests of each participant, determined in consultation with their Career Coach, including

- occupational training in advanced manufacturing, bioscience, cybersecurity, health, and IT for participants who needed formal training to qualify for their targeted jobs;

- work-based training through paid short-term “Work and Learns” and longer-duration on-the-job training that were developed by Industry Talent Consultants; and
- job search assistance provided by Career Coaches.

The remainder of this section discusses the enrollment process for MTC as well as the activities, services, and supports available to participants. The next section (Section 2.6) describes participation levels in the MTC program services.

Exhibit 2-2: Overview of the AAWDC Maryland Tech Connection Program



SOURCE: Developed by Abt Associates based on staff reports and program materials.

2.5.1 Enrollment and Initial Assessment

Potential applicants to MTC attended a one- to two-hour group information session conducted by a Career Coach at one of the Career Centers. During the sessions, Career Coaches provided information on the

employment sectors included under the grant; MTC’s goals, services, and activities; and the eligibility requirements and enrollment process.

Interested applicants then met with a Career Coach to complete an initial assessment. The assessments included several elements: (1) Career Scope, to determine aptitude for the target industries; (2) Prove It!, to gauge knowledge of business etiquette; and (3) a screen for mental health and financial issues, developed by Arundel Lodge and the CASH Campaign of Maryland, respectively. The Career Coach also assessed whether the applicant was interested in a career in MTC’s industries of focus; had prior educational or professional experience related to those industries or demonstrated an aptitude for related skills; and appeared committed to participating in the MTC program and finding a job.

2.5.2 Employment Readiness: Career ReStart

Designed to be a foundation for a successful job search, Career ReStart initially was required of all MTC participants prior to their attending other MTC activities. In the second half of the grant period, MTC stopped requiring that all participants take Career ReStart because staff found that some were sufficiently job-ready and could enter work-based training directly. Career Coaches, who were the primary instructors for the workshop, typically enrolled participants in MTC over a few weeks leading up to the next Career ReStart. The two-week workshop (which met 9 am to 3 pm five days a week at the Career Coaches’ respective Career Centers) was intended to provide participants with the tools and motivation necessary for a job search, at the same time helping them gain confidence in their skills and abilities as candidates for employment. The following were the primary components of Career ReStart.

- **Job search skills.** The curriculum for the job search confidence and skills component was adapted from Jay Block’s book *5 Steps to Rapid Employment*.¹⁵ The format included group discussion, individual work, and two to three hours of homework a night. When possible, the Industry Talent Consultants attended one day of Career ReStart to discuss the industries included under MTC and provide initial guidance to individual participants on appropriate MTC activities to pursue given their job interests. In the last year of the grant, MTC began using an outside vendor to teach a separate session on LinkedIn. This one-day session was tailored to the industries that were the focus of the program.
- **Mental health awareness.** The three-hour mental health awareness session was developed by Arundel Lodge and led by one of its licensed clinical counselors. In the session, the counselor discussed job loss and unemployment as a traumatic event that can have lasting psychological, emotional, and physical effects. The goals were to help program participants recognize the importance of mental health in their job search and to help them identify strategies for self-care and handling stress. Arundel Lodge also developed region-specific booklets listing available mental health resources.

¹⁵ The nationally available *5 Steps* curriculum was developed by Jay Block, a Career Coach and author of the book *5 Steps to Rapid Employment: The Job You Want at the Pay You Deserve*. Instructors of *5 Steps* participants must be certified to use the curriculum. Certification for *5 Steps* instructors includes in-person and online training, as well as an exam; certification for *5 Steps* coaches involves attending a five-day workshop and taking an exam. Recertification is annual.

- **Public benefits screening.** MTC required all participants to meet with a Seedco representative during Career ReStart to be screened for eligibility for about 20 public benefits programs such as SNAP, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and Child Care Subsidy Assistance, using Seedco’s web-based tool (EarnBenefits Online).¹⁶ For those interested in pursuing a public benefits program for which they qualified, a Seedco representative assisted with the application paperwork and process.¹⁷

At the beginning of the grant period, Career ReStart operated during the business day for two full weeks. The schedule was chosen with the idea that unemployed workers did not have commitments during the regular work week. As the grant period progressed, MTC staff found that some program participants had daytime commitments that prohibited them from attending Career ReStart. In response, MTC developed a Career ReStart with night and weekend sessions as well as an online self-paced Career ReStart. The latter was less common and primarily made available to those interested in the work-based training activities (see Section 2.5.4) so they could both work during business hours and complete Career ReStart.

Prior to or during Career ReStart, Career Coaches developed an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) with each participant. The IEP identified the participant’s target job and the skills and services needed to attain that position. Career Coaches sometimes consulted with the Industry Talent Consultants to make sure that the participant’s target job was feasible and the trainings identified were appropriate. Career Coaches viewed the IEP as a working document that could be updated over the course of program involvement.

2.5.3 Occupational Training

For MTC participants with an interest in occupational training to upgrade their skills or prepare for a job in a new sector, Career Coaches assisted with identifying appropriate training programs. As shown in Exhibit 2-3, staff reported that participants enrolled in a wide variety of training programs and providers across the four industries. MTC required participants to sit for certification exams when they were available for a given program.

- **Advanced manufacturing.** The primary manufacturing program in which participants enrolled was the one-month non-credit Certified Production Technician program.
- **Bioscience.** MTC funded short-term bioscience training that helped participants develop specific knowledge and skills to enhance their existing credentials.
- **Health.** Participants enrolled in non-credit health-related programs of five to 10 months, commonly at community colleges.
- **Information technology and cybersecurity.** Participants enrolled in non-credit IT and cybersecurity programs with a number of colleges and private providers. Programs tended to be short, lasting as little as a few days and not typically longer than three months.

Early in the grant period, staff reported that participants typically enrolled at community colleges or with other training providers eligible to receive state WIOA and Individual Training Account (ITA) funds to

¹⁶ For a list of the benefits for which Seedco’s EarnBenefits Online screens in Maryland: <http://www.earnbenefits.org/maryland/benefits/>.

¹⁷ The only time participants were required to enroll in public benefits programs for which they were eligible was if they were eligible for and wanted to receive the needs-based payments from MTC (see Section 2.5.6).

pay their tuition. Staff reported that the RTW grant generally funded their full tuition costs. However, sometimes the participant or the specific training also qualified for another workforce program that could cover training costs. In these instances, the RTW grant and the other source both supported the participant's training, and the participant was considered to be jointly enrolled in both programs.

Midway through the grant period, MTC staff developed cohort trainings whereby MTC contracted with a training provider to serve a group of MTC participants either in existing programs or in programs developed specifically for MTC. In some cases, MTC Industry Talent Consultants worked with employers to develop cohort trainings designed specifically to meet employer and industry needs and into which they exclusively enrolled MTC participants. Industry Talent Consultants advised the training provider on the curriculum so that it aligned with the skills and abilities in demand among employers. In other cases, a small group of MTC participants enrolled in a provider's existing training. Cohort trainings were used in particular for bioscience and IT programs. Cohort trainings were typically less costly per person than enrolling participants into programs individually because cohort trainings could be run on-demand when MTC had enough people (typically about 15) to make it cost-effective for the provider. Staff also reported that participants benefitted from peer support by being enrolled with other MTC participants. By the end of the grant, both types of training—(non-cohort) ITA-eligible training and cohort training—were used about equally according to staff.

Exhibit 2-3: Examples of Programs Pursued by Maryland Tech Connection Participants

Program	Length	Credit Status, Resulting Credential	Training Provider(s) Commonly Used by Participants
Advanced Manufacturing			
Certified Production Technician	1 month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-credit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American College Consortium
Bioscience			
Clinical Research Associate and Coordinator	3 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-credit • Good Clinical Practice certification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CRA Academy • Sollers Academy
Central Sterile Processing	5 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-credit • Certified Registered Central Service Tech (CRCST) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anne Arundel Community College
Medical Billing and Coding	2 weeks in class, 5 months hands-on	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-credit • Certified Billing and Coding Specialist (CBCS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National MD Billing
Laboratory Associate	6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 credits earned toward an associate's degree in biotechnology at Baltimore City Community College 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BioTechnical Institute of Maryland
Health IT	10 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-credit • Continuing education certificate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community College of Baltimore County
Health			
Dental Assistant	5 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-credit • Oral radiography certification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community College of Baltimore County
Nurse Refresher	5 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-credit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anne Arundel Community College
Medical Assistant	10 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-credit • Certified Clinical Medical Assistant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anne Arundel Community College • Montgomery Community College • Community College of Baltimore County
Information Technology			
Amazon Web Service	2-3 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-credit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amazon Web Services • Global Knowledge • ASM Educational Center
Network+	1-2 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-credit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UMBC Training Centers • ASM Educational Center • TrainACE • CompTIA
Security+	2-3 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-credit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UMBC Training Centers • Anne Arundel Community College • Montgomery College • CompTIA
Project Management Professional (PMP) [®]	3 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-credit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UMBC Training Centers • Anne Arundel Community College • ReGroup Consulting

SOURCE: MTC program data and staff reports.

2.5.4 Work-Based Training

There were two types of paid work-based training programs available through MTC: “Work and Learns” and on-the-job trainings (OJTs). Work and Learns were designed for participants to develop work experience, particularly if they were new to a particular field or had been out of the workforce for some time. OJTs were for participants that an employer wanted to hire, but who needed some additional training in order to fully qualify for the job.

- Work and Learns.** Staff equated Work and Learns to internships where interns gained experience in a particular field that could be used to bolster their credentials when applying for jobs. Positions could be structured as full-time or part-time, and participants could occupy them concurrent with being enrolled in a training program. MTC and the employer entered into a contract that stipulated the number of hours a participant would work, up to 400 hours. The contract included a training plan for the participant developed by the employer in consultation with the Industry Talent Consultant. MTC paid the participant a \$10 per hour wage initially, and increased the wage to \$12.50 per hour in the third year of the grant. MTC encouraged employers to supplement this wage with an additional payment to the worker so that the total pay was comparable with what regular employees would receive for similar work. Some Work and Learn participants transitioned to OJTs with the same employer; other participants did Work and Learns simply to gain experience in a particular role to help build their resume.
- On-the-job training.** OJTs were a mechanism for employers to hire an employee and use the OJT period to train them. Positions were typically full-time (and thus typically not current with training), and MTC and the employer established a training plan for the participant. Participants were paid directly by the employer, and AAWDC reimbursed the employer between 50 and 90 percent of the participant’s hourly rate, to a maximum of \$10,000 over the course of the grant program. OJTs lasted up to six months depending on how much training the participant needed. Upon successful completion, it was expected that the employer would retain the participant as a full-time employee.

Industry Talent Consultants played a central role in developing both types of work-based training. Drawing on their industry connections, they identified employers that were looking to hire, presenting the Work and Learns and OJTs as mechanisms the employer could use to try out or train candidates for available positions. Once MTC staff had developed a relationship with an employer interested in hiring MTC participants, the Consultants carefully screened the qualifications of participants before referring them for open jobs or work-based training positions. The employer then selected candidates to interview and entered into a contract with MTC that stipulated a training plan, length of training, and wage for the worker.

MTC staff reported that work-based training appealed to employers for two primary reasons. First, Industry Talent Consultants identified and referred qualified MTC participants for Work and Learns and OJTs, which saved employers the time and effort of having to recruit candidates on their own. Second, the grant-funded subsidies to pay the worker’s wages reduced employers’ costs to try out a potential employee or train a new employee. Staff reported that smaller companies and start-up companies in particular valued these incentives because they typically had limited resources to recruit and train staff.

Though Work and Learns and OJTs were available from the start of the grant, they were used more in the latter half of the grant period. Staff reported that it took time for MTC to develop relationships with employers and establish these positions. Staff also reported difficulty working with larger employers in developing OJTs because the process for approving a contract with MTC for work-based training

positions was often more extensive. In addition, the MTC-provided wage subsidy was often not sufficient to entice large employers to set up work-based training. In contrast, smaller employers could often bring on an MTC participant more easily. Small employers also had limited capacity for staff recruiting and training and valued the assistance from MTC, both in referring qualified candidates and in subsidizing their wages.

2.5.5 Job Search Assistance

For those program participants seeking to immediately enter employment or when participants had completed training, Career Coaches were available to help them in their search to identify and apply for jobs. Staff typically relied on participants to take the initiative in seeking out these services. Industry Talent Consultants were also available to assist participants with their job search, though they did so in a limited capacity such as by providing feedback on resumes to be sent to employers looking for candidates for work-based training.

2.5.6 Financial Assistance and Other Supports

MTC offered participants financial assistance and other supports, up to a maximum of \$10,000 per participant, including funds for occupational training tuition and work-based training wages. The types of financial assistance included:

- **Needs-related payments.** While enrolled in occupational training, participants whose household incomes were below the local living wage were eligible to receive a weekly \$100 stipend, capped at \$1,000.¹⁸ To receive the stipend, the participant submitted to the Career Coach a form completed weekly by the training provider to document attendance in occupational training.
- **Training-related costs.** In addition to tuition, MTC paid for textbooks, test preparation courses for certification exams, and certification exam fees for all participants enrolled in training.
- **Transportation assistance.** MTC offered transportation assistance to participants attending Career ReStart and enrolled in occupational and work-based training. Participants who needed it received a \$25 gas card for every five car trips. Baltimore City and Baltimore County residents received bus passes if they did not have a car.
- **Refurbished computers.** Participants who completed Career ReStart were eligible to receive a voucher for a no-cost refurbished computer from a partner organization. This benefit was intended to provide participants with computer access to aid their job search and/or to complete occupational training through online training providers.

Employer Experiences with Work-Based Training

The examples that follow illustrate the ways in which employers used work-based training through MTC to address their labor needs:

- A specialized cancer research non-profit placed several MTC participants in Work and Learns or OJTs or both. Four MTC participants stayed on as full-time hires in roles such as clinical research assistant or project manager.
- A small biotech company that provides technical and clinical research services to private companies and public agencies provided multiple work-based trainings to MTC participants. The company used both Work and Learns and OJTs. It hired several MTC participants as full-time employees in scientist, laboratory technician, and accountant positions. The salaries for these positions ranged from \$40,000 to \$60,000.

¹⁸ AAWDC used the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Living Wage Calculator (<http://livingwage.mit.edu/>) to determine the living wage for a given household size in the participant's local area.

- **Emergency financial assistance.** In rare instances, MTC provided one-time emergency assistance payments to participants encountering an urgent financial need that affected their ability to participate in MTC. These payments included help with rent, a car payment, or a cell phone bill. The Project Director determined which requests MTC would cover and the amount that MTC would fund.

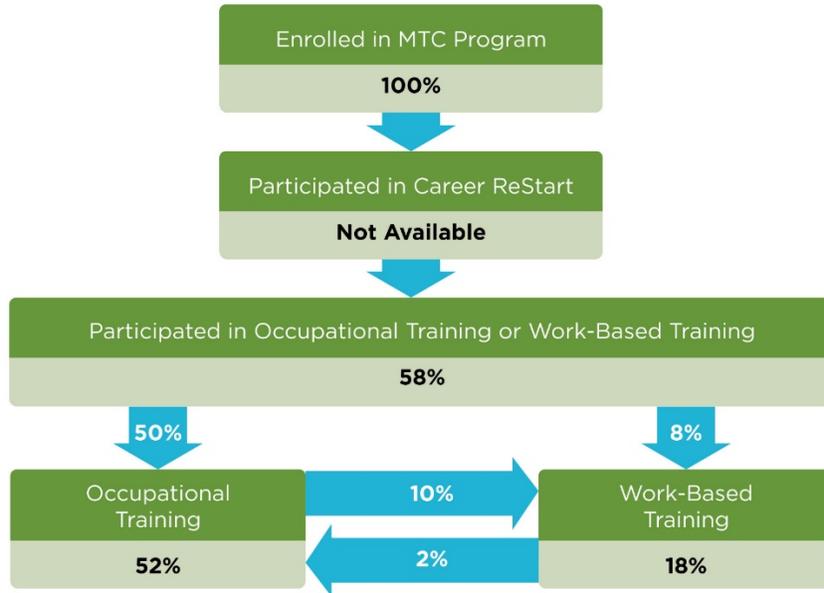
2.6 Participation Patterns in the MTC Program

This section analyzes rates and duration of participation in two components of the MTC program: occupational training and work-based training. The analysis is based on MTC administrative data covering a 16-month follow-up period after program enrollment. There are several limitations to this data. First, although all participants were required to participate in Career ReStart as their first activity, data on whether it was a first or subsequent activity were not available. Second, data on participation in job search services or the frequency and content of meetings with Career Coaches were not available. Therefore, this analysis underrepresents all the services that participants received through the MTC program. Finally, data were not available on the industry in which participants received occupational training.

Exhibit 2-4 shows the participant flow through MTC. Although data were not available on participation in Career ReStart, staff report that the vast majority of those who enrolled attended it. Looking at other activities for which data were available, for MTC program enrollees, 58 percent participated in occupational training and/or work-based training. That a little more than half of participants enter occupational or work-based training suggests that a significant portion (42 percent of all enrollees) did not attend any activities beyond Career ReStart.

Occupational training was more common than work-based training, with 52 percent of enrollees participating in it, compared to 18 percent of enrollees participating in work-based training. Exhibit 2-4 also shows the sequence in which people did these two activities (indicated by the blue arrows). While 50 percent of enrollees attended occupational training directly after Career ReStart, 10 percent of enrollees went on to later participate in work-based training. Eight percent of enrollees started work-based training after Career ReStart, and two percent went on to later enroll in occupational training.

Exhibit 2-4: Participation in MTC Program among Program Group Members within a 16-month Follow-up Period



SOURCE: MTC program records.

NOTES: Sample size is 540 program group members. Due to rounding, the subtotals may not equal the total. Data on participation in Career ReStart are not available and not included in this analysis.

While Exhibit 2-4 showed the overall participation pattern for all program enrollees, Exhibit 2-5 reports participation patterns for the subset of enrollees who attended at least one program service beyond meeting with a Career Coach—that is, the 58 percent from Exhibit 2-4 above. Specifically, Exhibit 2-5 shows participation rates, completion rates, and average length of stay in the MTC program as well as the proportion still participating at the end of the 16-month follow-up period.

As shown in the top panel, not including the Career ReStart program, of those who attended either occupational or work-based training 90 percent attended occupational training and close to one-third participated in work-based training. Those in work-based training primarily attended Work and Learns (24 percent) compared to OJT (10 percent). As shown in the middle panel of those who attended either occupational or work-based training, most attended only one, most commonly occupational training. About one-fifth participated in both occupational training and work-based training as shown in the bottom panel.

For those who attended occupational and/or work-based training, completion rates were high within the 16-month follow-up period, over 80 percent. The average length of stay in the MTC program was 3.6 months. Consistent with the short duration of many of the commonly attended occupational programs (see Exhibit 2-4), participants' length of stay in occupational training averaged about 2.7 months, while the average length of stay in work-based training was 3.5 months. Participants attending both activities had an average length of stay of 7 months. About 5 percent of those who attended any activity were still participating at the end of the 16-month follow-up period (first row).

Exhibit 2-5: Participation in MTC Program among Those Who Participated in Any Activity within a 16-month Follow-up Period

Activity	Participated (%)	Of Those Who Participated in the Activity		
		Completed (%)	Average Length of Stay (months)	Still Participating at Follow-up (%)
Attended Any Program Activity	100.0	91.7	3.6	5.4
Occupational training	90.1	91.8	2.7	3.9
Work-based training	30.7	85.4	3.5	6.3
Work and Learn	24.0	94.7	3.2	5.3
On-the-job training	9.6	93.3	2.9	6.7
Attended One Program Activity	79.2	89.9	2.7	5.2
Occupational training	69.3	90.3	2.6	5.1
Work-based training	9.9	87.1	3.6	6.5
Attended Two Program Activities				
Occupational training and work-based training	20.8	83.1	7.1	0.0

SOURCE: MTC program records.

NOTES: Sample size is 313 and includes all program group members who attended at least one activity. Length of stay is truncated for those still participating in activities at the end of the follow-up period. Data on participation in Career ReStart are not available and not included in this analysis.

2.7 Key Implementation Findings

This section discusses the implementation lessons that can be drawn from the experiences of AAWDC and its partners in operating MTC under the RTW grant. This section also identifies the program elements that the grantee planned to carry forward when the MTC program ended in October 2019.

2.7.1 Operating the Grant-funded Program

Slightly more than half of MTC participants attended occupational training or work-based training. Based on MTC program administrative data, of those enrolled in the MTC program, 58 percent participated in either occupational training or work-based training. Occupational training was more common: 52 percent of participants attended occupational training and 18 percent participated in work-based training. Though MTC administrative data were not available on participation levels in Career ReStart, staff reported that most participants attended this required initial course. Both the occupational training and work-based training were short-term, averaging 2.7 months and 3.5 months respectively, with few participating at the end of the follow-up period.

MTC was structured to serve a large geographic region through multiple service locations, but coordination among partners was perceived to be challenging at times. AAWDC's partnership with six other Career Centers enabled the grant to serve approximately half of the counties in Maryland and enroll a large number of participants. The Career Coaches were employed by different Career Centers, which gave them the flexibility to tailor MTC implementation to meet the needs of the local population and employers. However, staff reported because Career Coaches were not co-located in a single Career Center and did not report to a single MTC supervisor (i.e., most reported to a supervisor in the Career Center where they were based), it could be challenging to keep Career Coaches and Industry Talent Consultants informed of adjustments to MTC policies and practices. Over time, the Project Coordinator

came to play a key role in communicating with staff regarding program implementation. The Project Director also began holding monthly virtual meetings with MTC staff to share updates.

As the economy improved during the grant period, it became harder to identify potential applicants who met MTC’s eligibility requirements. According to staff, workers with higher levels of education and work experience who had lost their jobs during the recession found work on their own. As a result, it became more difficult to recruit participants who met the grant’s eligibility requirements. Staff observed that as the economy improved, the long-term unemployed applying to MTC tended to have barriers to employment that the program was not designed to address, such as a need for mental health services or a lack of commitment to finding a job. Early in the grant period MTC enrolled workers who had strong backgrounds and qualifications for the types of jobs targeted by the RTW grant, although they still met the program’s eligibility requirements. Later in the grant period, however, those enrolling tended to need more assistance to find jobs.

Staff reported that the short-term cohort occupational training was a valuable approach. As the grant progressed, MTC increasingly used cohort training; that is, training designed specifically to meet employer and industry needs and into which they exclusively enrolled MTC participants. Many of the contracted training providers used for cohort training were specific to an industry, as compared to community colleges that offered programs across a wide variety of industries. As such, cohort training providers typically understood the types of skills in demand among employers and often could help connect participants with employers upon completion of training. MTC staff also reported that they identified training providers with strong completion numbers and certification attainment and prioritized using those providers to serve MTC participants. Cohort training cost the program less than paying tuition separately for each participant. As a result, staff reported that using the cohort training model allowed MTC to enroll more participants in occupational training. Staff also said that cohort training gave participants a sense of peer support by being enrolled as a group.

The role of the Industry Talent Consultants in cultivating relationships with employers changed how AAWDC approached employers. Developed specifically for MTC under the RTW grant, the Industry Talent Consultant role was multifaceted, as they worked with employers, training providers, Career Coaches, and MTC participants. The Industry Talent Consultants had prior work experience in the industries they focused on under the grant, which staff reported gave them credibility with employers. The Consultants understood the employer’s labor needs and the specific skills, training, and certifications it was seeking in employees. The Consultants used information and their own industry knowledge to advise the Career Coaches and participants on the types of occupational training they should pursue in order to qualify for jobs in demand. As cohort trainings became more common, the Consultants also worked with the training providers to develop curricula that responded to the needs employers were expressing. With their prescreening, the Consultants sought to make quality candidate recommendations to employers. Some employers came to view the MTC program as a resource for filling their staffing needs and contacted the Consultants for MTC participant referrals when they had subsequent hiring needs.

The MTC program increased its use of work-based training in the latter half of the grant period, particularly working with smaller employers, with some differences by company size. Industry Talent Consultants reported that it took time—sometimes a year of meetings—to develop relationships with employers to the point that they were willing to hire an MTC participant in a Work and Learn or OJT. MTC staff reported they needed the multi-year grant period to figure out how best to identify and engage employers to offer work-based training, and then to place program participants into these positions and see them through to completion. In addition, staff reported difficulty working with larger employers, which often had more extensive approval processes to contract with MTC for work-based training positions and did not find the wage subsidy sufficient motivation. In contrast, staff reported that smaller employers typically reported a greater benefit from working with the MTC program. They had limited capacity for their own recruiting and training and valued the assistance from MTC, both in referring qualified candidates and in subsidizing their wages during trainings.

2.7.2 Sustainability of RTW Grant-funded Activities

AAWDC staff reported sustained institutional benefits from operating the RTW grant. Although MTC could not be sustained intact after the grant ended, AAWDC staff reported that certain elements of the program or approaches to implementation were being integrated into ongoing standard operations and would likely be integrated into future initiatives.

Employment readiness activities for other programs. Staff reported that components of Career ReStart, including the *5 Steps to Rapid Employment* and use of social media in a job search, have been adapted for use in other AAWDC grants and WIOA programs.

Work-based training. AAWDC viewed the work-based training positively, in that the subsidy provided an incentive for some employers to hire participants in temporary positions that could lead to full-time employment. AAWDC would like to offer work-based training in the future, but the ability to do so largely depends on it securing other sources of funding.

Industry connections. The Industry Talent Consultant role also could not be sustained without additional grant funding, but AAWDC sought to integrate aspects of the role into its ongoing business services practices. In particular, AAWDC intended to pursue an industry-focused approach to developing relationships with employers, such as by designating business services staff to specific industries and seeking out industry-specific events and job fairs.

3. Jewish Vocational Service—Skills to Work in Technology / Job Search Accelerator

Grantee Jewish Vocational Service (JVS) operated two programs funded by its RTW grant to serve long-term unemployed workers (including those underemployed): Skills to Work in Technology and Job Search Accelerator. JVS began enrollment for these RTW-funded programs in May 2015 and served a total of 1,006 participants, exceeding their target enrollment of 801 individuals. The programs ended in October 2019.

Skills to Work in Technology (STW-T) encompassed three courses that provided training for employment in IT:

- **Business Administration Bootcamp.** A five- to six-week course primarily focused on employment readiness skills, supplemented with training on software needed for working in an office environment, such as Microsoft Office® and sometimes Quickbooks®.¹⁹
- **Digital Marketing.** An 11- to 12-week course providing training in a variety of topics related to marketing using digital tools. This course closed early, in July 2018.
- **Salesforce® Administration.** A 16-week course providing technical training on how to manage the Salesforce platform for an organization.

Partway through the grant period, JVS implemented a second program, Job Search Accelerator (JSA), that did not have a technical skills component or a focus on IT. This two-week program focused on job search and readiness skills. Participants attended the three STW-T courses and JSA in relatively equal proportions, although Salesforce Administration was the largest.

3.1 Program Context

JVS is a San Francisco-based not-for-profit organization that provides employment and training services for job seekers at various career levels to several counties in the area.²⁰ JVS's office is in downtown San Francisco, and its service area includes the city and county of San Francisco as well as several neighboring counties in the San Francisco Bay Area: Alameda, Contra Costa, San Mateo, and Santa Clara Counties.

The San Francisco Bay Area had a strong economy in recent years. The annual unemployment rate in San Francisco in 2018 when the RTW grant ended was 2.4 percent, down from 3.6 percent in 2015 when JVS

¹⁹ The training focus of this program changed over time, and JVS renamed the program as these changes occurred. For example, for a period of time, it was known as “Office Administration Bootcamp.” For simplicity, we use the name “Business Administration Bootcamp” throughout to refer to the different iterations of the program.

²⁰ A network of agencies around the country under the name Jewish Vocational Service provide vocational and/or rehabilitation services. Each operates independently and is administratively separate from the others. Like the others, this JVS is an independent organization. It serves the San Francisco Bay Area.

began enrollment for its RTW programs. The unemployment rate improved significantly from its peak of 8.9 percent unemployment in 2010, and was below the national rate of 3.9 percent in 2018.²¹

According to the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, IT is a major industry in the Bay Area.²² Silicon Valley is located in the southern part of the area (the “South Bay”), which is home to Google, Apple, Facebook, and other major technology companies. Other technology employers in the area include Twitter, Salesforce, and Uber. Though the presence of technology employers means the demand for skilled workers is high, JVS staff reported competition for skilled positions is also high. Further, large IT employers in particular often need skills beyond the training level provided by JVS.

In spite of the strong economy in the area, its high cost of living resulted in financial challenges for many residents. In particular, JVS management staff reported that rents increased steadily over the course of the RTW grant period, resulting in more low- and moderate-income residents moving into parts of the Bay Area that were increasingly farther from San Francisco.

3.2 Organizational Structure and Staffing

JVS offered programs in several areas, of which STW-T and JSA were two. Other program areas included healthcare training, training for employment in financial services, and a “High School Bridge” program serving youth. It also had a more general Client Services team not specifically tied to any training area.

The STW-T program was created by JVS for the RTW grant, and positions specific to STW-T were funded by the grant. These included a Director of Technology Training Programs and a Program Manager who oversaw STW-T; Program Coordinators for each of the three STW-T courses (Business Administration Bootcamp, Digital Marketing, and Salesforce Administration), and a Lead Instructor who oversaw instruction on the job search components and led most of the job search activities. At times during the grant period, other key STW-T positions included a Career Advisor who provided participants with one-on-one help with job search; a position focused on recruitment and intake; and a part-time position focused on job development and employer engagement.

A number of staff members from other areas of the organization and from outside JVS also supported STW-T. Most notably, the technical skills training for the three STW-T courses was not provided by full-time STW-T staff. Rather, JVS engaged an instructor for Salesforce Administration on an hourly basis to provide training on-site at JVS. For Digital Marketing, JVS purchased seats in classes at the for-profit technology training provider General Assembly, located in the same building as JVS. The Business Administration Bootcamp’s Microsoft Office training was provided by a JVS staff member from another program area who dedicated part of their time to STW-T. Finally, staff from JVS’s Client Services team led components incorporated into STW-T from the Power of Thought curriculum, discussed below.

JSA existed as a separate program area within JVS, and its staff were separate from STW-T. JSA (and therefore its staff) was funded in part through the RTW grant and in part through other sources. About seven JVS staff worked on JSA at any given time: the JSA Director, a senior Client Success Strategy Coordinator responsible for selecting and assessing JSA participants, one or two Program Coordinators

²¹ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Labor Force Data by County*, see <http://www.bls.gov/lau/#tables>.

²² <https://sfchamber.com/resources/economic-development/key-sectors-2/>

responsible for setting up the curriculum and leading workshops, an Outreach Coordinator to conduct recruitment and intake, and two Career Advisors who supported participants in their job search. JSA sessions were led by a combination of these staff and instructors from other programs at JVS.

Partnerships played a role in JVS's implementation of the programs. JVS primarily delivered STW-T and JSA services at its office in San Francisco, but twice during the grant period JVS partnered with other organizations to operate Business Administration Bootcamp elsewhere in the San Francisco Bay Area. The two partners were the San Pablo Economic Development Corporation and the Stride Center, which were located in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties (the East Bay). The partner organizations provided the location for the Bootcamp training and assisted JVS staff with logistics.

JVS staff reported that employers were important partners in their RTW programs. In designing the STW-T program, JVS staff interviewed local employers, including large companies, about their hiring practices. JVS staff also periodically convened "Leadership Councils" of employers in its various program areas to provide insight into program design or promote job openings for JVS graduates. These councils helped JVS determine which technical skills trainings to offer, particularly the types of trainings that both met employer needs and addressed the backgrounds of the participants.

3.3 Target Population and Program Group Characteristics

To be eligible for the JVS RTW programs, applicants had to be able to work legally in the United States, be a resident of one of the counties served by JVS, and be age 18 or older. In addition, participants had to meet the RTW grant criteria of experiencing long-term unemployment and needed at least a high school diploma. Beyond that, JVS targeted workers who had experience (or relevant college education) in a field related to the program to which they were applying.

The specific requirements differed for each of the STW-T program's courses and JSA:

- ***Business Administration Bootcamp*** required no specific technical skills, but applicants had to have job goals related to working in an office environment.
- ***Digital Marketing*** targeted workers with a marketing or sales background; applicants had to demonstrate a basic understanding of marketing and how up-to-date digital skills might contribute to their career.
- ***Salesforce Administration*** required applicants to demonstrate a related background that could be supplemented by a Salesforce certification; understand how skills they would learn in the training could help their career; and possess basic computer skills such as typing, use of web browsers, and Microsoft Excel®.
- ***Job Search Accelerator*** required no specific technical skills, but applicants had to have a sense of the type of job they wanted, whatever type that might be.

Program staff reported that Business Administration Bootcamp generally served participants with lower incomes and lower skills than the other three offerings. Digital Marketing and Salesforce Administration required more existing skills of its applicants, and staff reported those courses generally served participants who previously had medium to higher income levels before becoming long-term unemployed. Over the grant period, the application processes for Digital Marketing, Salesforce Administration, and JSA increased the emphasis on relevant work experience and industry knowledge.

Staff reported they found that participants with definite job targets succeeded more in training than those without definite targets.

Exhibit 3-1 shows the demographic characteristics of members in the study's program group (see Chapter 1 for information on the evaluation design), using self-reported data collected at program enrollment ("baseline"). About two-thirds of the program's enrollees were women. About half were White and one-quarter were Asian. The average age was 44, and about 20 percent were age 55 or older. Three-quarters did not have children who were living with them. Program enrollees were well educated.

A large majority (81 percent) had a bachelor's or master's degree. An additional 6 percent had a technical or associate's degree, and 10 percent had some college but no degree. Reflecting the RTW grant eligibility criteria, 82 percent were unemployed at the time of enrollment; 34 percent had not worked in more than a year. For the 18 percent who were employed at the time of enrollment, weekly earnings averaged \$390 (or about \$1,500 per month). One-quarter received public assistance at the time of enrollment, with 17 percent receiving benefits from Unemployment Insurance and 10 percent from Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

Exhibit 3-1: Selected Characteristics of Program Enrollees at Baseline, JVS RTW Programs

Characteristic	Distribution
Gender (%)	
Female	64.2
Male	35.8
Race (%)	
Asian	24.5
Black or African American	12.3
White	51.6
Hispanic ethnicity (%)	10.2
Age (%)	
24 years or younger	1.8
25 to 34 years	25.3
35 to 44 years	22.5
45 to 54 years	29.9
55 years or older	20.5
Average age (years)	43.6
Marital Status (%)	
Married	41.1
Widowed/divorced/separated	13.9
Never married	38.2
One or More of Own Children in Household Age 18 or Younger (%)	24.1
Education level (%)	
Less than high school or GED	1.0
High school diploma	2.2
Technical or associate's degree	5.8
Some college credit but no degree	9.7
Bachelor's degree	50.1
Master's degree or higher	31.2
Employment status (%)	
Currently employed full time (30+ hours)	6.0
Currently employed part time (<30 hours)	12.1
Currently unemployed, but employed in last 12 months	47.6
Currently unemployed, and longer than 12 months since last worked	34.3
Weekly earnings (\$)	\$389.67
Receiving any public benefit (%)	25.8
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	1.2
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	10.2
Unemployment Insurance (UI)	16.5
Section 8 or public housing assistance	2.7

SOURCE: Ready to Work Baseline Information Form (BIF).

NOTES: Percentages do not sum to 100% for race and marital status because not all response categories are included. Sample size is 502 and includes all program group members randomly assigned. Statistics in this table are computed based on the JVS program group members who completed the BIF for the given question (e.g., gender). Weekly earnings are calculated for those working at baseline.

3.4 Recruitment

JVS's recruitment strategies included both recruitment for specific upcoming courses and general outreach for JVS programs. Its main strategies for recruiting applicants for STW-T and JSA included online advertising, especially through Craigslist; recruitment at events such as job fairs; outreach and referrals through community partners; and newspaper advertising. Staff also reported JVS's own website as an important source of recruitment, as well as internal referrals of who went through JVS's intake process for general services and whom staff identified as potentially appropriate for the RTW programs. JVS held information sessions at the JVS San Francisco office for potential applicants to learn more about the programs and decide whether to apply. As time went on, word of mouth became more important, and JVS leveraged alumni networks to spread the word about its programs.

Staff reported some differences in the recruitment strategies that they found effective for each offering:

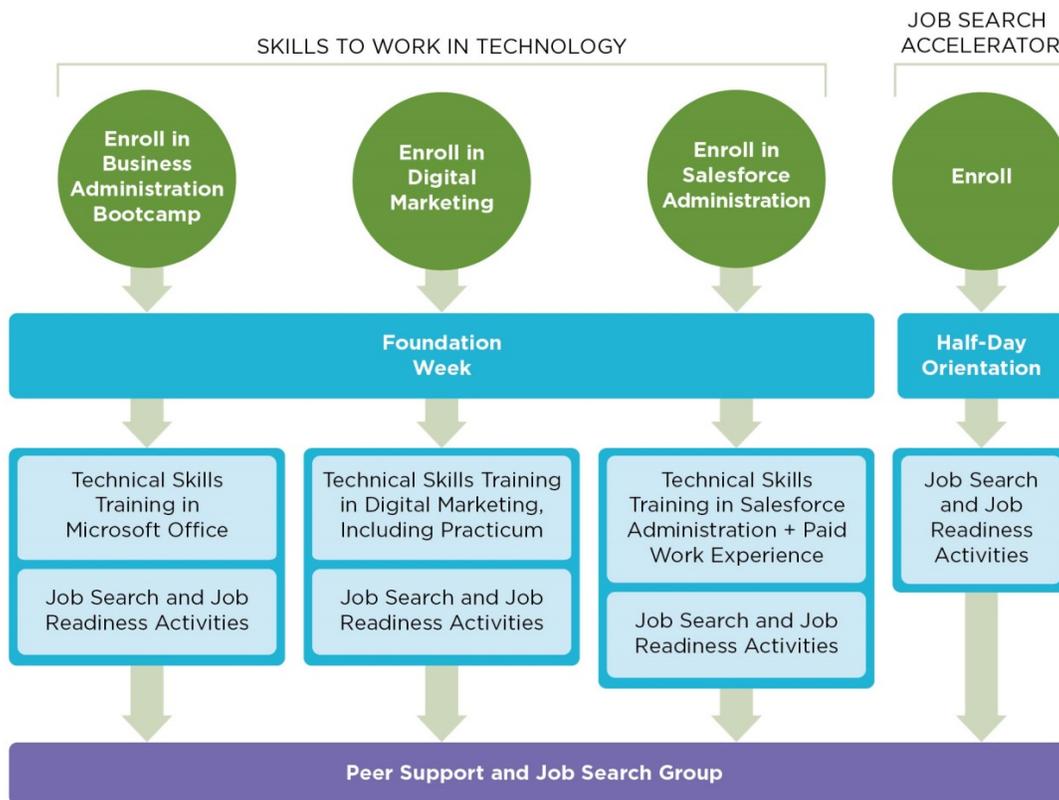
- ***Business Administration Bootcamp.*** Craigslist ads were an important recruitment tool for the Bootcamp course. For those cohorts located at partner organizations in the East Bay, JVS staff also conducted more localized outreach, including placing advertisements in free newspapers serving the local community; distributing flyers; and reaching out to local community-based organizations, public housing locations, and networks of service providers that served as referral sources. JVS staff met with staff from these organizations to establish relationships.
- ***Digital Marketing.*** Craigslist and Nextdoor were most valuable, but JVS also conducted outreach through social media tools such as Facebook groups and used advertising analytical tools (described more below).
- ***Salesforce Administration.*** Recruitment for early cohorts used the same strategies as for the other offerings, but recruitment became easier as word of mouth about the program spread. In later cohorts, recruitment for Salesforce Administration involved only word-of-mouth referrals, Craigslist advertisements, and a minor number of referrals from other organizations.
- ***Job Search Accelerator.*** Early recruitment strategies focused largely on development of the program's website (with a focus on visuals and showcasing previous participants' successes, including videos with their stories). JVS staff also recruited participants at JVS events (e.g., open houses, public workshops, and speaker events) and elsewhere such as job fairs. As with the other offerings, JVS posted ads for JSA on Craigslist that included online versions of the program's poster. JVS also developed relationships with referral partners, including local staffing agencies (with which staff also would place program graduates).

JVS continuously gathered information on how applicants heard about its programs, and revised its outreach strategy based on that information. In particular, JVS used web analytics to refine details of its recruitment approaches. These efforts focused on understanding which websites or other online marketing brought prospects to its program applications and which part of the JVS website they first visited. It also tracked the types of devices visitors used to access the website and program applications—and where different visitors dropped off in the application process—which led JVS to make applications more friendly for mobile device users. Finally, JVS tested Craigslist advertisement templates to understand which headlines resulted in more interest.

3.5 Program Services

This section describes the services available through the two JVS RTW programs, and the next section (Section 3.6) describes participation levels in the programs. Business Administration Bootcamp, Digital Marketing, and Salesforce Administration were new and provided occupational skills training for employment in the technology sector combined with job search and employment readiness activities. Salesforce Administration also included a work-based training component. Partway into the grant period, JVS combined elements of the Business Administration Bootcamp curriculum with elements of a more general job search program that it had previously operated. Like STW-T, JSA included job search activities; however, it did not focus on a particular industry or include technical skills training. Exhibit 3-2 shows the components and sequence of each program.

Exhibit 3-2: Overview of the JVS Skills to Work in Technology and Job Search Accelerator Programs



SOURCE: Developed by Abt Associates based on staff reports and program materials.

3.5.1 Enrollment

The enrollment processes for each program followed the same general structure, though there were some differences for each offering. JVS holds general information sessions weekly for the range of programs it operates. In addition, for the RTW-funded programs, JVS held sessions specific to STW-T or JSA once or twice a week when courses were upcoming.

Interested prospects applied online for one of the four offerings. The applications were specific to each, but collected similar information, including the applicant’s background and experiences relevant to the program area of interest. Staff screened each application and made a preliminary determination of the applicant’s fit based on eligibility criteria, prior related experience and skills, and (for STW-T) interest in the IT industry.

JVS staff then scheduled applicants to complete subsequent steps in the application process to further assess their fit for the specific course. Assessments for STW-T courses included these:

- ***Business Administration Bootcamp; Digital Marketing:*** Staff from the program conducted in-person interviews with the applicants to determine the appropriateness of the course in meeting their employment goals.
- ***Salesforce Administration:*** Applicants completed online technical assessments (which they could do from home). These assessments helped staff to gauge applicants’ digital and computer literacy in such areas as Microsoft Excel, use of web browsers, and the internet. Those applicants achieving the requisite scores then recorded an online video interview in response to several pre-specified questions. This requirement allowed the applicant to demonstrate the minimum computer skills needed to attend the training.

Staff reported that over time the assessment of fit allowed too much discretion by staff. In response, JVS standardized and streamlined its enrollment process. For STW-T, JVS developed a scoring approach and used it for all three STW-T courses. First, staff conducted a phone interview with the applicant to determine his or her knowledge about the position and industry of interest (to identify applicants with definite job targets). An in-person group activity followed to gauge applicants’ communication skills and ability to work in a cohort setting. Finally, during the group activity, applicants completed a technical assessment of their basic computer skills to determine whether they met the criteria for the specific course. The enrollment process for JSA included only the phone interview.

The next sections describe the content of the three STW-T courses and JSA.

3.5.2 Occupational Training in the STW-T Program

The three STW-T courses combined occupational training in an IT-related area with activities to develop employment readiness skills. The occupational training component of each is described below.

Business Administration Bootcamp

The Business Administration Bootcamp provided training on software helpful for working in an office environment, but with a primary focus on employment readiness skills. Of the roughly 100 total program hours provided over five to six weeks, about 15 hours were dedicated to training in office and business computer skills. The specific number of hours as well as the content of the computer skills training changed from cohort to cohort, based on JVS’s understanding of the skills in demand by employers and an assessment of the characteristics of each cohort. Most cohorts focused on Microsoft Office programs (particularly Word and Excel), considered necessary for participants to meet basic employer needs. In later cohorts, JVS adjusted the curriculum to focus instead on QuickBooks, basics of accounting, and more advanced Excel tools. Bootcamp participants needing additional training could also complete self-paced modules on their own time through Lynda.com accounts that JVS made available to them.

Digital Marketing

The Digital Marketing training was provided by General Assembly, a for-profit computer programming training provider in the same building as JVS. JVS purchased seats in General Assembly’s Digital Marketing course. The 10-week course consisted of two two-hour sessions weekly, delivered through a combination of lectures and hands-on activities. Topics covered included general marketing, business, and customer strategy; various channels for marketing; search engine optimization and Google AdWords; social media ads; content strategy; using information to develop customers; A/B testing; email marketing; Google Analytics; and key performance indicators. Part of the instruction was an applied project, in which participants created their own advertising campaigns and strategies for a project company. Participants were responsible for finding their own project company. To address any remaining participant needs, JVS provided later cohorts with an 11th week of training after the General Assembly training ended.

Digital Marketing ended about three years into the four-year RTW grant period, in July 2018. Staff reported difficulty finding placements for its participants. Combined with the input of the Digital Marketing Leadership Council (i.e., employer advisers), staff determined that General Assembly training was not well tailored to employer demand. Specifically, General Assembly provided a broad survey of multiple digital marketing tools, whereas staff found that employers were reporting a need for deep proficiency in only a few skills.

Salesforce Administration

The Salesforce Administration prepared participants for the exam needed to obtain a Salesforce Administrator basic certification (known as ADM 201). A contracted Salesforce instructor delivered the training three days a week over about four months. The first phase of the training generally followed the official Salesforce Administrator curriculum, delivered over approximately seven weeks (including introductory content and exam preparation). It included an overview of Salesforce’s cloud-based structure, its implications for how data are stored, and understanding the end-user experience, all of which provided context for the Administrator training.

The second phase of the training also incorporated IT business analysis. Participants worked on an independent project in an area of their interest that helped the instructor assess their understanding of course material. At the end of the program, students took the ADM 201 exam. STW-T provided funding to take the exam up to two times, and Salesforce made the exams available to JVS at reduced cost. For most cohorts, the program also helped students who passed the ADM 201 exam prepare for the basic Salesforce App Builder exam.

JVS conducted one shorter, “accelerated” cohort that enrolled participants with at least six months of prior Salesforce experience and aimed to get them fellowship experience and deeper levels of learning. However, staff found that participants who both had this experience and met the criterion of being among the long-term unemployed had challenges affecting their ability to find a job that occupational training could not address. JVS did not repeat this model, but lessons from it informed its approach in subsequent cohorts. It added more emphasis on the introduction to Salesforce and developed more referral resources for participants needing supports (e.g., mental health services, rehabilitation, access to professional clothing, help adapting to the U.S. workforce for refugees or immigrants).

3.5.3 Job Search and Employment Readiness Activities in the STW-T Program

For the RTW grant, JVS developed a job search and employment readiness curriculum that was part of the three STW-T courses (and was used as the basis for the JSA program, as discussed in Section 3.5.5). The goal of the job search and employment readiness curriculum in STW-T was to provide participants in its three courses with the tools needed to get a job in the IT sector. In all three courses, delivery of the curriculum began in the first week (“Foundation Week”) and then continued concurrent with training. How the curriculum was integrated with the occupational training varied across the three courses.

Activities in the curriculum had several key objectives, including defining a concept of one’s target job; developing effective resumes and cover letters, LinkedIn profiles, “personal brands,” and “elevator pitches”; and improving networking skills and strategies and interviewing skills. JVS brought in guest panelists, including potential employers, to conduct networking and employer events and mock interviews. Employers ranged from larger technology-focused companies to small businesses. In addition, the curriculum provided mechanisms for peer feedback. The instructor put participants in groups to comment on one another’s resumes; to present and critique one another’s personal career narratives; and hold one another accountable throughout the program. The same instructor delivered the curriculum across all three of the STW-T courses.

Foundation Week. For Business Administration Bootcamp and Salesforce Administration, Foundation Week lasted five days, with about six hours of activities each day. For Digital Marketing, in contrast, the Foundation Week curriculum was abbreviated, and participants attended only three days. Foundation Week had three sets of activities:

- **Peer support.** A primary purpose of the week was for participants to get to know others in the course. The class established peer groups and did small group activities to support and learn from one another as they went through the technical training and job search activities.
- **Personal branding.** Participants began developing a professional “pitch” to effectively communicate their past experiences and career goals to potential employers. This activity in part aimed at helping long-term unemployed workers who were discouraged to focus on their strengths and passions.
- **Career exploration.** Foundation Week included activities focused on exploring a possible target job. Participants engaged in activities to understand the industry and requirements for this job, including their expectations and responsibilities. In later cohorts, JVS added training on using LinkedIn. For Salesforce Administration, JVS also added an introduction to the Salesforce software, its uses, and an understanding of the end-user experience.

Following Foundation Week, job search and employment readiness activities continued. For the Business Administration Bootcamp, the core curriculum was the primary focus of the course and was delivered daily throughout it. For Digital Marketing and Salesforce Administration, time was set aside each week for the job search and employment readiness activities, and these activities were increasingly emphasized as the end of the training neared. About eight weeks into the longer Salesforce Administration course, the program dedicated a week exclusively to developing both a resume and cover letter and a list of companies to which participants would like to apply.

Staff Office Hours. Across all three STW-T courses, staff held office hours for one-on-one help during job search. During that time, staff provided help with mock interviews, resumes, and information about networking events. Participants could also access resources in JVS’s technology center, such as

computers and tutorials, or any of JVS’s general services, such as public workshops or labs on subjects such as interviewing, resumes, and networking.

My Career Action Plan. JVS used an individualized employment plan, My Career Action Plan (MyCAP), to lay out each participant’s goals related to self-development and job search as well as a timeline for these goals and for check-ins with STW-T staff on progress. MyCAP also specified activities to help the participant meet the goals, including a training plan. Participants developed the MyCAP in a set of one-on-one meetings with a STW-T staff member for their course. The MyCAP was generally developed around the third week of the course, so that participants had already spent time in group sessions considering their employment goals and exploring their potential target job. The number and timing of the follow-up MyCAP meetings differed by program: weekly check-ins during Business Administration Bootcamp, but only one follow-up during Digital Marketing or Salesforce Administration.

Positive Mindset / Power of Thought. STW-T incorporated a cognitive behavioral therapy–based component aimed at addressing motivation and self-confidence, which JVS originally called “Positive Mindset” and later “Power of Thought.” JVS used grant funds to engage a Marriage and Family Therapy Specialist to develop the component. It consisted of six one-hour sessions, scheduled as part of the job search and readiness activities and usually delivered over six weeks. Staff described Positive Mindset’s activities as teaching participants to regain control over their circumstances and adopt healthy coping mechanisms by recognizing their own reasons for being unemployed, and then helping participants come up with alternative ways to think about their unemployment.

Peer Support. After completing the job search and readiness curriculum and the technical skills training, participants attended peer support groups, facilitated by a JVS staff member. These groups were designed to provide structure and accountability during job search. The group checked in on how each participant was doing with job applications and networking and discussed any issues that arose in the job search. Participants laid out the planned steps in their job search, and then at the next session held one another accountable for what they said they would do. The group also focused on improving job search strategies.

The specific structure of these groups evolved over the RTW grant period. For much of the period, STW-T courses assigned participants to one of two groups, depending on the amount of additional preparation for job search they needed. Participants considered more job ready, and therefore less in need of help improving their job search strategies, were assigned to a group focused on promoting accountability in their job search activities. Others were assigned to a group that gave more attention to continuing to improve resumes and other materials. Later in the grant period, the STW-T groups were eliminated; instead, STW-T participants could attend similar groups that were occurring as part of JSA, known as “Chart Your Course,” together with JSA participants. JVS decided to eliminate the separate groups in part because it found that the STW-T participants who needed a higher level of assistance were not progressing as much in their job search as anticipated and might benefit from additional content presented as part of the JSA groups. At the same time, the more-job-ready participants did not seem to need the support provided by their group.

Job Development. Initially, responsibility for job development, consisting primarily of outreach to new employers, was shared among several of the STW-T program’s managers. Later, JVS had two staff members specifically responsible for building relationships with employers. JVS staff arranged events with employers such as mock interviews and brought in guest speakers from area employers. These events helped build JVS’s relationships with employers that might have openings, and participants occasionally submitted applications to employers they met at such events. The job search and

employment readiness curriculum required participants to search for employers and positions of interest. As a result, many of the employer contacts came from participant suggestions. In addition, job developers pursued placements through personal and corporate networks, employer databases, online job sites, and JVS alumni. Finally, through other programs it offered, JVS also had connections with employers in the healthcare and banking industries that sometimes had relevant job openings in office administration or technical office positions.

STW-T staff reported that private staffing agencies were an important source of temporary, permanent, and contract jobs. Temporary staffing agencies gave STW-T participants with little recent work experience an opportunity to gain experience needed to compete with other applicants for permanent positions. In addition, many employers of interest to STW-T participants hired for permanent positions through staffing agencies. Further, Salesforce-focused staffing agencies and creative staffing agencies provided contracting opportunities of interest to participants in the Salesforce Administration and Digital Marketing programs. JVS also found the relationships with staffing agencies helped it to learn about the labor market, as these companies were well informed about the skills that employers were demanding.

3.5.4 Work-Based Training: Salesforce Administration Fellowship

Salesforce Administration included a paid work experience position for some participants, known as a “fellowship,” where participants gained experience at an employer with Salesforce needs. Fellowship participants were paid \$20 an hour. Most fellowships were 20 hours per week for one to three months. STW-T paid for up to 80 fellowship hours via a third-party staffing agency that served as the employer of record. Employers paid for any hours worked beyond 80.

STW-T staff reached out to employers to arrange the fellowships, including talking with employers about their Salesforce needs that could be filled with a fellow. STW-T staff matched the participants to the fellowships, based in part on participant preferences, but the participants themselves then needed to apply to the employer. Fellowships were arranged with both for-profit and non-profit organizations. As part of their fellowships, participants met in a group for two hours each week to discuss their experiences.

Employer Experiences with Work-Based Training

The examples that follow illustrate the ways in which employers used work-based training through the Salesforce Administration fellowships to address their labor needs:

- A non-profit hosted two JVS Salesforce Administration fellows and hired one based on that fellow's proficiency with the required tasks during the fellowship. This non-profit was overseeing a third fellow when interviewed for the implementation study. Salaries for Salesforce Administrators at the non-profit started at \$61,000, which was substantially lower than salaries at corporate firms, but appealed to applicants interested in its mission. The non-profit particularly appreciated that JVS did not just prepare its participants for certification, but also focused on how to use Salesforce in the context of a job.
- A large financial services company hosted two fellows, both of whom it hired into business-systems-related positions. The positions paid about \$40 an hour. The company saw their familiarity with cloud architecture as a strength in the financial services industry. The company trained the fellows on the types of projects and tasks they would work on at the company. The company later hired two other JVS graduates. The company saw the fellowship as a “proof of concept” of the value of JVS's programs and so did not feel a need to go through a fellowship before hiring them. Of the four JVS graduates hired, one was full-time and the other three contractors on one-year engagements.
- A small Salesforce consulting company hosted two fellows. Fellows participated in calls with business analysts, worked through approval processes, and handled sales operations tasks. The company provided fellows with a business analysis mentor. The company was not sure they would hire the workers after the fellowship ended. If it did, it would be into junior business analyst positions, which would pay about \$60,000. The company had previously turned down two fellowship candidates whom they judged to lack the client engagement skills and adaptability needed for the position. It provided that feedback to JVS.

The number of fellowships JVS could fund was limited. Most participants could receive fellowships in the earlier cohorts, but JVS reduced the number of fellowships in later cohorts due to budgetary considerations. To determine which participants would receive a fellowship and how those participants would be matched with an employer, JVS had interested participants fill out a form indicating their preferences. JVS staff then made an assessment of each participant's appropriateness for the fellowships based on their experience in working with the participants during the course and information obtained during each participant's second MyCAP meeting.

In choosing which participants would receive the fellowships, staff selected participants who had received the Salesforce Administrator certification, were targeting a job in a Salesforce Administrator role, and had demonstrated progress in their independent project. These factors reflected the staff's goal of making matches where the employers might hire the fellows after the fellowship ended. JVS helped some participants who did not receive a fellowship find volunteer opportunities.

3.5.5 Job Search Accelerator Program

The JSA program combined the employment readiness elements of the Business Administration Bootcamp curriculum with elements of a more general job search program that JVS had previously operated. JSA's two-week program focused only on career exploration and job search, encompassing all the elements of the STW-T job search and employment readiness curriculum, with some modifications.

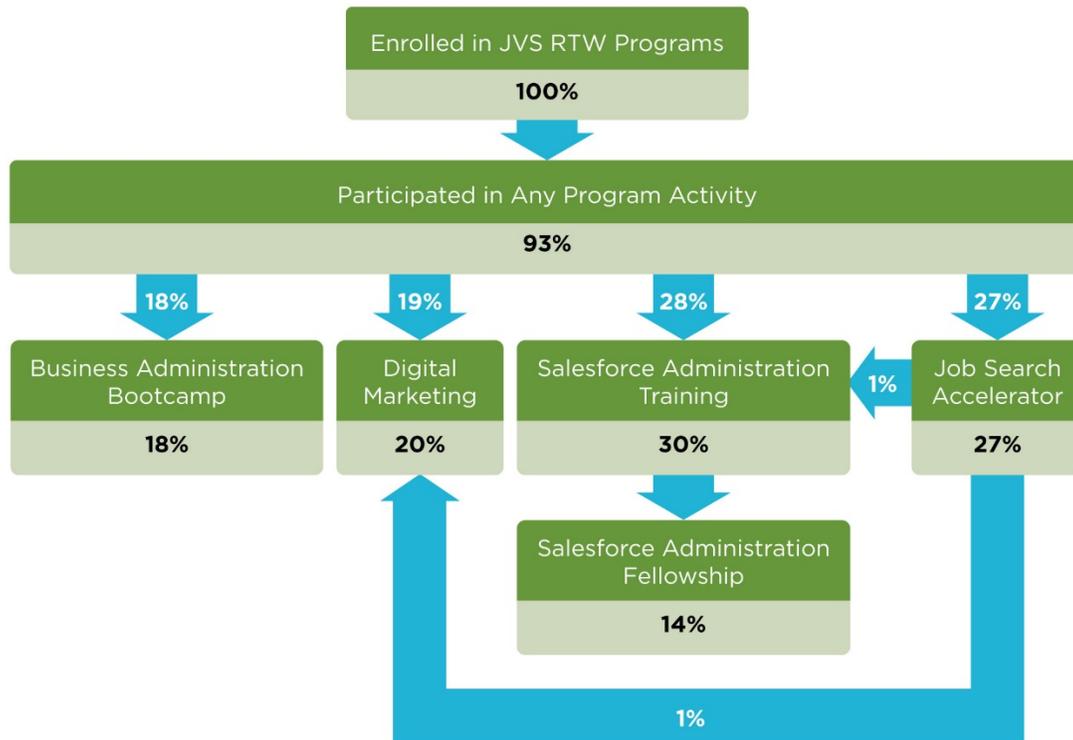
JSA's curriculum incorporated the same main features as the STW-T Foundation Week and core curriculum, including focus on developing an understanding of one's target job; development of resumes, cover letters, and LinkedIn profiles; personal branding and development of an "elevator pitch"; networking and job search strategies; and interviewing skills. JSA also incorporated the Power of Thought and peer activities into JSA. Unlike STW-T, because JSA was not tied to a specific sector its activities were conducted in a way to accommodate a broader set of target job types.

Many activities in JSA were organized around an online, 75-question assessment, the Employment Readiness Scale (ERS). The assessment produced a feedback report on a participant's preparedness for work and for job search and on challenges and supports affecting his or her ability to succeed in finding and keeping a job. JSA participants completed the assessment after their first-day orientation, and took it two more times during the two-week program. Advisors used results from the ERS during one-on-one advising meetings to tailor participants' job search education and activities.

3.6 Participation Patterns in the JVS Programs

This section reports rates and duration of participation in the JVS RTW programs overall as well as in each of the three STW-T courses and the JSA program. The analysis is based on the JVS administrative data covering a 16-month follow-up period after program enrollment.

Exhibit 3-3 shows the participant flow through the JVS RTW programs. Of all enrollees in JVS RTW programs, 93 percent participated in at least one of the four offerings. Data were not available on the reasons that some enrollees did not participate, but possibilities include finding a job. Across the four offerings, 30 percent of enrollees participated in Salesforce Administration, 27 percent in JSA, 20 percent in Digital Marketing, and 18 percent in Business Administration Bootcamp. Only two percent attended more than one course, by first attending JSA then attending a STW-T course (Salesforce Administration and one in Digital Marketing).

Exhibit 3-3: Participation in JVS RTW Programs among Program Group Members within a 16-month Follow-up Period

SOURCE: JVS program records

NOTES: Sample size is 502 program group members. Due to rounding, the subtotals may not equal the total.

While Exhibit 3-3 showed the overall participation pattern for all program enrollees, Exhibit 3-4 reports participation patterns for the subset of enrollees who attended at least one program service beyond meeting with STW-T staff—that is, the 93 percent from Exhibit 3-3 above. Specifically, Exhibit 3-4 shows participation rates, completion rates, and average length of stay in JVS RTW programs as well as the proportion still participating at the end of the 16-month follow-up period. Of those who ever participated, almost three-quarters attended one of the three STW-T courses focused on building technical skills: 19 percent attended Business Administration Bootcamp, 32 percent attended Salesforce Administration, and 22 percent attended Digital Marketing. About 29 percent participated in the Job Search Accelerator. About half of those who attended Salesforce Administration also participated in its paid work experience (fellowship).

Completion rates in all the programs were high—ranging from 87 percent in the Business Administration Bootcamp to 93 percent in Salesforce Administration (not including the fellowship). The average length of stay was 2.6 months, with the duration of attendance reflecting the different program designs. The average length of stay ranged from less than a month for JSA to about four months for Salesforce Administration training (plus an additional two months for the Salesforce Administration participants who took part in a fellowship). For those in the three technical skills training courses, the length of stay was 3.2 months (not shown). No participants were still attending any of the programs at the end of the 16-month follow-up period.

Exhibit 3-4: Participation in JVS RTW Programs among Those Who Participated in Any Activity with a 16-month Follow-up Period

Activity	Participated (%)	Of Those Who Participated in the Activity		
		Completed (%)	Average Length of Stay (months)	Still Participating at Follow-up (%)
Attended Any Program Activity	100.0	92.5	2.6	0.0
Technical Training				
Business Administration Bootcamp	19.1	86.5	1.2	0.0
Digital Marketing	21.9	94.1	3.0	0.0
Salesforce Administration-Training	32.0	92.6	3.9	0.0
Salesforce Administration-Fellowship	15.5	98.6	2.2	0.0
Job Search Accelerator	29.3	95.6	0.3	0.0

SOURCE: JVS program records

NOTES: Sample size is 465 and includes all program group members who attended at least one activity.

3.7 Key Implementation Findings

This section discusses the implementation experiences of JVS in designing and operating its RTW-funded programs. It includes a discussion of the elements the grantee hoped to carry forward after the grant's end date of October 2019.

3.7.1 Operating the Grant-funded Program

JVS had high participation and completion rates in both of its RTW-funded programs, and length of stay in the program was short-term as designed. Based on JVS administrative data, of those enrolled in the JVS RTW programs, 93 percent participated in one of them. Salesforce Administration was the most common program attended. Of those who participated, almost three quarters attended one of the STW-T program's three courses focused on building technical skills: 19 percent attended Business Administration Bootcamp, 32 percent attended Salesforce Administration, and 22 percent attended Digital Marketing. About 30 percent participated in the Job Search Accelerator program, with its primary focus on employment readiness. Completion rates in all four offerings were high—more than 85 percent in each. As designed, participants generally did not attend more than one. Across all the courses, length of stay was 2.6 months and none were participating at the end of 16-month follow-up period.

JVS purposively screened applicants for the RTW grant-funded programs to try to ensure participants could succeed in them. JVS incorporated various screenings into its enrollment process for the JVS RTW programs. The nature of the screening differed across the four offerings and evolved over the course of the grant period. It always involved some assessment of appropriateness of fit—largely centered on the applicant's dedication to finding stable employment quickly and an idea of a job target. For the three courses in the STW-T program, it involved a demonstration of the needed computer skills.

JVS engaged employers to inform its program design and in the hiring of program graduates. In developing the initial design, JVS interviewed about 25 local employers about their hiring practices and how job candidates could demonstrate their skills during their job search. It also interviewed other employers in developing the STW-T program's three courses. To continue to solicit input from employers, JVS established Leadership Councils to provide insight on program design and on job openings. In addition, to improve job placement, the staff increased their efforts to engage employers in

hiring program graduates. Many of their initial employer relationships were with small and midsize companies and non-profit organizations; later in the grant period, JVS staff engaged larger for-profit companies, reporting that this approach increased the job placements.

JVS adjusted aspects of its programs in response to the changing economy. JVS initially designed its RTW programs during a period of high long-term unemployment, but by the time the programs began, the labor market had improved. JVS found that applicants who were still long-term unemployed came with more barriers to employment than programs originally anticipated. JVS adjusted its screening processes and support services to better serve this group. In addition, the increasingly high cost of living in the Bay Area presented challenges to JVS in serving its target population, as many workers were moving outside of San Francisco. As a result, as JVS tried to target more disadvantaged groups with the Business Administration Bootcamp, it found it had to deliver the course at partner locations outside San Francisco to reach these groups.

Staffing agencies played an important role in JVS’s approach to helping participants find employment. Midway through the grant period, staff expressed concerns with their job placement numbers. They reported several challenges, including that many employers would not consider resumes of workers who had been unemployed for a long period. In addition, participants had to compete with high-skilled workers attracted to IT job opportunities in the San Francisco Bay area. In response, JVS staff found that working with staffing agencies helped its participants to find temporary, permanent, and contractor positions. JVS staff reported that given the structure of employer hiring in the IT industries being targeted, staffing agencies provided an important way for their program graduates to enter the competitive labor market.

Salesforce Administration was perceived by staff as the most successful offering, because it addressed both participant and employer interests and appeared to fill a needed niche in the labor market. Programs similar to the STW-T program’s Salesforce Administration were not common in the area, particularly programs serving unemployed workers that combined occupational training in Salesforce Administration skills, job search and employment readiness skills, and—for some— a work experience component. JVS used this course and its fellowship to meet a need for skilled workers in non-technology industries (e.g., non-profits, financial services), some of which needed an IT skill level lower than did some of the major IT companies.

JVS refined and adapted many aspects of its RTW programs on an ongoing basis. As an organization, JVS continually reassessed its processes and program offerings and frequently tried refinements (some of which it did not continue) over the course of the grant period. These included:

- ***Making multiple changes to Business Administration Bootcamp.*** Having originally conceptualized this course without a technical skills training component, JVS added the training on office-related software based on the challenges participants had finding employment. Later, JVS began offering the course at partner locations to better reach a lower-income target population who did not need as much technical skills training as other Bootcamp participants.
- ***Modifying the process for screening applicants during program enrollment.*** JVS streamlined its process and made deciding whom to accept into the program more objective.
- ***Exploring an “accelerated” version of Salesforce Administration.*** The version was tested with one group of about ten participants, but not repeated, as staff found participants needed more supports than the accelerated program provided.

- **Reassessing which technical skills training might be most effective in facilitating job placement.** In the final year of the grant period, JVS stopped offering the Digital Marketing because program completers had difficulty finding jobs. JVS also piloted another program that provided funding to applicants to enroll in external technology-related training programs; only two participants were served, and it was not continued.

3.7.2 Sustainability of RTW Grant-funded Activities

JVS planned to continue some aspects of its two RTW grant-funded programs after funding ended. JVS staff reported that the STW-T and JSA programs had matured over the course of the grant to where they believed the program models were “robust.” They also reported that the programs had become better known in the community and well regarded by many employers. Staff hoped to build on the programs and to continue to provide some technology trainings, though they had not yet identified funding. Further, staff expected the job search and employment readiness activities developed for the JVS RTW programs to continue more broadly in various other JVS programs. Staff anticipated that these services would no longer be focused on the long-term unemployed, however. Some key elements from STW-T and JSA that may be carried forward beyond the grant’s end include those discussed below.

Job search and employment readiness support. JVS had provided job search and employment readiness activities before receiving the RTW grant, and it planned to continue to do so after the grant. It had found that a number of tools and strategies developed under the RTW grant were valuable and expected to continue using them—most notably, the Power of Thought curriculum, group activities within the workshops, and the post-program peer support activities. JVS expected to continue the JSA program, which represented a change from its pre-RTW job search assistance programs; that is, JVS had not previously delivered these activities through cohorts, but it planned to continue that model.

Skills to Work in Technology program. As of the final evaluation site visit, JVS was unsure about the future of the STW-T program. It was interested in continuing the Business Administration Bootcamp and Salesforce Administration in some form—perhaps not with the same structures used under the RTW grant—but had not yet identified funding to support them. Ending Digital Marketing was not specifically due to the grant ending, but rather JVS’s ongoing process of reassessing the structures and value of its programming.

Salesforce registered apprenticeship. As one approach to continuing Salesforce-related training, JVS was in the process of developing a Salesforce Registered Apprenticeship in partnership with the San Francisco Office of Economic and Workforce Development and its TechSF initiative, recipients of a DOL apprenticeship grant. TechSF had approached JVS for help in developing such an apprenticeship given its experience with the Salesforce Administration course. JVS worked with its Salesforce Leadership Council to design one. JVS took on various design tasks in this effort, including developing a standards agreement, appropriate training, and a list of competencies. SNAP Business Intelligence, a local Salesforce consulting company involved in JVS’s Salesforce Leadership Council, helped in this process. JVS planned to serve as the sponsor; the Office of Economic and Workforce Development would provide funding to employers for training and onboarding participants.

4. RochesterWorks!—Finger Lakes Hired

This chapter describes the Finger Lakes Hired (FLH) program operated by RochesterWorks!. The program provided a range of individualized services, including job search and readiness assistance, occupational training, and work-based training to help long-term unemployed workers (including those underemployed) find jobs in the advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and IT fields. Program designers expected the majority of long-term unemployed participants would enter the program with credentials and work experience needed to obtain a job in the targeted industries. Reflecting that expectation, the first goal of the FLH program was to help participants find employment as quickly as possible, primarily by providing one-on-one job search assistance from grant-funded staff and an employment readiness workshop. FLH began enrollment in January 2015, serving a total of 1,007 participants out of a target of 1,500 individuals, and the program ended in July 2019.

4.1 Program Context

Grantee RochesterWorks! is the Workforce Investment Board (WIB) for Monroe County, which includes the city of Rochester in western New York State. Rochester and its surrounding areas have experienced economic difficulties over the past decade. According to RochesterWorks! staff, their region had experienced several decades of gradual economic decline by the start of the national recession in 2008-2009. Substantial declines in key industry sectors such as manufacturing, trade, and transportation were not offset by growth experienced in the education, healthcare, and social assistance sectors. Staff reported that although those sectors nearly absorbed the job losses, the newer jobs were typically for lower skill levels and wages.

At the time the grant was awarded in October 2014, staff anticipated both job opportunities for workers with upgraded skills and growth in reemployment opportunities. In response, RochesterWorks! applied for the grant to prepare long-term unemployed workers to meet these needs. FLH staff reported that the economy improved over the course of the grant period, although generally more slowly than in other parts of the country. The annual unemployment rate in Monroe County in 2015 when enrollment began was 5.1 percent, dropping to 4.3 percent near the end of the grant period, a considerable improvement from a peak of 8 percent in 2010.²³

4.2 Organizational Structure and Staffing

RochesterWorks! partnered with two other WIBs to operate FLH in a multi-county region. Those two WIB partners in the grant were Finger Lakes Works, serving Seneca, Ontario, Wayne, and Yates Counties; and GLOW Works, serving Genesee, Livingston, Orleans, and Wyoming Counties. The RTW evaluation of FLH focuses only on grant activities operated by RochesterWorks!, which serves the city of Rochester and Monroe County.

RochesterWorks! operates three local American Job Centers (called Career Centers), which house and support FLH. Three local community colleges—Monroe Community College, Finger Lakes Community College, and Genesee Community College—partnered with RochesterWorks! on the FLH program.

²³ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Labor Force Data by County*, see <http://www.bls.gov/lau/#tables>.

RochesterWorks! used the RTW grant funding for several positions:

- ***A full-time Project Manager.*** In addition to overseeing grant operations, the Project Manager developed relationships with employers to cultivate work-based training and employment opportunities for program participants and worked with the Education and Employment Specialists to fill these positions.
- ***Two full-time Education and Employment Specialists (EESs).*** The role of the EESs was to assess participants' employment interests and goals, determine appropriate steps and activities to pursue those goals, and address potential barriers to achievement. The EESs were available to participants throughout their tenure in the program and provided support on an ongoing basis.
- ***Three half-time College Liaisons.*** The grant included half-time funding for one College Liaison at each of the three partner colleges to provide support and assistance to participants enrolled in occupational training there.²⁴ The Liaisons also assisted with recruitment by referring to the program students at the college who may be eligible for the program's job search assistance or work-based training.
- ***Two full-time Outreach Specialists.*** The Outreach Specialists recruited participants and fostered relationships with community organizations to increase referrals to the FLH program. This dedicated recruitment role was added in the second two years of the four-year grant to bolster recruitment and enrollment given recruitment challenges discussed in Section 4.4.
- ***A full-time Business Services Specialist.*** The Business Services Specialist developed relationships with employers and industry associations to make them aware of the job candidates and work-based training funding opportunities available from FLH, and RochesterWorks! more broadly. This role was added partway through the grant period to support the Project Manager with business engagement.

4.3 Target Population and Program Group Characteristics

FLH targeted long-term unemployed workers (as defined by the RTW grant). Additionally, applicants were required to have a high school diploma or GED and an interest in one of the targeted sectors: advanced manufacturing, healthcare, or IT. There were no income guidelines, although only low-income participants could access certain financial assistance supports (see Section 4.5.5).

Exhibit 4-1 below shows the demographic characteristics of members in the study's program group (see Chapter 1 for information on the evaluation design), using self-reported data collected at program enrollment ("baseline"). The program enrolled more women than men (58 percent versus 42 percent) and twice as many enrollees were White as were Black or African American (60 percent versus 31 percent). The average age of program enrollees was 46, and about 60 percent were age 45 or older. Close to two-thirds (62 percent) had no children under age 18 residing in their household.

Reflecting the RTW grant's focus on aiding skilled workers who had experienced long-term unemployment, program enrollees were well educated overall; about one-third of FLH enrollees had a bachelor's degree and 12 percent had a master's degree. One-fifth had some college credit but no degree.

²⁴ The community colleges supervised the College Liaisons and offered training to FLH participants as they would to the general public, but otherwise the colleges were not actively engaged in program operations.

Most FLH enrollees (90 percent) were not employed at the time of enrollment, reflecting the program’s emphasis on serving unemployed workers. Some 63 percent of enrollees had been employed in the previous 12 months but were not currently working, and 27 percent of enrollees had not worked in more than a year. For the 10 percent who were employed at the time of enrollment, weekly earnings averaged \$267 (or about \$1,000 per month). Half of enrollees (53 percent) received public assistance: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Unemployment Insurance (UI) were the most common (28 percent each).²⁵ Less common were housing assistance (12 percent) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (6 percent).

²⁵ This data does not include workers who may have already exhausted their UI benefits.

Exhibit 4-1: Selected Characteristics of Program Enrollees at Baseline, Finger Lakes Hired

Characteristic	Distribution
Gender (%)	
Female	57.7
Male	42.3
Race (%)	
Asian	0.7
Black or African American	31.2
White	59.7
Hispanic ethnicity (%)	6.6
Age (%)	
24 years or younger	3.6
25 to 34 years	17.9
35 to 44 years	17.9
45 to 54 years	29.6
55 years or older	30.9
Average age (years)	46.3
Marital status (%)	
Married	31.9
Widowed/divorced/separated	21.4
Never married	41.4
One or More of Own Children in Household Age 18 or younger (%)	37.6
Education Level (%)	
Less than high school or GED	8.1
High school diploma	8.5
Technical or associate's degree	18.2
Some college credit but no degree	20.2
Bachelor's degree	32.6
Master's degree or higher	12.4
Employment Status (%)	
Currently employed full time (30+ hours)	2.9
Currently employed part time (<30 hours)	6.9
Currently unemployed, but employed in last 12 months	62.7
Currently unemployed, and longer than 12 months since last worked	27.5
Weekly earnings (\$)	266.50
Receiving any public benefit (%)	53.2
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	5.6
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	27.6
Unemployment Insurance (UI)	28.1
Section 8 or public housing assistance	11.5

SOURCE: Ready to Work Baseline Information Form (BIF).

NOTES: Percentages do not sum to 100% for race and marital status because not all response categories are included. Sample size is 307 and includes all program group members randomly assigned. Statistics in this table are computed based on the RochesterWorks! program group members who completed the BIF for the given question (e.g., gender). Weekly earnings are calculated for those working at baseline.

4.4 Recruitment

FLH primarily relied on applicant referrals from the following sources:

- **Career Center referrals.** RochesterWorks! Career Services Advisors (who were not part of the FLH) identified possible applicants as part of their standard interactions and meetings with Career Center customers. To refer a potential applicant, RochesterWorks! Career Services Advisors completed a FLH referral form and forwarded it to a FLH EES for follow-up. In addition, RochesterWorks! Workshop Specialists or the FLH Outreach Specialists recruited potential participants for FLH directly at the Career Center through presentations they made at regular Career Center workshops.
- **College Liaison referrals.** The three FLH College Liaisons referred to the FLH EESs community college students who might qualify for the program in order to help the students fund their tuition. Liaisons also referred students who were nearing graduation and who might benefit from assistance from the EESs with finding a job or from work-based training through FLH.
- **Partner referrals.** FLH Outreach Specialists met with staff at community organizations to inform them about FLH and foster connections that might lead to referrals of eligible applicants. Outreach Specialists also delivered formal presentations to potential candidates at libraries, business clubs, networking groups, and social services agencies and sent interested workers to the EES weekly orientation session. In addition, the EESs had a reciprocal relationship with the local Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES); BOCES referred workers who met the program's eligibility standards to FLH, and FLH sent participants to BOCES for training.

Referrals from these sources were used most commonly to identify eligible applicants for the program, but RochesterWorks! also advertised the FLH program through its website, fliers in the Career Center waiting room and posted at community organizations, and targeted mailings to UI claimants. However, staff reported less success with these strategies.

Overall, FLH management staff reported that it was more challenging to recruit eligible applicants than they had originally expected when RochesterWorks! applied for the RTW grant. In particular, staff reported that a contributing factor was that the number of long-term unemployed workers in the region declined over the grant period. Staff reported that many of the more highly educated and skilled workers found work as the economy improved in the service area.

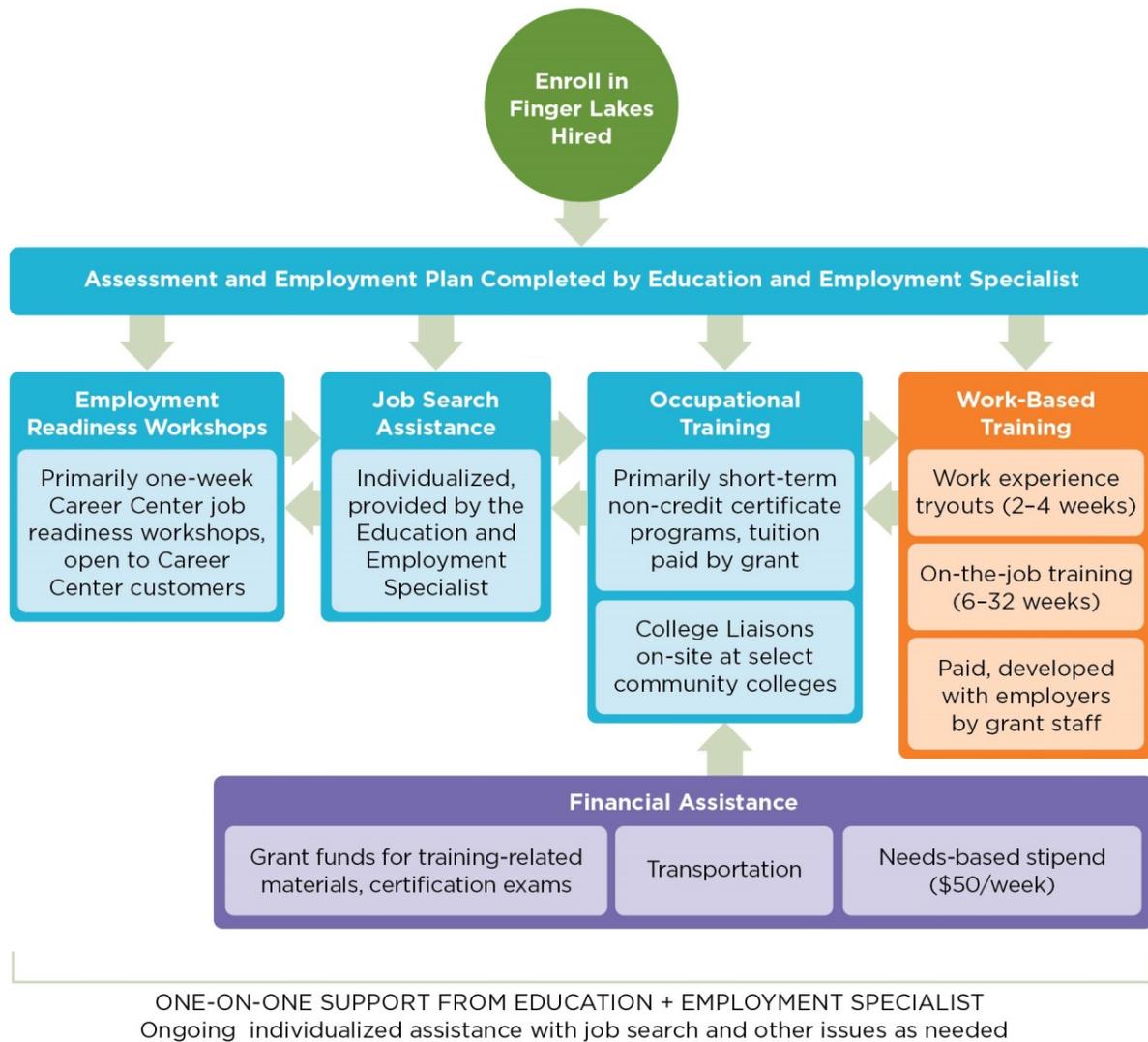
4.5 Program Services

This section describes the activities available through FLH. During program intake, EESs met individually with enrollees to assess their employment goals and develop a plan that identified the activities they would pursue to help them achieve their goals. As shown in Exhibit 4-2, these activities included the following:

- Employment readiness activities, primarily a one-week workshop available through the Career Center, to build job search skills and address social and emotional issues related to long-term unemployment;
- Job search assistance, provided one-on-one by the EESs, focused on finding immediate employment;
- Occupational training, lasting two years or less in advanced manufacturing, healthcare, or IT; and,
- Work-based training with an employer, including on-the-job training (OJT).

FLH staff reported they designed the program to provide services that would move participants to employment as quickly as possible and that anticipated that many participants would enter with the credentials and work experience to qualify for their target job. Reflecting these goals, staff designed the FLH program to primarily provide one-on-one job search assistance and employment readiness workshops, and intended that only a relatively small portion of participants would need to upgrade skills in their target industry through occupational training. This section describes the services provided through the FLH program and the next section (Section 4.6) describes participation levels in the program services.

Exhibit 4-2: Overview of the RochesterWorks! Finger Lakes Hired Program



SOURCE: Developed by Abt Associates based on staff reports and program materials.

4.5.1 Enrollment and Assessment

The assessment and enrollment process for FLH involved several steps. EESs conducted a prescreening of each potential participant, typically by telephone. During the screening, the EES provided information about FLH, determined whether applicants likely would meet the eligibility criteria, and informally assessed whether they were interested in employment in the grant-targeted industries. If applicants met

the preliminary criteria, the EES registered them for the weekly FLH group orientation session that provided additional information about the program, determined whether workers were eligible, and enrolled them into the program.

Next, participants met with the EES, who conducted an in-person assessment of background and goals. The assessment consisted of reviewing each participant's employment objectives and job search efforts to date, educational and employment history, employment barriers, and financial and personal situation. The EES and participant created an Employment Plan that documented the participant's employment goals; identified appropriate and available program services as well as support services; and, if enrolled in occupational training, determined the kinds of financial assistance available.

4.5.2 Employment Readiness and Job Search Activities

As discussed, the primary goal of the FLH program was to help participants to obtain employment as quickly as possible. Toward that end, the employment readiness activities operated by the Career Center as well as one-on-one job search assistance were the primary services received by participants.

Employment Readiness Activities

The primary employment readiness activity for the FLH program was the week-long *5 Steps to Rapid Employment* workshop.²⁶ RochesterWorks! had used the *5 Steps* curriculum since 2012 and it was available to all Career Center customers. FLH participants, however, received an admission preference into *5 Steps* if the class was oversubscribed for the upcoming session. The workshop aimed to provide support and assistance to unemployed workers who had lost confidence in their professional capabilities, making their job search difficult. Developing resumes and cover letters and practicing interviewing skills were its main activities, but the curriculum was also designed to help participants build self-confidence and develop a vision for the type of job they wanted.

In addition to the *5 Steps* workshop, FLH participants could also attend other Career Center workshops not specific to the FLH program. *Career Navigator* was a one-week job search workshop similar to *5 Steps*. EESs commonly referred participants to the Career Center's two-hour sessions on resume development and review, cover letter development, interviewing skills, handling disclosure of a disability to an employer, and using LinkedIn to network and job search.

Job Search Activities

One-on-one job search assistance was provided by the EESs to help participants conduct a job search. Some workers appeared to have the skills and credentials to find a job and to be committed to attending job search activities. EESs met with them regularly, typically every two weeks, suggesting steps they could take to explore job opportunities and apply for jobs, and setting a schedule for them to complete those activities. Staff reported that participants who were underemployed had a harder time remaining

²⁶ The nationally available *5 Steps* curriculum was developed by Jay Block, a Career Coach and author of the book *5 Steps to Rapid Employment: The Job You Want at the Pay You Deserve*. Instructors of *5 Steps* participants must be certified to use the curriculum. Certification for *5 Steps* instructors includes in-person and online training, as well as an exam; certification for *5 Steps* coaches involves attending a five-day workshop and taking an exam. Recertification is annual.

active in their job search efforts with the EESs, in part because they were typically working during business hours and therefore could not meet with FLH staff in person.

As a result of the employer outreach efforts by the FLH Project Manager, Business Services Specialist, and EESs, some employers were interested in hiring job candidates available through the program. When they had open positions, those employers approached FLH staff to recommend candidates. EESs would then review the roster of active job-seeking FLH participants and refer those qualified to the employer. If the EES did not find anyone appropriate, the position was posted on FLH's online job board. This website, maintained by the EESs and accessible to current and past program participants, listed job announcements in the program's target industries. In addition, EESs monitored job announcements that came through the Career Center to identify any appropriate for FLH participants.

In the latter half of the grant period, FLH held several industry-specific "reverse" job fairs, at which FLH participants set up booths to display their skills and abilities as employers circulated, looking for suitable potential employees. EESs prescreened participants before the job fair to verify they were strong candidates for the types of employers attending and that their resumes and supporting materials were presentable.

4.5.3 Occupational Training

The FLH program also provided occupational training, typically for participants who needed a specific credential for a particular job and who expressed interest in attending the training for that credential. Participants who had an interest in occupational training when they enrolled in FLH usually started in these trainings as their initial activity. Because staff anticipated that the number of participants in need of training versus job search and readiness services would be low, FLH allocated a fixed and modest level of resources for the entire grant period to cover tuition for training. If participants and the training they pursued were eligible for any type of financial aid (such as a Pell grant), participants were required to apply those funds to the cost of tuition. Upon receipt of a bill and course syllabus or schedule, FLH then paid the balance.

As the RTW grant moved into its second year, demand for tuition assistance was greater than anticipated. Staff reported that by the time the FLH program launched, the more highly educated population originally targeted by FLH—who would not need classroom training in order to obtain employment—had already found work. That meant that an unanticipated and greater proportion of applicants to the program sought occupational training, rather than primarily job search assistance. In response, RochesterWorks! modified its original FLH budget to dedicate more funds to training. Even this increased level of funding was nearly exhausted by the end of the third year of the four-year grant. Thus, for the final year of the program, FLH provided only limited tuition support, particularly for lengthier occupational trainings (e.g., nursing, which had more costly tuition). During the last year of the grant, EESs informed potential participants of the lack of funds for tuition assistance when they applied to the program and did not enroll them if they were primarily interested in a training through FLH (although participants could attend other FLH program activities instead of training).

While grant funding for tuition assistance was available, to receive it, participants had to attend training offered by one of the providers on the New York State Department of Labor's Eligible Training Provider (ETP) List. Because such courses at those particular institutions were eligible to receive state WIOA

Individual Training Account (ITA) funds to pay the tuition, they could also receive RTW funds.²⁷ Within Monroe County, the ETP List included 21 community colleges, BOCES, and private training providers. Together, these providers offered a number of programs in advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and IT.

The length of training and resulting credential varied by provider and training program. Options ranged from short-term (a few weeks or months) certificate programs in healthcare and IT through postsecondary degrees (lasting up to two years). FLH limited the length of training it covered to two years (due to the length of the RTW grant period). Participants in postsecondary degree programs could pursue either an associate's degree or, if transferring credits, a bachelor's degree. Trainings commonly pursued by participants in each of the sectors over the course of the grant period are shown in Exhibit 4-3 and discussed below.

- **Advanced Manufacturing.** The for-credit Precision Tooling certificate and degree programs were the most commonly attended of the manufacturing programs, followed by the Precision Machining Accelerated program. These programs were for credit and offered at Monroe Community College.
- **Healthcare.** The most common programs were Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) and Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN). Often taken through community colleges and the local BOCES, these healthcare trainings resulted in professional certification, not college credit. A small number of participants enrolled in the credit-bearing two-year Bachelor's of Science in Nursing program. Because of its higher tuition, FLH required participants to have received a Pell grant before it would provide financial assistance.
- **Information Technology.** Participants attended a range of IT programs offered by a range of providers. Participants with a professional background in IT typically enrolled in one-week "bootcamps" designed to upgrade skills and provide certificates. Those with little to no prior experience in IT enrolled in longer programs that might last six months, during which they gained a foundation as well as specific skills in IT.

As discussed in Section 4.2, the RTW grant funded a FLH College Liaison at each community college to complement the role of the FLH EES by helping participants access college and external resources to promote program completion. When a participant was referred to training at one of the three partnering community colleges, the EES notified the College Liaison, who in turn reached out to the participant. The College Liaisons introduced participants to on-campus resources such as tutoring and helped them select courses and navigate the college system. College Liaisons also facilitated completion of necessary paperwork for participants to continue receiving FLH support. Such paperwork included participants' monthly attendance forms and requests for supportive services for those receiving needs-based payments. College Liaisons reported that they discussed post-program plans with participants, encouraging them to consider further training (e.g., along a nursing career pathway) and discussing employment prospects.

²⁷ New York's ETP List identifies those providers qualified to receive ITAs from customers seeking training. To be qualified, a training provider's program must be evaluated and approved by the local WIB. ITAs are vouchers given to those who need occupational training to become gainfully employed or reemployed. The List was created to comply with the 1998 Workforce Investment Act and continued under WIOA. It can be found here: <https://applications.labor.ny.gov/ETPL/Details.faces>, accessed September 30, 2016.

Exhibit 4-3: Examples of Programs Pursued by Finger Lakes Hired Participants

Program	Length	Credit, Resulting Credential	Training Provider(s) Commonly Used by Participants
Advanced Manufacturing			
Precision Machining Accelerated	22 weeks	For-credit, certificate	• Monroe Community College
Lean Six Sigma	1-2 semesters	Non-credit, certificate	• Rochester Institute of Technology
Precision Tooling	2-4 semesters	For-credit, certificate or degree	• Monroe Community College
Healthcare			
Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)	2 months	Non-credit, certificate	• Finger Lakes Community College
Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN)	10-12 months	Non-credit, certificate	• Finger Lakes Community College • Isabella Graham Hart School of Practical Nursing • Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES • Rochester Educational Opportunity Center • Genesee Valley BOCES
Phlebotomy	3 months	Non-credit, certificate	• Monroe BOCES
Medical Office Assistant	6 months	Non-credit, certificate	• Monroe BOCES
Information Technology			
A+, Network+, and Cisco	1 week to 6 months	Non-credit, certificate	• Monroe Community College • ONLC Training Centers
Microsoft Office/Workplace	4-20 weeks	Non-credit, certificate	• ONLC Training Centers • Monroe 2-Orleans BOCES • Greece Community Education
Business Analyst/ Management	1-15 weeks	Non-credit or for-credit, certificate	• ONLC Training Centers • SUNY Empire State College
Web Design	1-26 weeks	Non-credit, certificate	• Monroe Community College • ONLC Training Centers
Microsoft Certified Solutions Developer	4 months	Non-credit, certificate	• ONLC Training Centers
Associate's Degree in Science	2-4 semesters	Degree	• Monroe Community College

SOURCE: RochesterWorks! program administrative data and staff reports.

4.5.4 Work-Based Training

Another activity offered by the FLH program was work-based training. Because of FLH's focus on immediate job placement when possible, participants used work-based training (like occupational training) less often than employment readiness activities or job search assistance. FLH offered two types of work-based training—work experience “tryouts” and OJT placements.

- **Work experience tryouts.** Work experience tryouts were intended to provide participants with job experience to build their resumes. Tryouts also offered employers the opportunity to work with a participant as a prospective employee before making a longer-term hiring commitment. The tryouts were short term, lasting two to four weeks. During that period, the FLH participant worked for an

employer in the participant’s selected target industry (advanced manufacturing, healthcare, or IT) in the same or a similar role to one they might be hired for. The FLH program used grant funds to pay the participant’s wages. The program covered benefits, insurance, and any background screening the employer required. At the end of the tryout, if the employer was interested in continuing with the participant, it could either offer a job immediately or retain her or him in an OJT.

- ***On-the-job training.*** OJT placements were longer than tryouts, lasting six to 32 weeks. With the understanding that they would hire the participant as a full-time employee upon completion of the OJT, employers had time to train the worker on the specifics of a particular job while receiving a subsidy through FLH. Placements were customized to meet each participant’s skill development needs. OJT contracts typically required a formal training plan, which could be provided by the employer based on company-specific needs. Alternatively, the EES could assist the employer in developing a relevant training plan for the participant. FLH partially reimbursed the employer for wages paid during this OJT period based on a sliding scale. Smaller companies (fewer than 50 employees) could be reimbursed up to 90 percent of the participant’s wages; midsize companies (51–250 employees), up to 75 percent; and large companies (250+ employees), up to 50 percent. FLH capped the reimbursement at \$25,000, and employers sent invoices for payment monthly.²⁸

Potential work experience tryouts and OJTs were identified by FLH EESs, Business Services Specialists, and participants (who searched for employers with positions relevant to the skills they would like to develop or jobs in which they were interested). The demand among participants for work-based training was not as great as for occupational training

FLH staff reported that a common source of work-based training positions were employers that had individual workers they wanted to hire but who needed additional training to fully qualify for a position. Another source were employers looking for training for incumbent workers they wanted to move to different or higher-skilled jobs. In both cases, employers contacted FLH staff, who referred the workers to an EES for eligibility determination and enrollment. These “reverse referrals” were not included in the RTW evaluation.²⁹

It took time to implement the work-based training opportunities; neither work experience tryouts nor OJTs were common, particularly in the early years of the grant. Staff reported that more employers

²⁸ DOL defined the company sizes and reimbursement percentages in the RTW grant solicitation.

²⁹ Because employers had already committed to hiring these workers, random assignment (required for program entry as part of the RTW evaluation) was inappropriate, as there was a chance they would be assigned to the control group and thus excluded from FLH. When considering all participants (not just those in the RTW evaluation) staff reported that overall, about 18 percent of the RochesterWorks! FLH participants enrolled in work-based training. Of those, only a small proportion (about 10 percent) were in the RTW evaluation; the remainder were reverse referrals.

preferred OJTs over work experience tryouts because OJTs could be developed to match the needs of a specific position the employers were looking to fill, and OJTs also allowed for a longer training period.

4.5.5 Financial Assistance and Other Supports

FLH provided a range of financial and other supports to participants who were enrolled in occupational training, in order to facilitate their attendance and completion:

- **Training-related costs.** For the first three years of the grant period, FLH covered the cost of tuition, textbooks, and certification exams for all participants enrolled in training.
- **Needs-related payments.** Low-income participants who enrolled in an occupational training program could receive a needs-based stipend of \$50 per week.³⁰ Participants typically used the stipend for childcare or other living expenses. There was no cap on the total amount a participant could receive. EESs also worked with participants, regardless of their current activity, to apply for public benefits such as SNAP if they had not already.
- **Transportation assistance.** The FLH program offered transportation assistance to facilitate participants' attendance in the occupational training. Those who relied on a car received a \$25 gas card for every 200 miles traveled, with a maximum of four gas cards per month. Those who took public transportation received a monthly bus pass worth \$56 or single-ride passes, whichever option was cheaper.

Employer Experiences with Work-Based Training

The examples that follow illustrate the ways in which employers used work-based training through FLH to address their labor needs:

- An IT consulting firm used FLH OJTs to train five participants, all of whom it then hired full-time. The positions included chief financial officer (CFO), software architect, sales executive, account manager, and junior sales business developer. The firm developed training plans of three to six months in length for each participant. Wages for the positions ranged from about \$45,000 for the junior sales role to about \$110,000 for CFO.
- A highly specialized advanced manufacturer used FLH OJTs to train six participants for entry-level technician positions. The jobs paid \$12 to \$15 per hour, with the possibility of additional incentives in the thousands of dollars. This growing company had struggled to find qualified job candidates, and FLH was a resource to provide tailored training to meet the company's needs.
- An IT services management consulting firm used a work experience tryout that transitioned to an OJT plus three additional OJTs to train project managers, a technical support coordinator, and a marketing director. These positions had been vacant for some time because its human resources staff had been too busy filling other, more pressing jobs. FLH staff helped the firm identify qualified candidates, and the firm hired all four full-time at the conclusion of the work-based training.

4.6 Participation Patterns in the FLH Program

This section analyzes rates of participation and duration of training in the FLH program overall and in its primary training activities: employment readiness training, occupational training, and work-based training. The analysis is based on RochesterWorks! administrative data covering a 16-month follow-up period after program enrollment.

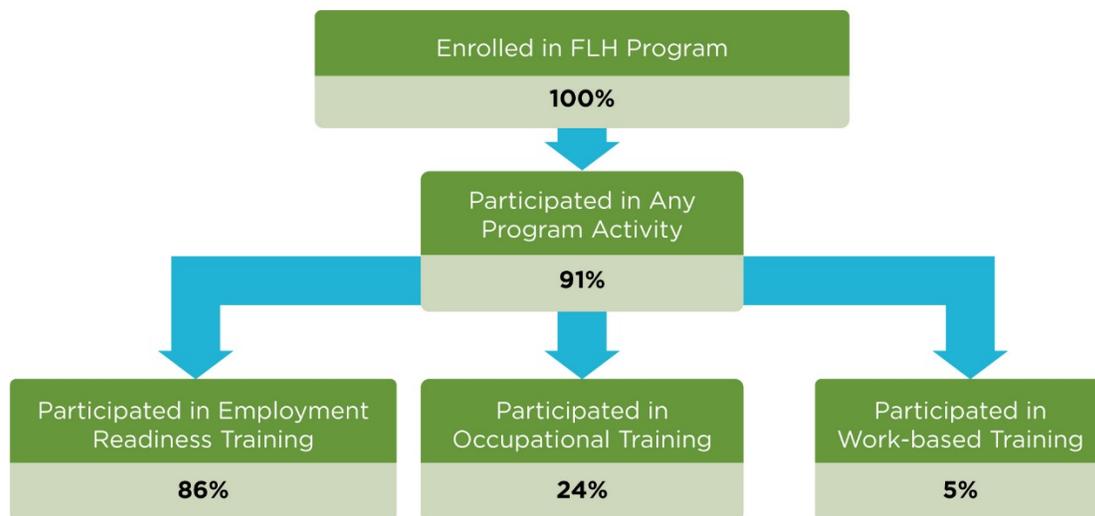
³⁰ For FLH, RochesterWorks! used the WIOA definition of *low-income*, which is that a person either is receiving public assistance or is below 100 percent of the federal poverty level or below 70 percent of the standard living level over a period of several months just prior to applying for the support.

There are several limitations to these data. First, data on participation in one-on-one job search assistance services (which were primarily provided by EESs) or on the frequency and content of participants' meetings with EESs were not available. Second, for work-based training, participants who were reverse referrals from an employer were not included in the RTW evaluation, and so are not included in the analysis presented here. Thus, as discussed further below, the proportion of all participants served under the grant (including those not in the RTW evaluation) who attended work-based training is greater than the proportion reported for program group members. Finally, the data did not allow the sequencing of program activities to be determined.

Exhibit 4-4 below shows participation patterns in FLH. Of all program enrollees, 91 percent attended a program activity for which data are available; that is, employment readiness activities, occupational training, and work-based training. Those who did not attend a program activity may have only worked one-on-one with an EES, found a job, or decided not to continue with the program for some other reason. Of the 91 individuals who attended a program activity, by far the most common was employment readiness training: 86 percent of enrollees participated in employment readiness workshops offered through the Career Center and 24 percent participated in occupational training. Only five percent of enrollees participated in work-based training, with the caveat above. As discussed in Section 4.5.4, the number of FLH participants in that activity is larger than is reported here because those assigned work-based training through reverse referrals with an employer were not included in the evaluation.

As noted above, data on the sequencing of activities are not available. However, as discussed in Section 4.5.3, staff reported that participants interested in occupational training at enrollment in FLH usually started in these trainings as their initial program activity. Otherwise, staff reported that most participants attended an employment readiness workshop as their first activity or focused on one-on-one job search with an EES.

Exhibit 4-4: Participation in Finger Lakes Hired among Program Group Members within a 16-month Follow-up Period



SOURCE: RochesterWorks! program records.

NOTES: Sample size is 307 program group members. Due to rounding, the subtotals may not equal the total.

While Exhibit 4-4 showed the overall participation pattern for all program enrollees, Exhibit 4-5 reports participation patterns for the subset of enrollees who attended at least one program service beyond meeting with an EES—that is, the 91 percent from Exhibit 4-4 above. Specifically, Exhibit 4-5 shows participation rates, completion rates, and average length of stay in the FLH program as well as the proportion still participating at the end of the 16-month follow-up period.

Almost all participants (95 percent) attended employment readiness training. Some 27 percent of participants attended some type of occupational training: 2 percent in advanced manufacturing, 14 percent in healthcare, and 11 percent in IT. CNA was the most common healthcare training program, attended by half those in healthcare training, followed by LPN (not shown). In contrast, those attending IT training participated in a range of different programs. Only 6 percent conducted any work-based training with an employer: 3 percent attended a work experience tryout, 5 percent participated in OJT, and some participants did both. Completion rates were high for activities where data is available: about 80 percent in occupational training and on-the-job training.

Also shown in Exhibit 4-5, most FLH participants attended only one program activity (73 percent), mostly employment readiness training, with very few attending only occupational (5 percent) or only work-based training (less than one percent). An additional 26 percent attended two program activities, mostly combining employment readiness with occupational training. Less than 1 percent of participants attended all three program activities. Completion data was available only for occupational training and OJT.

Because the majority of FLH participants attended only the one-week employment readiness workshop, the average length of stay in the FLH training activities overall was short, 1.8 months. However, the length of stay for those attending an occupational training program was much longer, 5.3 months. Note that the lengths of stay are for enrollment in training activities and not necessarily overall engagement with the FLH program which could have included additional time spent working with the EESs. Notably, 16 percent of those participating in IT training were still participating at the end of the 16-month follow-up period, as were 9 percent of those in OJT. Overall, across all activities, few were still participating in the FLH program at the end of the follow-up period.

Exhibit 4-5: Participation in Finger Lakes Hired among Those Who Participated in Any Activity within a 16-month Follow-up Period

Activity	Participated (%)	Of Those Who Participated in the Activity		
		Completed (%)	Average Length of Stay (months)	Still Participating at Follow-up (%)
Attended Any Program Activity	100.0	—	1.8	—
Employment Readiness Training	94.6	—	0.2	—
Occupational Training	27.0	78.7	5.3	6.7
Healthcare	13.7	86.8	5.0	0
IT	11.2	67.7	5.7	16.1
Advanced Manufacturing	2.2	83.3	4.5	0
Work-Based Training	5.8	—	3.4	—
Work Experience Tryout	2.5	—	1.0	—
On-the-Job Training	4.7	81.8	3.8	9.1
Attended One Activity	73.4	—	0.5	—
Employment Readiness Training	68.0	—	0.2	—
Occupational Training	5.0	—	4.2	—
Work-Based Training	0.4	—	5.7	—
Attended Two Activities	25.9	—	5.2	—
Employment Readiness and Occupational Training	21.2	—	5.5	—
Employment Readiness and Work-Based Training	4.7	—	3.5	—
Occupational Training and Work-Based Training	0.0	—	—	—
Attended Three Activities	—	—	—	—
Employment Readiness, Occupational Training, and Work-Based Training	0.7	—	11.6	—

SOURCE: RochesterWorks! program records.

NOTE: Sample size is 278 and includes all program group members who attended at least one activity. The “—” symbol indicates the field is not applicable because no data were available or incomplete information was available. Length of stay is truncated for those still participating in activities at the end of the follow-up period.

4.7 Key Implementation Findings

This section discusses the implementation experiences of RochesterWorks! in designing and operating its RTW-funded programs. It includes a discussion of elements the grantee hoped to carry forward after the grant’s end date of July 2019.

4.7.1 Operating the Grant-funded Program

Finger Lakes Hired provided a range of program services, but most participants attended only the one-week employment readiness workshop; about one-quarter attended occupational training.

These participation patterns reflect that the FLH program emphasized moving participants to employment quickly, typically through job search and employment readiness activities, as well as a limit on resources for tuition assistance. Of those who participated in any program services, 95 percent participated in an employment readiness workshop and 27 percent participated in occupational training. Some 6 percent participated in work-based training. Participants who attended occupational training were split relatively equally between healthcare and IT, with few in advanced manufacturing. Because most participants only attended the short-term employment readiness workshop, average length of stay in the program was short: 1.8 months.

Recruitment of the middle- to high-skilled population targeted by the RTW grant was difficult throughout the grant period. FLH staff reported that it was more challenging to recruit eligible applicants than they had expected when they applied for the grant. In particular, staff reported that the number of long-term unemployed workers in the region declined over the grant period. As the economy improved and the national recession waned, many of the more highly skilled workers either found work or stopped searching. As a result, staff reported that those seeking FLH services were more likely to be less educated and have less work experience. Staff also reported that over the course of the grant period, participants had barriers to employment that the program was not originally designed to address, such as mental health needs. RochesterWorks! staff also reported that underemployed workers did not typically visit the Career Center. Staff found it challenging to find the right strategy and messages to recruit from this population. Participants who were underemployed workers who did enroll in FLH generally had a harder time remaining active in their job search efforts with the EESs, in part because they were typically working during business hours and therefore could not meet with FLH staff in person.

FLH participants had a greater need for and interest in occupational training than anticipated when the program was designed. RochesterWorks! staff reported that when designing FLH, they expected that the majority of participants would enter with the education and work experience needed for the high-skilled jobs they sought and the grant targeted. Since participants were less educated and had less work experience than anticipated, staff reported that the demand for tuition assistance and other supports to attend occupational training went beyond what they had initially budgeted for. Although they modified the FLH budget partway through the grant period to dedicate more resources for occupational training tuition, even these funds were exhausted, and FLH had to slow and ultimately stop enrolling participants who had an interest in occupational training.

One-on-one assistance provided by EESs was important to meeting the needs of the long-term unemployed. The FLH EESs each had a caseload of participants for whom they made themselves available on an ongoing basis to strategize about job search activities and assist in finding employment. As a result, the EESs said, they could follow up with participants to check on their progress and provide continuous assistance, something not typically offered through the Career Center to walk-in clients. RochesterWorks! staff reported that by building relationships over time, EESs became trusted advisors to participants, who then felt comfortable coming to them for help with job search and personal challenges. According to staff, the relationships that EESs established helped to motivate long-term unemployed participants who might be discouraged and lacking confidence in a job search.

FLH’s integration within the RochesterWorks! Career Center facilitated participant referrals and aided business development. Although FLH was a separate and new program within the Career Center, it was managed by existing RochesterWorks! staff, who helped integrate the program into its ongoing operations. All Career Center career coaches and front desk staff knew the FLH program’s basic eligibility criteria and regularly referred prospective applicants to the EESs. The Business Services team for the broader RochesterWorks! organization and the Business Services staff for FLH coordinated their employer outreach efforts so as to present employers with a unified set of services to address their labor needs. This internal coordination was intended to avoid confusing employers with the nuances of specific grant programs. Further, by presenting the services of RochesterWorks! as a whole, the organization sought to build a sustainable reputation among employers as a partner in their search for skilled workers.

4.7.2 Sustainability of RTW Grant-funded Activities

RochesterWorks! staff reported some sustained institutional benefits from operating the RTW grant. Resources were not available to continue FLH after the grant period ended, but staff reported that they planned to continue certain program elements or practices as part of their ongoing service delivery strategy, including those discussed below.

Education and Employment Specialist. FLH staff valued the EES role in providing consistent and ongoing support and job search assistance to long-term unemployed job seekers. Although funding was not available for this role after the grant ended, RochesterWorks! staff were interested in including an EES-like position in future grant efforts and possibly adopting the model to serve certain types of clients who would most benefit from more-intensive job search services.

Industry connections. The grant-funded FLH Business Services staff increased the capacity of the RochesterWorks! Business Services department and broadened its reach to new employers in new industries. Staff reported that they anticipated the relationships with these employers would be sustained after the grant ended, with the RochesterWorks! Business Services team taking over managing them. The grant allowed the Business Services team to try new strategies and messages to engage employers, such as “reverse” job fairs. RochesterWorks! planned to incorporate these practices into its approach.

5. Worksystems, Inc.—Reboot Northwest

The Reboot Northwest (Reboot NW) program provided a range of individualized services, including occupational training, work-based training, and job search and employment readiness assistance, to help long-term unemployed workers (including those underemployed) find jobs in the advanced manufacturing, IT, and software fields. Occupational training, particularly in IT, was the most common activity attended by Reboot NW participants. The program operator was Worksystems, Inc. (Worksystems), the Workforce Investment Board (WIB) for Multnomah County (including the city of Portland) and Washington County in Oregon. Reboot NW began enrolling participants in April 2015, serving a total of 1,348 participants and exceeding their target of 1,000 individuals, and the program ended in June 2019.

5.1 Program Context

Worksystems operated Reboot NW in partnership with two other WIBs from two states, Clackamas Workforce Partnership in Oregon and Workforce Southwest Washington (WSW) in Washington (including the city of Vancouver), as part of the Columbia-Willamette Regional Workforce Collaborative. Covering six counties in total, the Collaborative partners with economic development corporations in all three regions to expand employment opportunities for residents and market the regions to employers.

Throughout this chapter, we refer to the grant’s overall service area of Reboot NW as “Portland-Vancouver.” As shown in Exhibit 5-1, when we discuss similarities and differences across that service area, we use “Portland Metro” to refer to the region covered by Worksystems; “Clackamas,” to refer to the region covered by the Clackamas Workforce Partnership; and “Southwest Washington,” to refer to the region covered by WSW.

Exhibit 5-1: Geographic Areas Served by Reboot Northwest

WIB	Regional Label	Service Area
All	Portland-Vancouver	Overall
Worksystems, Inc.	Portland Metro	Multnomah (including city of Portland) and Washington Counties, Oregon
Clackamas Workforce Partnership	Clackamas	Clackamas County, Oregon
Workforce Southwest Washington (WSW)	Southwest Washington	Clark (including city of Vancouver), Cowlitz, and Wahkiakum Counties, Washington

SOURCE: RTW program materials.

Like the rest of the country, Portland-Vancouver experienced large increases in unemployment rates during the 2008-2009 recession. In Clackamas and Portland Metro, unemployment increased from approximately 6 percent to 10 percent in that time period.³¹ In Southwest Washington, unemployment

³¹ State of Oregon Employment Department, *Local Area Unemployment Statistics*, see <https://www.qualityinfo.org/ed-uesti/?at=1&t1=410100000~unemprate~y~2000~2019>.

rates increased from an average of 8 percent to 14 percent.³² Also like most of the country, the effects of the recession were already receding when Reboot NW began enrollment in 2015. By 2018, the unemployment rate had further decreased to approximately 3.7 percent in Clackamas and Portland Metro and to an average of 5.7 percent in Southwest Washington.³³

In developing the Reboot NW program, Worksystems identified advanced manufacturing, IT, and software as high-priority industries based on anticipated growth across the region. Information security and software developer positions were expected to grow by more than 30 percent by 2027 in Portland Metro alone.³⁴ Worksystems staff reported that they did not expect as much growth in the advanced manufacturing industry but observed that retirements among the workforce created more employment opportunities. When the grant was awarded, the main employers in Portland Metro included IT companies such as Amazon, Puppet, and Jama and advanced manufacturing companies such as Boeing, ESCO, and Precision Castparts Corp., which was also a major employer in Clackamas. Clackamas also had several other manufacturing employers including Optimize Technologies; Blount International, which makes chainsaws; and large food processors such as Bob's Red Mill.

5.2 Organizational Structure and Staffing

Worksystems and its two WIB partners operated the Reboot NW program through their local American Job Centers, called WorkSource centers, at a total of eight locations. Worksystems operated out of five centers in Portland Metro; Clackamas Workforce Partnership, out of a center in Oregon City, Oregon; and WSW out of two centers, one each in Vancouver and Kelso, Washington.

The key staff for the program were the Career Coaches. There was typically one Career Coach in each WorkSource center. The Career Coaches were responsible for intake and random assignment, enrollment, assessment, and ongoing coordination of service needs with participants. The RTW grant also funded the full-time Reboot NW Program Manager and Instructors to teach employment readiness workshops in Portland Metro and Clackamas.³⁵

Reboot NW contracted with several organizations. Worksystems contracted with Cascadia Behavioral Health, a non-profit provider of healthcare and housing services in Portland Metro and Clackamas, to provide behavioral health services for Reboot NW, including training for staff, presentations at Career Link classes, and private consultations with program participants. WSW contracted with Cascade Community Services to provide similar services in its region. To better serve Reboot NW participants facing housing challenges, Reboot NW partnered with local housing authorities in Clackamas and

³² U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Labor Force Data by County*, see <http://www.bls.gov/lau/#tables>.

³³ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Labor Force Data by County*, see <http://www.bls.gov/lau/#tables>.

³⁴ State of Oregon Employment Department, see <https://www.qualityinfo.org/-/new-and-emerging-jobs-in-oregon-the-latest-trends>.

³⁵ In Southwest Washington, the employment readiness workshop (Career Link) was run by WorkSource center staff.

Portland Metro. Worksystems also contracted with a marketing firm to develop and operate a website and marketing campaign for the grant-funded program.

5.3 Target Population and Program Group Characteristics

Reboot NW targeted long-term unemployed workers and veterans³⁶ or eligible veteran spouses. Applicants also had to be age 18 or older and legally able to work. Finally, applicants needed a high school diploma or GED and some interest and/or experience in the advanced manufacturing sector, or IT or software.

Exhibit 5-2 shows the demographic characteristics of members in the study’s program group (see Chapter 1 for information on the evaluation design), using self-reported data collected at program enrollment (“baseline”). The program group included far more men than women (76 percent versus 24 percent). Consistent with the region as a whole, a large majority of the participants were White (74 percent). Reboot NW enrollees were a relatively older and well-educated group. Their average age was 44, with about one-quarter age 55 or older. More than 70 percent had no children living in their household. Approximately half reported having a bachelor’s or master’s degree; 14 percent, a technical or associate’s degree; and 21 percent, at least some college credit but no degree.

Reflecting the RTW grant goals and grantee eligibility criteria, few program participants were working at the time of enrollment (19 percent), and 31 percent reported being unemployed for longer than 12 months. For the Reboot NW participants who were employed at the time of enrollment, weekly earnings averaged about \$352 (or about \$1,400 per month). About half reported receiving some type of public benefits. The most commonly accessed benefit was SNAP (28 percent), followed by Unemployment Insurance (26 percent).

³⁶ Worksystems targeted veterans for Reboot NW because it anticipated that 4,500 inactive soldiers stationed at a local base would soon need civilian jobs, training, and work readiness services.

Exhibit 5-2: Selected Characteristics of Program Enrollees at Baseline, Reboot Northwest

Characteristic	Distribution
Gender (%)	
Female	24.2
Male	75.8
Race (%)	
Asian	9.2
Black or African American	6.9
White	73.5
Hispanic ethnicity (%)	7.8
Age (%)	
24 years or younger	3.4
25 to 34 years	23.5
35 to 44 years	24.7
45 to 54 years	25.8
55 years or older	22.5
Average age (years)	43.8
Marital Status (%)	
Married	42.2
Widowed/divorced/separated	20.8
Never married	32.8
One or More of Own Children in Household Age 18 or Younger (%)	30.2
Education Level (%)	
Less than high school or GED	2.9
High school diploma	10.8
Technical or associate's degree	14.1
Some college credit but no degree	21.0
Bachelor's degree	36.3
Master's degree or higher	14.9
Employment Status (%)	
Currently employed full-time (30+ hours)	7.4
Currently employed part-time (<30 hours)	12.0
Currently unemployed, but employed in last 12 months	49.6
Currently unemployed, and longer than 12 months since last worked	31.0
Weekly earnings (\$)	351.63
Receiving any public benefit (%)	49.9
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	3.2
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	28.2
Unemployment Insurance (UI)	26.1
Section 8 or public housing assistance	2.9

SOURCE: Ready to Work Baseline Information Form (BIF).

NOTES: Percentages do not sum to 100% for race and marital status because not all response categories are included. Sample size is 493 and includes all program group members randomly assigned. Statistics in this table are computed based on the Worksystems program group members who completed the BIF for the given question (e.g., gender). Weekly earnings are calculated for those working at baseline.

5.4 Recruitment

Reboot NW’s approach to recruiting applicants to the program involved centralized outreach and recruitment led by Worksystems, as well as more targeted strategies and partnerships at the regional and local levels. At the start of the grant, Worksystems conducted outreach for the Reboot NW program generally; however, management staff reported they later shifted the outreach messaging to recruit for specific training cohorts, as well as a range of the sector-based training opportunities offered at the WorkSource centers, including the opportunities offered through Reboot NW, WIOA, and other grant programs. More recent outreach materials and presentations emphasized training opportunities in advanced manufacturing, construction, healthcare, and IT as well as the aptitudes and personal characteristics needed to succeed in these fields, rather than focusing on Reboot NW alone. Worksystems also launched a new website that used the sector messaging, rather than highlighting specific programs. Candidates interested in IT and manufacturing fields were directed to Reboot NW Career Coaches.

Worksystems used a variety of marketing strategies to promote Reboot NW:

- ***Outreach materials and social media advertising.*** Worksystems used flyers, posters, and other outreach materials in combination with media advertising, including TV, radio, newspaper, bus, and online ads (primarily through Facebook, LinkedIn, and Google), to recruit for Reboot NW across all three regions. Worksystems also worked with a contractor to develop a Reboot NW website.
- ***Unemployment Insurance databases.*** Worksystems worked with the State of Oregon Employment Department to identify potential applicants for Reboot NW, using the Department’s Unemployment Insurance data to identify workers who had been unemployed for at least six months. Reboot NW then sent a mailing to this group, providing information on the program.
- ***Region-specific recruitment strategies.*** Each region received some portion of the grant funds for recruitment. Worksystems collaborated with WIB partners and used its funds primarily to create and print marketing materials. Clackamas also sent a mass mailing and email blast to about 4,000 people on its list serv. In Southwest Washington, a Marketing and Outreach Coordinator worked on media and news releases, published success stories, and handled media engagement. Worksystems and WSW also placed local bus ads that framed Reboot NW as a “fast track for your career” and mentioned training opportunities and available support services.
- ***Referrals from the workforce system.*** The most common method of recruitment for Reboot NW was referrals from within the WorkSource system. WorkSource staff made presentations about the Reboot NW services and its target population, and they made announcements at general information sessions.
- ***Referrals from partner organizations and training providers.*** In Portland Metro, Career Coaches received referrals from organizations within the Aligned Partner Network of approximately 30 community-based organizations and partner agencies, including the WorkSource centers. Across all regions, training providers also referred clients to Reboot NW, for on-the-job training or internship opportunities; for assistance with job search; or to access funding resources and supports.
- ***Community outreach.*** Career Coaches relied on word of mouth and community outreach using tear-away posters and flyers in locations such as libraries, grocery stores, and community centers. Coaches also did more targeted outreach in the community, at existing advanced manufacturing and IT groups for networking or job seekers, industry-specific career fairs, and conferences or other industry events.

- **Oregon Employment Department database.** Coaches used the State of Oregon Employment Department database, called “iMatchSkills,” an online job-matching tool that allows any WorkSource customer, often Unemployment Insurance recipients, to post a professional profile, including skills and work history, and connect to potential jobs. Program staff mailed information about Reboot NW to anyone in iMatchSkills who appeared eligible.

Using this multi-faceted approach, Worksystems was successful in meeting its grant enrollment goals. Still, staff did report challenges in maintaining a steady stream of interested and eligible applicants, in part because the RTW evaluation necessitated over-recruiting to establish the control group. Moreover, recruitment became more difficult toward the end of the grant when the improving economy resulted in many long-term unemployed workers who met Reboot NW’s eligibility requirements finding employment on their own. Even as the more-job-ready workers found employment, however, other workers expressing interest in the program still reported a range of significant barriers to employment, including housing, mental health, and outdated skills.

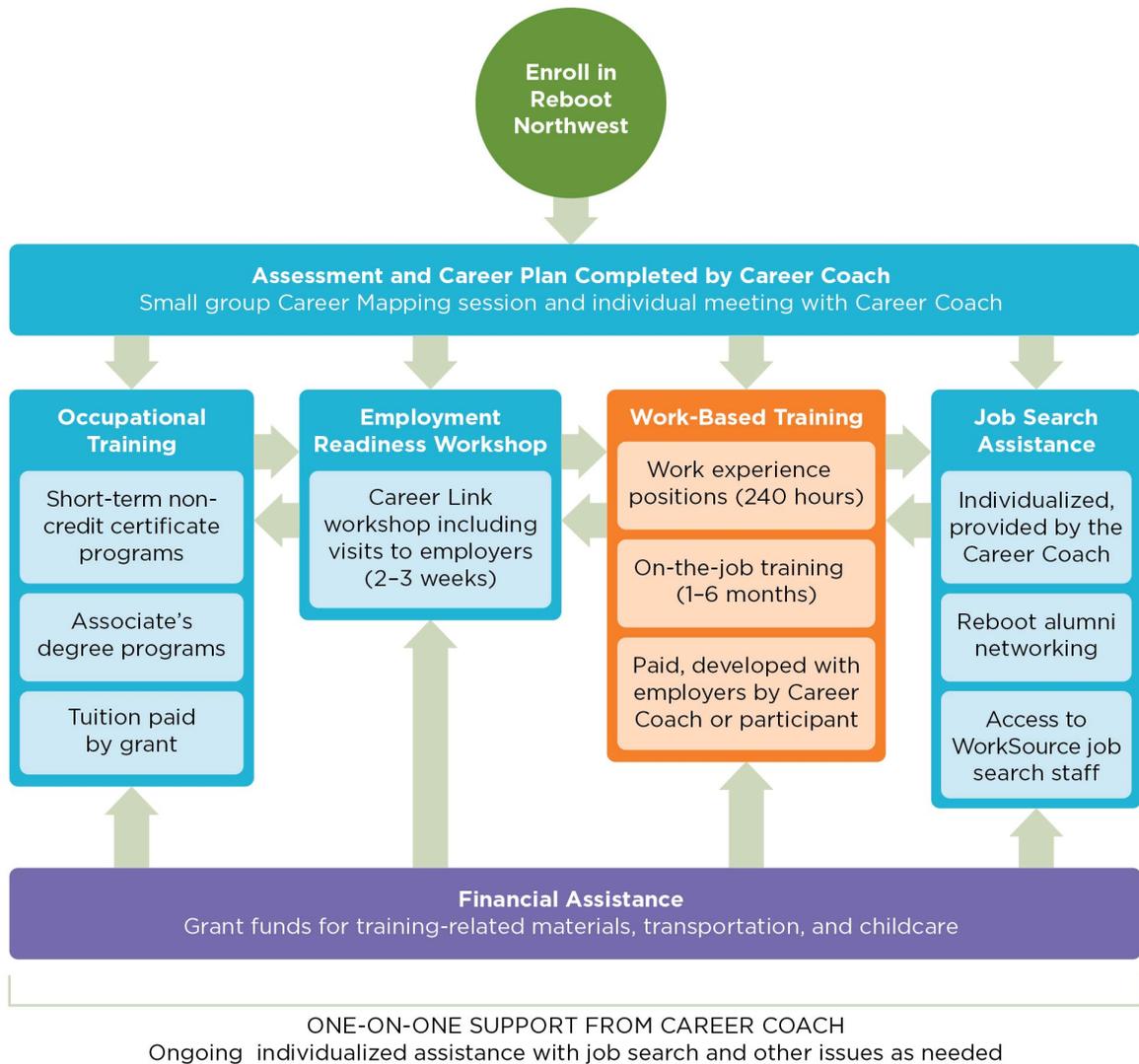
5.5 Program Services

The Reboot NW program offered a range of services. As depicted in Exhibit 5-3 below, after enrolling, participants engaged in career planning and goal setting with their Career Coach to determine which training programs and services to pursue. The particular sequence and combination of Reboot NW services were customized to meet the needs of the individual participant. Potential services included these:

- Career Link, a workshop focused on job search and employment readiness, building a peer support network, industry exposure and networking, and assistance with mental health issues.
- Occupational training in advanced manufacturing, IT, or software.
- Work-based training, including both on-the-job training and paid work experience.
- Job search assistance to help participants find jobs in the advanced manufacturing, IT, or software industries.
- In addition, all participants received regular and ongoing one-on-one guidance from their Career Coach and access to support services such as financial assistance or behavioral health services.

This section describes the services provided and the next section (Section 5.6) describes participation levels in the Reboot NW program services.

Exhibit 5-3: Overview of the Worksystems Reboot Northwest Program



SOURCE: Developed by Abt Associates based on staff reports and program materials.

5.5.1 Enrollment and Assessment

The Reboot NW enrollment and assessment process comprised several steps. First, interested applicants attended an information session at one of the WorkSource centers. Attendees completed a questionnaire that assessed program eligibility, including basic demographic information, educational and employment background, and target occupation. Next, applicants scheduled a follow-up meeting with a Career Coach to confirm eligibility and suitability for the program. Those who were deemed eligible and suitable were randomly assigned either to a group that could enroll in Reboot NW services (program group) or to a group that could not, but could participate in other services in the community (control group).

Once enrolled, the first step in Reboot NW was to develop a Career Plan. Participants attended a Career Mapping session, which was usually completed in a small group, but sometimes individually, to help determine their career path and goals. After the Career Mapping session, each participant worked with his

or her Career Coach to create an individualized Career Plan, which laid out steps to accomplish the goals and identified needed support services and resources.

5.5.2 Occupational Training

Occupational training was the most commonly attended activity in the Reboot NW program, designed for those who needed technical training to develop new skills or obtain updated certifications to be competitive as job candidates in the target industries. Training was typically provided at a local community college or private training provider. Program staff reported that participants were often already interested in attending particular training programs when they enrolled in Reboot NW, and that the software field was of particular interest.

Staff reported that Reboot NW participants typically received funding for trainings through a WorkSource Individual Training Account (ITA). To be eligible for this training scholarship or tuition assistance, participants had to select an approved training from their WIB's Eligible Training Provider List.³⁷ Reboot NW targeted occupations in advanced manufacturing, IT, and software, and its Eligible Training Provider List included more than 100 training programs across a number of providers. Though Reboot NW funds could be used for tuition, staff also leveraged funds from WIOA and other grant-funded programs at the WorkSource center to assist with tuition and support services, when a participant met eligibility requirements for another program.

Exhibit 5-4 below presents the common training programs pursued by Reboot NW participants.

- **Advanced Manufacturing.** Reboot NW participants enrolled in a range of advanced manufacturing training programs to pursue certifications and degrees in drafting and engineering. Non-credit and certification programs tended to be shorter in length, whereas degree programs, mainly in engineering, took as long as two years to complete. There were fewer private training providers in the manufacturing field, so it was more common for participants to enroll in a community college program. In mid-2017, Reboot NW added welding as a training option in this sector.
- **Information Technology.** Reboot NW participants enrolled in a variety of IT and software training programs at community colleges and private training providers. Reboot NW participants commonly enrolled in programs such as coding, software development, and web design, or they pursued IT training to advance in a specific skill or software such as Python, HTML, or CSS. Participants enrolled in shorter-term certifications and non-credit training programs, which ranged in length from several weeks to a few months, and in some longer-term degree programs that took up to two years.

³⁷ The Eligible Training Provider List includes those training programs qualified to receive ITAs. To be qualified, a training provider's program must be evaluated and approved by the local WIB. The list was originally created to comply with the 1998 Workforce Investment Act and continued under WIOA. Portland Metro's and Clackamas's Eligible Training Provider Lists may be found here: <https://www2.worksourceportlandmetro.org/TrainingProgramsEligibility.aspx>. Southwest Washington's may be found here: http://www.careerbridge.wa.gov/Search_Program.aspx?cmd=clear&etp=true.

Exhibit 5-4: Examples of Programs Pursued by Reboot NW Participants

Program	Length	Credit and Resulting Credential	Training Provider(s) Commonly Used by Participants
Advanced Manufacturing			
Computer Aided Drafting	1-2 years	Non-credit, certificate	• Community colleges
Soldering	12-40 hours	Non-credit, certificate	• Soldering.Biz
Welding	4 weeks to 1 year	Non-credit, certificate	• SkillPATH • American Welding Society
Manufacturing Engineering Technology / Technician	Up to 2 years	For credit, associate's degree	• Community colleges
Computer Numerical Control Machining	8 weeks to 1 year	For credit; associate's degree or certificate	• Community colleges
Information Technology and Software			
Lean Fundamentals	4 hours	Non-credit, certificate	• Community colleges
Software Developer	Varied	Non-credit, certificate	• Code Fellows • PDX Code Guild • Hack University
Computer Support	40 hours to 6 months	Non-credit, certificate	• New Horizons • CompTIA Creating IT Futures
Computer Programming	Varied	For credit; associate's degree or certificate	• Launchcode • Code Fellows • Community colleges
Web Design	1-2 years	For credit; associate's degree or certificate	• Community colleges
Network and Computer Systems Administrator	Up to 1 year	For credit and non-credit; associate's degree or certificate	• Community colleges • New Horizons
Computer Network Support Specialist	Up to 2 years	For credit; associate's degree or certificate	• Community colleges • New Horizons

SOURCE: Worksystems program administrative data and staff reports.

Beginning in fall 2017 (two years after the RTW grant period started), in addition to making individual referrals to training, Reboot NW began offering training options for cohorts of Reboot NW participants. For these trainings, a group of Reboot NW participants attended a training program as a group. Unlike an ITA-funded training, where the individual participant received tuition assistance to enroll, the training provider was directly funded by Worksystems using Reboot NW funds. Worksystems contracted with the training provider for the entire course, or for a certain number of seats in a training, and then recruited existing and new participants in Reboot NW and other grant programs to fill those slots. Sometimes designed for a specific employer, this training also included an employment readiness component and assistance in finding a job.

Worksystems staff found several benefits from training in cohorts. First, staff reported participants had the added benefit of training side by side with their peers, which could offer opportunities for peer support and learning. Second, cohort trainings were intended to shorten the time from training enrollment to employment. To speed job placement, Worksystems staff assessed employer staffing needs and demands and invited employers to job fairs to ensure job opportunities were easily accessible to training completers. Staff also reported that because of the cohort structure, Reboot NW could address the demand among employers that needed multiple workers with the same skills and credentials. Finally, staff anticipated that by developing cohort trainings through Reboot NW, employers would see the return on investment in training a group of people in a specific occupation and would start to fund the trainings themselves once the RTW funding for Reboot NW ended.

In total, the Reboot NW program ran 12 cohort trainings with a total of 114 program participants. Three of these cohort trainings were in advanced manufacturing, and nine were in IT. Cohort trainings were structured differently for each sector:

- **Advanced Manufacturing.** The cohort training classes were composed only of Reboot NW participants. Worksystems staff coordinated with both employers and training providers to create an accelerated training course to meet specific employer needs. In turn, the employers committed to hiring a certain number of the cohort graduates. For example, Worksystems staff identified that some employers in Portland Metro had an immediate need for Computer Numerical Control (CNC) machinists. In response, Worksystems coordinated with a community college to provide a course, funded by Reboot NW, that condensed an existing CNC training program into 12 weeks plus added employment readiness content.
- **IT.** Private training providers operated the programs used for cohorts. The programs combined multiple certifications and job search assistance. Worksystems purchased seats in an existing class and filled slots with both Reboot NW participants and those from other programs, using a combination of Reboot NW and other grant funds. The training providers separately also recruited students to fill the remaining slots.

Throughout the process of selecting, enrolling, and completing an occupational training, Career Coaches provided one-on-one support and guidance to Reboot NW participants. Career Coaches had at least monthly contact with participants over the course of the program and provided individualized support.

5.5.3 Career Link: Employment Readiness Workshop

For those participants who needed to build employment readiness skills or wanted to explore career opportunities within its target sectors, Reboot NW offered a career exploration and employment readiness workshop called Career Link, a course designed for and available only to Reboot NW participants. For most of the grant period, Career Link was provided to cohorts, who attended all Career Link classes together. Toward the end of the grant period, Career Link shifted to providing separate modules from which individual participants could choose to attend.

Career Link Workshop Content

The Career Link courses in all regions engaged participants in the following activities and topics:

- Techniques to maintain a positive mindset to achieve employment goals
- Labor market analysis to identify industry trends
- Development of a “Career Ladder Action Plan” in which participants identified their interests and abilities, and steps to take to fill skill gaps
- Resume and cover letter writing
- Interviewing skills and general

Because staff found that workers experiencing long-term unemployment often felt professionally disconnected, the Career Link program was designed to provide an opportunity to establish and build a professional network and peer community. Staff reported that it could be difficult for participants to conduct a job search on their own, so working with others in a similar situation helped them feel more comfortable and motivated.

Several times during the Career Link workshop, or as a separate module, participants attended “career exploration experiential visits” at employer worksites. These visits often included panels in which current employees shared details of their positions and career paths. Instructors worked with the employer to choose employees who held roles similar to those the Career Link participants were interested in pursuing.

Though the Career Link workshop covered similar content across regions, it varied in length and schedule. The Career Link curriculum was flexible enough to adjust to participant needs over time. For example, in Portland Metro, Career Link instructors noticed a decline in participation by advanced manufacturing students, so they adjusted the course content to focus on IT and software and then provided supplemental individualized support. At another time, the instructors integrated social media content into the curriculum in response to the cancellation of a WorkSource center workshop on the topic.

5.5.4 Work-Based Training

Work-based training was another of the primary program services provided by Reboot NW. The program provided two types of work-based training opportunities: OJT, where the participant’s wages were subsidized by the program as an incentive to the employer to train and hire the worker; and paid work experience, where the participant worked at an employer’s worksite but the wages were paid by Reboot NW directly.

On-the-Job Training. OJT positions were available to all those served by WorkSource centers, although positions for Reboot NW participants were funded by the RTW grant. For these positions, Reboot NW reimbursed the OJT employer for 50 to 75 percent of the wages earned for a one- to six-month training period or \$5,000, whichever was less.³⁸ Employment following the completion of the OJT was not guaranteed, but employers committed to the intention of retaining the trainee in a permanent position.

Paid Work Experience. These internship positions were developed specifically by Reboot NW to help its participants develop specific technical skills. Reboot NW internships paid \$15 to \$18 per hour and generally lasted for 240 hours (the equivalent of six weeks at full-time). Program participants could identify work experience positions and propose them to the Career Coach, or vice versa.

Staff reported that advanced manufacturing employers were more interested in OJT positions than were IT and software employers. The manufacturing employers could invest in necessary training on safety procedures and technical skills for trainees who were likely to become employees. In IT and software, by

³⁸ Wages were required to be at least \$10 an hour, for 30 hours a week, for a minimum of one month, with an employer contribution toward health insurance.

contrast, employers were interested in internships to test out a person’s fit and aptitude before making a permanent hire.

5.5.5 Job Search Assistance

Another key program service provided through the Reboot NW program was job search assistance provided by Career Coaches. Job search assistance included activities such as resume review and interview preparation for those program participants who were ready to find employment. The amount of time Coaches spent on job search assistance depended on the participant’s needs. Some Coaches also held group sessions on employment-related topics. For example, one Career Coach hosted a resume workshop series once per month for her Reboot NW participants, where she covered topics such as customizing a resume and navigating applicant screening systems.

Reboot Network. The Reboot Network alumni group served as a way to maintain the peer support connections that participants established in Career Mapping sessions and the Career Link workshop. The goal for the Network was that each region would connect participants with a monthly meet-up, a monthly industry event (e.g., networking or guest speaker), and a quarterly celebration to recognize group members who had found jobs. The specific structure of the networking groups varied across the three regions and evolved over the course of the RTW grant.

Integrated Placement Model. In June 2016, WorkSource Portland Metro and Clackamas launched its “integrated placement” model for employment assistance. All WorkSource customers were able to access these services, and the Reboot NW Career Coaches leveraged the resources with their participants, as a complement to the individualized support. Each WorkSource center had a placement team, which included Reboot NW Coaches, WorkSource Job Search Navigators, and other WorkSource staff who worked with center customers on job placement. During bi-weekly meetings, staff providing job search assistance to Reboot NW participants helped to identify job leads from staff doing business-facing job development. The meetings were also an opportunity for Career Coaches to share information about jobseekers looking for work and get advice on challenging cases.

5.5.6 Other Supports

The Reboot NW program provided a range of other support services to participants, including the following:

Transportation and Other Assistance. The most common support service provided was transportation assistance (e.g., bus passes, gas cards) to help participants get to and from Career Link, training, and job interviews. The RTW grant also covered training-related items such as books or supplies, childcare, and one-time payments for emergencies such as utilities or rent.

Employer Experiences with Work-Based Training

Employers used work-based training through Reboot NW to address their labor needs:

- A small tech project, program, and portfolio management company hosted two Reboot NW internships, which transitioned into OJT and later to full-time employment. These participants currently work in engineering and project management positions at the company. The company used the internship structure to find out whether a person was capable of learning and doing the job before making a permanent hire.
- A family-owned manufacturing company that builds machinery for the paper and pulp industry worked with the local WorkSource center to hire six or seven trainees with OJT funding, including one Reboot NW participant. It used OJT funding to cover training costs, so it could afford to hire someone without all the necessary skills. The company valued the OJT funding and relationship with WorkSource, but did not differentiate between Reboot NW and other OJT programs.
- A 200-employee manufacturing company that produces vehicle recovery equipment and off-road accessories hosted OJTs for five Reboot NW participants and a paid work experience for one participant. This employer also frequently made presentations to Career Link classes.

Behavioral Health Services. Reboot NW contracted with Cascadia Behavioral Health in Portland Metro and Clackamas and with Cascade Community Services in Southwest Washington for in-person group support and individual counseling for program participants. The behavioral health service providers also conducted “mental health first aid” trainings for Reboot NW staff early in the grant period. The behavioral health service partners made presentations at Career Link classes to discuss the services available, and Reboot NW instituted a self-referral process to maintain participant anonymity when seeking these services.

Housing Assistance. In Clackamas, the Reboot NW program partnered with the Housing Authority of Clackamas County to provide short-term rental vouchers for a small number of Reboot NW participants. With funds from an outside grant, the Housing Authority was able to provide select Reboot NW participants facing housing barriers with a year of rent assistance, starting at 100 percent and decreasing once the tenant found employment.

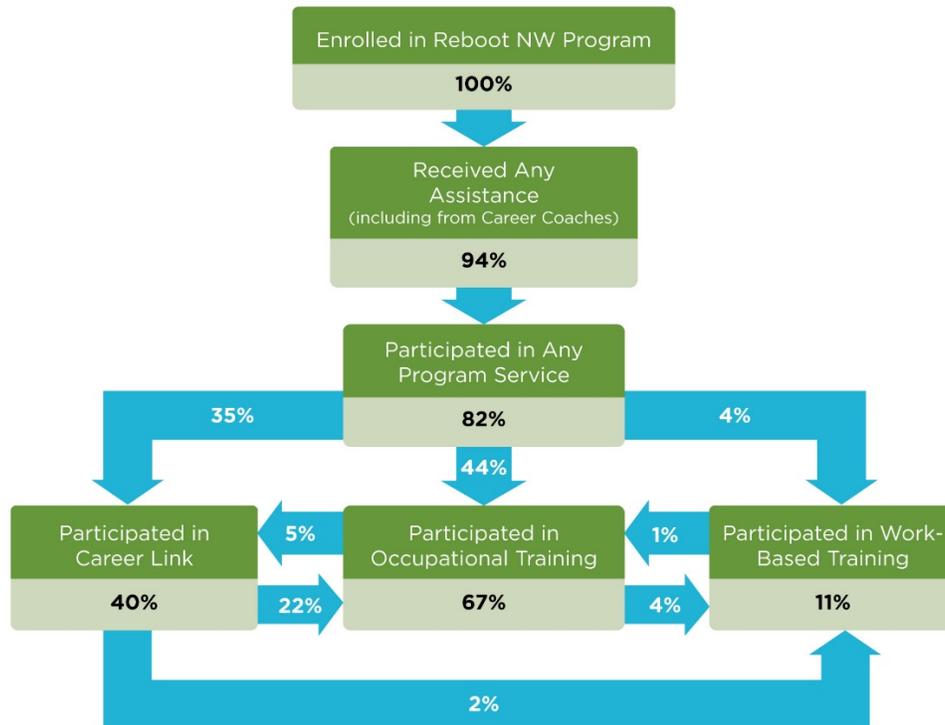
5.6 Participation Patterns in the Reboot NW Program

This section analyzes rates and duration of participation in the Reboot NW program overall and in three different program activities. The analysis is based on Reboot NW administrative data covering a 16-month follow-up period after program enrollment. Data on participation in job search services or the frequency and content of meetings with Career Coaches were not available.

Exhibit 5-5 shows the participant flow through the Reboot NW program. Out of all program enrollees, 94 percent received any type of assistance from Reboot NW, including the initial assessment and meeting with the Career Coach. Eighty-two percent of program enrollees participated in one or more of Reboot NW’s primary activities beyond working with a Career Coach: 40 percent participated in Career Link, 67 percent in occupational training, and 11 percent in work-based training.

Exhibit 5-5 also shows the sequence of activities Reboot NW participants attended. Occupational training was the most common first activity. As shown in the top set of numbers inside blue arrows, of all program enrollees, 35 percent attended Career Link as a first activity, 44 percent attended occupational training, and four percent attended work-based training. Some participants went on to a second activity (shown in the next set of numbers and blue arrows), mostly commonly after participating in Career Link. Of the 35 percent who attended Career Link as a first activity, about two-thirds (22 percent of all enrollees) went on to an occupational training program. Of the 44 percent who attended occupational training as a first activity, about one-fifth (nine percent of all enrollees) went on to an additional activity: five percent went on to Career Link and four percent went on to work-based training.

Exhibit 5-5: Participation in Reboot NW among Program Group Members within a 16-month Follow-up Period



SOURCE: Reboot NW program records.

NOTES: Sample size is 493 program group members. Due to rounding, the subtotals may not equal the total.

While Exhibit 5-5 showed the overall participation pattern for all program enrollees, Exhibit 5-6 reports participation patterns for the subset of enrollees who attended at least one program service beyond meeting with a Career Coach—that is, the 82 percent from Exhibit 5-5 above. Specifically, Exhibit 5-6 shows participation rates, completion rates, and average length of stay in the Reboot NW program as well as the proportion still participating at the end of the 16-month follow-up period.

Likely reflecting the strong interest many participants had in occupational training when they enrolled in Reboot NW, particularly in IT and software, participation in IT and software training programs was the most common activity. As shown in Exhibit 5-6, some 81 percent of all participants attended an occupational training, with most (66 percent) in IT and software and a smaller proportion (17 percent) in advanced manufacturing.³⁹ About one half (49 percent) of participants attended Career Link, and 14 percent attended work-based training. Those in work-based training were split evenly between OJT and internships. As discussed above, most participants (60 percent) attended one program activity; 36 percent attended two, most commonly Career Link and Occupational Training (30 percent). Less than 4 percent of participants attended all three activities.

³⁹ A small proportion of participants (2 percent) attended training in both IT and advanced manufacturing.

The program activities generally had high completion rates within the 16-month follow-up period, greater than 80 percent across most of the program activities. The average length of stay in the Reboot NW program was 5.2 months. However, about nine percent of participants were still participating in some type of program activity at the end of the 16-month follow-up period, and thus 5.2 months is an underestimate of the overall length of stay. As expected, the length of stay was longer in occupational training programs (5.1 months), compared to Career Link (0.4 months) and work-based training (3.0 months).

Exhibit 5-6: Participation in Reboot NW among Those Who Participated in Any Activity within a 16-month Follow-up Period

Activity	Participated (%)	Of Those Who Participated in the Activity		
		Completed (%)	Average Length of Stay (months)	Still Participating at Follow-up (%)
Attended Any Program Activity	100.0	89.6	5.2	8.9
Occupational Training	81.2	82.0	5.1	9.8
Advanced Manufacturing	17.1	75.4	5.2	10.1
IT and Software	66.3	83.2	4.8	9.0
Career Link Workshop	48.5	91.8	0.4	0.5
Work-Based Training	13.6	83.6	3.0	9.1
On-the-Job Training	7.4	83.3	2.9	3.3
Paid Work Experience	7.9	84.4	2.4	12.5
Attended One Activity	60.1	84.0	3.6	4.9
Occupational Training	42.3	84.2	4.6	7.0
Career Link Workshop	13.9	80.4	0.4	0.0
Work-Based Training	4.0	93.8	3.6	0.0
Attended Two Activities	36.4	75.5	7.4	0.7
Career Link and Occupational Training	30.2	78.7	7.2	0.0
Occupational Training and Work-Based Training	5.2	57.1	9.1	4.8
Career Link and Work-Based Training	1.0	75.0	7.0	0.0
Attended Three Activities				
Career Link, Occupational Training, Work-Based Training	3.5	64.3	10.9	0.0

SOURCE: Reboot NW program records.

NOTES: Sample size is 404 and includes all program group members who attended at least one activity. 10 participants (2 percent) attended occupational training in both IT and manufacturing. Length of stay is truncated for those still participating in activities at the end of the follow-up period.

5.7 Key Implementation Findings

This section discusses the implementation findings from the experiences of Reboot NW in operationalizing its RTW grant program. Sources include program records and interviews with program staff. It includes a discussion of the key elements of the program being carried forward after the Reboot NW program ended in June 2019.

5.7.1 Operating the Grant-funded Program

The Reboot NW program provided a range of program services, but most participants attended occupational training, primarily in IT and software. According to Reboot NW program administrative data, of those enrolled in the Reboot NW program, 82 percent participated in a primary program activity: the Career Link workshop, occupational training, work-based training, or some combination. Of them, 81 percent participated in occupational training, primarily in IT and software. Staff reported that many enrollees came to Reboot NW interested in IT and software training in particular. However, staff also reported regional differences, with IT and software training more desired in Portland Metro, where many IT companies are located, and advanced manufacturing training more desired in rural areas. Training lasted just over 5 months on average, and close to 9 percent were still participating at the end of the 16-month follow-up period.

Cohort training was an effective way to both engage participants in training and address employer needs. Cohort training was instituted partway through the grant period, sometimes developed in conjunction with employers to meet their specific staffing needs. Staff reported that it took more time to develop these programs, compared to referring participants to an existing program at an eligible training provider. However, they see the cohort structure as an effective way to engage participants in training that had a direct connection to specific employment opportunities. The cohort trainings were also helpful with Reboot NW outreach, because staff were able to recruit candidates with interest in a specific training opportunity at a specific time, as opposed to promoting Reboot NW generally.

The Career Link workshop was an important element of the Reboot NW program for participants who lacked recent work experience. Staff reported Career Link offered an opportunity for participants to gain an in-depth understanding of the specific industry they planned to work in, along with contextualized employment readiness skills. Participants were able to learn about their target industry directly from employers as guest speakers or on worksite tours, as well as from their peers, some of whom had experience working in that industry. Furthermore, because all the participants in the workshop were from the Reboot NW program, Career Link also provided peer support among a population that could be discouraged and disconnected due to their long period of un- or underemployment. However, staff also reported that some participants with a lot of work experience were not interested in the workshop, preferring to enroll in training directly. Overall, close to half (49 percent) of Reboot NW participants attended Career Link.

Relatively few participants used work-based training due to administrative burdens and difficulties in recruiting employers. Staff reported that work-based training was not used as much as they originally envisioned. According to program administrative data, only 14 percent of participants attended either OJT or an internship. Staff reported that completing the required paperwork took them and employers a lot of time. As a result, staff preferred to spend their time helping participants find full-time positions, and some employers appeared to prefer making a direct hire rather than spending time on the procedures necessary to obtain the wage subsidy from the Reboot NW program or sponsor an internship.

As the economy recovered through the grant period, the share of Reboot NW participants who had significant barriers to employment increased. Staff reported that later in the grant period, as the economy recovered from the recession, applicants to Reboot NW more often were workers who faced significant barriers to employment. These barriers included issues related to housing, mental health, and lack of job skills. This shift likely occurred because the more-job-ready candidates, with fewer or lesser barriers, were able to find employment without the help of Reboot NW, leaving the more disadvantaged

candidates interested in the program. Unexpectedly for the targeted population of long-term unemployed, take-up of behavioral health services was low. At the outset of the grant, Reboot NW partnered with behavioral health service providers to give program participants access to mental health counseling and other related services. However, staff reported that these services were rarely used, in part due to state regulations that required those seeking mental health services to be assessed and formally diagnosed in order to receive the counseling. According to staff, the stigma associated with having mental health issues was in part responsible for the low levels of interest. To address the issue, the mental health services provider shortened the intake process and began offering group counseling at the WorkSource centers instead of its offices, but take-up remained low.

5.7.2 Sustainability of RTW Grant-funded Activities

Reboot NW staff reported that resources were not available to continue program operations after the RTW grant period ended. The most notable component that will not be sustained is the level of funding for occupational training, the most common activity in the Reboot NW program. However, they hoped to offer select programmatic elements or practices as part of their ongoing service delivery strategy, including those discussed below.

Strategies for engaging employers. Worksystems shifted its messaging from grant-specific to mostly sector-specific marketing and outreach. Rather than promoting Reboot NW, they began to highlight career exploration in target sectors, including advanced manufacturing, IT, and software. Staff reported that this adjustment provides local job seekers with sector-specific career exploration support, while helping Worksystems and its partners to sustain partnerships with employers and training providers established during Reboot NW's operation. Rather than promoting individual grant programs that change over time, sector-specific resources and messaging enable Worksystems to maintain a consistent identity with employers and partners over time.

Cohort trainings. Worksystems hoped to continue cohort trainings after Reboot NW, funded by employers. Despite the fact that cohort trainings are costly in terms of financial resources and time needed to coordinate with employers and enroll participants, staff reported that employers found this training approach beneficial and hoped to contribute resources in order to sustain cohort training after the grant ended. Worksystems wanted to engage additional employers in order to continue and possibly grow its cohort training programs.

Staff industry knowledge. The RTW grant funding allowed Worksystems to build capacity and knowledge in the advanced manufacturing, IT, and software sectors that will be used moving forward. Over the course of operating the RTW grants, WorkSource staff counseled participants on appropriate trainings and job search strategies. In the process, staff developed their knowledge of sector-specific training providers and programs, and they developed relationships with employers. After the grant ended, some Reboot NW staff planned to continue working for Worksystems on different grant programs or through other funding sources. Their institutional knowledge and employer relationships across the advanced manufacturing, IT, and software sectors will help to guide ongoing work.

Career Link and Career Coach. Worksystems has continued to utilize the Career Link and Career Coach model in its other grant-funded programs, adapting the services to reflect the needs of a range of target populations. Worksystems has applied this program structure to grants in other sectors, such as healthcare. Staff have also considered the possibility of incorporating short-term certification trainings within Career Link.

6. Key Findings from the Ready to Work Implementation Study

In 2014, in response to the sustained effects of the 2008-2009 recession, DOL funded the RTW Partnership grant program that is the focus of this report. RTW grants went to partnerships of workforce agencies, training providers, employers, and local organizations to improve the employment prospects of their area's long-term unemployed. DOL awarded four-year grants totaling \$180 million to 24 grantees. DOL gave grantees discretion in structuring and designing their programs, but specified they should include a range of customized services including staff guidance on career planning and appropriate program activities, occupational training, employment readiness and job search assistance, and work-based training. The RTW-funded programs operated from 2015 to 2019.⁴⁰

In addition to awarding and funding the individual grants, DOL also funded an evaluation of the RTW program consisting of implementation and impact studies. Based on program design and scale, the evaluation selected four grantees to evaluate: Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation (AAWDC), Jewish Vocational Service (JVS), RochesterWorks!, and Worksystems, Inc. (Worksystems). Grantees were purposively selected for the evaluation and are not representative of all RTW grantees. All four programs provided the range of services specified by DOL with the aim of assisting workers experiencing long-term unemployment (which includes underemployment) to find jobs in the middle- to high-skilled positions targeted by the grant. The number of participants served over the four-year period ranged from 1,006 at JVS to 1,348 for Worksystems, and all the grantees except RochesterWorks! met their enrollment target. This report provides results from four implementation studies of RTW grantees' program operations for the four-year grant period. This chapter summarizes key findings, discusses the key elements of the programs that were sustained after the grants ended, and provides operational lessons for other programs aimed at moving long-term unemployed individuals back to work.

6.1 Operating the Four Grant-funded Programs

The grantee programs provided a similar range of services, but reflecting their program design they varied substantially in their primary emphasis and the length of time participants attended.

Across the four grantees, most program enrollees (more than 80 percent) participated in at least one program activity: occupational training, work-based training, or employment readiness activities (data on participation in one-on-one staff meetings is not available). Occupational training (largely in IT) was the primary focus of two programs (JVS and Worksystems), accounting for at least two-thirds of their enrollments. In these two programs, 40 percent or fewer enrollees attended employment readiness courses. In contrast, RochesterWorks! designed its program with a strong emphasis on immediate employment. Its program provided individual employment readiness activities to nearly all (86 percent) of its enrollees, whereas only about one-quarter attended occupational training. AAWDC fell between these extremes, with most of its enrollees receiving employment readiness activities, but more than half also receiving occupational training. For all programs, work-based training (e.g., subsidized employment or unpaid work experience) was the least common service used by participants (18 percent or fewer).

⁴⁰ For 23 of the grantees, the grants operated from 2014 to 2019. DOL awarded an additional grant in 2015 to a 24th grantee for which the four-year grant period ended in 2020.

Also reflecting their program design and mix of activities, within a 16-month follow-up period, the length of stay in the RTW programs varied from 1.8 months in RochesterWorks! (with most participants attending short-term employment readiness workshops) to 5.1 months for Worksystems (with most participants in occupational training). (Length of stay is truncated for the small proportion still attending activities at the end of the follow-up period.)

Exhibit 6-1: Participation in RTW Program Activities among Enrollees in a 16-month Follow-up Period

Activity	AAWDC	JVS	RochesterWorks!	Worksystems
Any program activity: occupational training, work-based training, and/or employment readiness course (%)	NA	92.6	92.6	81.9
Occupational training (%)	52.2	67.7	24.4	66.5
Work-based training (%)	17.8	14.3	5.2	11.2
Employment readiness course (%)	NA	27.1	85.6	39.8
Average length of stay (months)				
In occupational training	3.6	3.2	5.3	5.2
In program overall	2.7	2.6	1.8	5.1
Still participating at end of follow-up (%)	5.4	0.0	NA	8.9

SOURCE: Program administrative data for program group members in RTW evaluation. Sample size is 540 for AAWDC, 502 for JVS, 307 for RochesterWorks!, and 493 for Worksystems. Length of stay is calculated among those who attended the activity.

NOTES: Data on work readiness activities not available at AAWDC, and rate of participation in any activity cannot be calculated. JVS's Business Administration Boot Camp, Digital Marketing, and Salesforce Administration courses are counted as occupational training. These courses also include some instruction on employment readiness. Job Search Accelerator is an employment readiness program. Some participants attend more than one activity. Length of stay truncated for those still attending at the end of the follow-up period.

As the economy improved over the four-year grant period and the more-job-ready unemployed workers found jobs, grantee staff reported that they served participants who faced greater barriers to employment than staff originally anticipated. Grantees adjusted their programs to better serve this population.

Grantee staff reported that as a result of the economic recovery that occurred during the operational period of the grants, many of the long-term unemployed workers targeted by the RTW grant, particularly those with higher levels of education and work experience, found jobs on their own. As a result, staff reported that many of those who enrolled in the RTW-funded programs had lower skill levels and less work experience than grantees had anticipated. Furthermore, some enrollees faced circumstances that affected their ability to work, such as issues with housing, mental health, or family well-being. In response, grantees made a range of program modifications (all discussed below), including new recruitment methods, a greater use of occupational training than originally planned to address skill deficits, and strengthening employment readiness activities. JVS started providing program services in a new location that was more convenient to the area where its program's target population likely resided.

Grantees experienced difficulties in recruiting eligible participants throughout the grant period, requiring grantee programs to aggressively explore alternative sources of prospective applicants.

All four RTW grantees reported difficulties identifying potential participants who met the grant's definition of long-term unemployed (unemployed or underemployed for over 27 weeks but with the educational background required for middle-skill positions). Staff reported that these difficulties were

exacerbated by the improving economy (discussed above), which served to shrink the anticipated pool of applicants, as well as the necessity of the programs to over-recruit in order to meet the impact study's design requirements. To ensure an adequate number of participants, programs used the multifaceted recruitment strategies that had been successful in the early years of the grant while also trying new strategies. Grantees relied extensively on referrals of applicants from American Job Centers, community colleges, non-profits, and community-based organizations. Several of the grantee programs worked with their respective states to identify workers who had exhausted their Unemployment Insurance benefits in order to mail them information about the RTW programs. Partway through the grant period, some of the programs added staff dedicated to recruitment, who focused on building relationships with community organizations that might refer potential applicants.

Despite the recruitment challenges, grantees enrolled the population targeted by the grant.

Overall, participants were generally well educated but unemployed when they entered the program. As shown in Exhibit 6-2, more than 80 percent of participants were unemployed when they enrolled in a program, and about one-third had been unemployed for a year or more. One-third to one-half of participants had a bachelor's degree, and most others had some college or a technical or associates degree. Because the RTW grants focused on those with prior work experience and education, most enrollees were older, with an average age of around 45; about one-fifth were older than age 55. Reflecting their long periods of unemployment, about half of the participants were receiving some type of public benefit, primarily Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Unemployment Insurance benefits. Reflecting their local economies and program design, grantee programs differed in the population served. Based on several measures, for example, the percentages of their program group having at least a bachelor's degree and receiving any public benefits, RochesterWorks! served more disadvantaged participants (45 percent with a bachelor's degree; 53 percent receiving any public benefits) and JVS served less disadvantaged participants (81 percent with a bachelor's degree, 26 percent receiving any public benefits).

Exhibit 6-2: Selected Characteristics of RTW Program Enrollees, by Grantee Program

Characteristic	AAWDC	JVS	RochesterWorks!	Worksystems
Female (%)	51.5	64.2	57.7	24.2
Average age (years)	45.3	43.6	46.3	43.8
Race (%)				
Black or African American	56.2	12.3	31.2	6.9
White	30.9	51.6	59.7	73.5
Hispanic ethnicity	3.3	10.2	6.6	7.8
Employment (%)				
Unemployed at enrollment	83.6	81.9	90.2	80.6
Unemployed 12 months or longer	32.0	34.3	32.0	31.0
Education level (%)				
Some college but no degree	15.2	9.7	20.2	21.0
Technical or associate's degree	11.1	5.8	18.2	14.1
Bachelor's degree	40.7	50.1	32.6	36.3
Master's degree or higher	25.9	31.2	12.4	14.9
Receiving any public benefit (%)	42.1	25.8	53.2	49.9

SOURCE: RTW Baseline Information Form.

NOTES: Percentages do not sum to 100% for race and education because not all response categories are included. Sample size is 1,029 for AAWDC, 994 for JVS, 610 for RochesterWorks!, and 980 for Worksystems and includes all program group members.

Occupational training was the most common activity attended at three of the grantees, but much of the training attended was short term (less than six months).

In part reflecting the need to raise skills to the levels needed for middle-skill jobs in a population harder to serve than anticipated, occupational training was the major focus of the JVS and Worksystems programs, and to a lesser extent, the AAWDC program. RochesterWorks!, which had the lowest occupational training participation rate, reported having more applicants interested in such training than it had budgeted to financially support this activity. As a result, RochesterWorks! staff reported they had to limit access to tuition assistance for training in its last two grant years. Participants enrolled in training with both community colleges and private providers, and could pursue both non-credit certificate and for-credit degree programs. The training programs were short-term: the average length of stay in occupational training ranged from 3.2 months for JVS to 5.3 months for RochesterWorks!.

Three of the programs reported that “cohort trainings,” whereby they enrolled groups of participants in the same occupational training, were an efficient way to meet employer demand for certain skills and to serve more participants.

JVS designed its program to operate all of its occupational training in cohorts. AAWDC and Worksystems increased their use of cohort trainings as the grant period progressed because they found it to be an efficient way to train workers to meet specific employer needs. Particularly given the specific sectoral focus of the RTW grants, program staff reported that the curricula for cohort trainings could be adapted relatively easily to include the occupational knowledge and skills currently sought by employers in a particular industry. In addition, employers sometimes provided input on the curriculum. Programs often used private, industry-specific training providers, rather than community colleges or other educational institutions. Program staff reported that the ability of cohort trainings to be responsive to industry and employer demand made participants in these trainings more attractive as job candidates.

The grantee programs established strong connections with employers and used them in several aspects of the program operations.

Given the sectoral emphasis of the RTW grant program, all grantees made it a priority to develop industry connections. These connections were used to develop work-based training options (see below), provide speakers and employer visits, and post information on current or pending job opportunities. To facilitate these connections to industry, the four grantees consistently engaged staff in developing employer relationships. For example, RochesterWorks! and AAWDC had staff dedicated to developing relationships with employers and industry associations to make them aware of the job candidates and work-based training funding opportunities available. AAWDC hired staff with prior work experience in the industries it focused on under the RTW grant, reporting that this background enabled them to have credibility with employers in understanding their labor needs and the specific skills, training, and certifications they were seeking. As part of the grant planning process, JVS interviewed about 25 local employers about their hiring practices and how job candidates can demonstrate their skills during their job search. Throughout the grant period, JVS continued to solicit input from employers on its program design and to identify job openings for participants. Grantees used a variety of other strategies to identify and connect with employers, including attending industry events to network with sector-specific employers and organizing job fairs to which they invited employers.

Developing work-based training positions took time and these positions remained a relatively small component of grantee programs compared to the other activities.

Staff at all the grantees consistently reported that they were committed to and saw the value of work-based training, but they found they had to invest substantial time to develop these positions. In particular, it took time to understand the labor and skill needs of individual employers and multiple meetings to establish a level of trust before an employer was comfortable offering work-based training. Moreover, staff reported that potential employers found completing the required paperwork and documentation took time, with some employers not interested in completing procedures necessary to sponsor work-based training. Some grantees reported more success in developing these positions with smaller employers, which tended to be more flexible than large employers that often had more formalized processes requiring more layers of review and approval to sponsor a position. Staff reported that because of these factors work-based learning positions were slow to emerge and were not a major activity for most grantee programs, although the number increased over time.

Staff reported that employment readiness activities, to reorient participants to the world of work as they built job search skills and industry knowledge, were a key program service throughout the grant period.

The emphasis that programs gave employment readiness activities differed by grantee. Some required activities for all participants and some targeted participants in most need of the services. Despite these differences, grantee staff reported that employment readiness activities were a critical program element and one that programs continued to refine and adapt through the term of the grant. Staff reported that these activities were important in large part because the programs served workers with more barriers to employment than anticipated. Though there are differences across the programs, these activities generally included setting employment goals; understanding the types of jobs and skills required for the target industry; identifying interests, abilities, and strategies for filling skill gaps; developing job search skills for the target industry, such as resume development and networking; and researching labor market analysis and trends in the relevant sector. Two grantee programs also included a peer group component, where participants received feedback and support from others in their class. AAWDC, RochesterWorks!, and Worksystems provided a workshop (one to three weeks in duration) focused on building job search skills specifically for a population without recent work experience. Rather than a workshop, JVS introduced employment readiness activities, including goal setting, in its program-specific initial “Foundation Week”; subsequent sessions focused on building industry knowledge and enhancing job search skills that accompanied technical skills training.

The grantee programs also provided access to specialized assistance on mental or behavioral health issues, specifically designed for RTW participants, and maintained these services throughout the grant period.

Explicitly recognizing the possible emotional and psychological effects of long-term unemployment, the four grantee programs included services intended to address participants’ mental health and self-confidence. Three programs provided assistance with mental and/or behavioral health issues as part of their employment readiness activities, sometimes provided by an outside agency with expertise in this area. These activities included a three-hour workshop on the trauma of job loss and unemployment, and strategies for coping with stress (AAWDC); a six-session, cognitive behavioral therapy-based component designed to build confidence and motivation to find employment (JVS); and specific curricula focused on identifying and addressing negative beliefs and emotions that could affect a job search

(RochesterWorks!). In contrast, Worksystems contracted with an outside agency to provide one-on-one behavioral health counseling sessions to participants (rather than including counseling as part of group activities). In this site, staff reported that take-up of these services was low due to the stigma associated with disclosing the required mental health information.

Partnerships that grantees formed with proximate workforce agencies expanded the programs' geographic reach but presented other operational issues.

Each of the three workforce development agency grantees (AAWDC, RochesterWorks!, and Worksystems) partnered with between two and six other workforce development agencies. Staff reported that doing so contributed to them being able to enroll a larger number of participants. The separate agencies were given leeway to tailor recruitment and certain service delivery strategies to the particular needs of their local populations. However, serving a large region presented some operational issues. Grant staff were dispersed across the region and reported to their own, separate workforce agencies, so the lead grantee had to be intentional about communicating program updates and changes to ensure services were implemented consistently. There were also variations in the prevalence of employers in certain industries across the region. For example, Worksystems found that IT was more common in urban areas and advanced manufacturing in rural areas. AAWDC added two additional industries (advanced manufacturing and healthcare) partway through the grant period because its original industries (bioscience, cybersecurity, and IT) were common in the metropolitan service area but not the more rural regions served by AAWDC's partners.

6.2 Sustainability of RTW Grant-funded Activities

The RTW grants were explicitly time limited. Nevertheless, grantees reported institutional benefits that appeared likely to continue after the grant-funded programs ended. In general, doing so would require either finding new sources of funds or reallocating existing funding from other current activities. All of the grantees reported that they did not have resources available to continue their RTW programs in their entirety, but grantees do plan to sustain certain components or integrate them into future initiatives.

All grantees planned to continue using material developed for the employment readiness activities to assist other unemployed populations.

All the grantee programs offered employment readiness services that in part addressed the importance of motivation and self-confidence to participants' job search efforts. Staff who provided these services reported that this content was valuable in helping participants overcome personal and attitudinal barriers to looking for work, particularly after experiencing long spells of unemployment. All grantees planned to continue offering this material as part of other job search workshops they offered, in addition to the more standard curriculum emphasizing job search skills such as resume development and interview skills. For example, AAWDC began using this component of its curriculum in programs for veterans and Unemployment Insurance claimants. JVS planned to continue offering its employment readiness curriculum, both through a separate two-week career exploration and job search workshop and through incorporating the material into existing training programs, including for youth and ex-offenders. In particular, JVS staff reported that the group peer support activities were a critical element they planned to carry forward. RochesterWorks!'s employment readiness workshop continued to be provided at the AJC after the grant ended, open to all who were interested. Worksystems included its employment readiness workshop in two other grant-funded programs that were ongoing after its RTW grant ended.

Three grantees developed occupational training programs specifically for cohorts of participants, and hoped to continue this training model.

Cohort trainings, used by AAWDC, JVS, and Worksystems, were a way to train small groups of workers who had the skills and credentials in demand from one or more employers, with the training courses sometimes specifically tailored to employer needs. Following the approach it used throughout the RTW grant period, JVS expressed an interest in continuing to deliver technical skills training in IT for cohorts of participants, but had yet to identify funding to do so. Worksystems, which also developed cohort trainings in advanced manufacturing and IT, hoped that it could demonstrate the value of this approach to employers and ultimately secure their financial support. Worksystems reported that employers were interested in funding cohort training as a way to design curriculum specific to their needs and have a set of potential job candidates trained. AAWDC also developed cohort trainings in bioscience and IT, and it planned to offer them to employers as part of its ongoing business development efforts.

Grantees identified ways to sustain the employer relationships that had been established under the RTW grants.

Grantees implemented certain practices to help them maintain employer relationships developed during the grant period even after the grant ended. For example, RochesterWorks! and Worksystems presented their RTW grant-funded program services and participants to employers under the broader umbrella of their organization names, rather than using the RTW program names (Finger Lakes Hired and Reboot Northwest). By doing so, RochesterWorks! and Worksystems each presented a single cohesive identity to employers that they hoped would give them name recognition beyond the life of their RTW grant and pave the way for future work with the employer. In addition, RochesterWorks! made arrangements so that non-RTW-funded staff at the workforce agency would take over and maintain the established employer relationships. AAWDC also developed plans to continue using the industry-focused staff who developed job placement and work-based training positions in the relevant industry, which was a new position under the RTW grant. Specifically, after the grant ended, AAWDC included the Industry Talent Consultant role in other grant programs and continued to pursue the industry-focused approach to employer engagement.

Regional partnerships developed or advanced under the grants continued after the grants ended.

AAWDC established a partnership with six other workforce development agencies in order to serve a large region of Maryland. It was interested in partnering again in the future, citing the fact that some large employers in the region have a presence across county lines and that by sharing resources and labor market information across workforce agencies, they could better meet employers' skill needs and place clients in jobs. RochesterWorks! partnered with two workforce development agencies that served neighboring counties in rural New York State. Although they had partnered prior to the RTW grant, RochesterWorks! staff reported that the RTW partnership continued to work well, with grant-funded staff in each location remaining in regular contact both to ensure consistent implementation of participant services and to coordinate on employer outreach. They planned that the cross-agency relationships would continue under a regional economic development initiative after the RTW grant ended.

6.3 Conclusion: Implications and Lessons for Future Programs

The RTW grant program focused on serving workers who were experiencing long-term unemployment and moving them into middle- and high-skilled jobs. This section provides reflections from the authors on lessons that could inform future efforts to move unemployed individuals back to work.

Flexibility in program design appears important in meeting local business and employer needs.

Economic conditions, potential employers, and participant characteristics all varied across the grantees. Using the flexibility provided by DOL to address local needs, some grantees emphasized occupational training to upgrade skills, while others focused on developing employment readiness skills and/or connections to employers. The forthcoming impact study of each grantee will report estimates of the impact of each grantee's approach on improving participants' employment and other outcomes.

Even with a focus on serving relatively well-educated workers and operating in a strong economy, there are workers with substantial barriers to employment that can potentially benefit from customized workforce services.

Grantee staff consistently reported that, in part due to the improving economy which enabled more job-ready individuals to find jobs, the populations they were serving faced more barriers to work than they had originally anticipated. This indicates that even workers with relatively high levels of education that qualify them for middle- and high-skilled jobs still experience long-term unemployment. And based on their participation in the RTW programs, these individuals appear to have a need for the customized assistance in finding jobs provided. In particular, grantees reported that activities focused on employment readiness skills, such as building confidence and motivation and understanding industry needs, were critical given the length of time participants had been out of work.

Developing employer interest in sponsoring work-based training activities requires significant effort and attention.

All grantees reported that developing work-based training options was consistently the most difficult program component to implement. Staff reported that eliciting employer interest in sponsoring positions as well as gaining employer willingness to complete necessary steps to place a participant in a work-based training slot were the primary obstacles. Identifying additional strategies to promote employer interest in these activities is an area for future attention.

Industry partnerships to understand and meet employer needs can be enhanced through staff resources dedicated to this activity.

While developing business partnerships is a common strategy for identifying employment opportunities and placing job seekers, grantees reported that RTW resources allowed their programs to dedicate staff time to this activity above and beyond what would have typically been possible at American Job Centers. Furthermore, the RTW grant programs' narrow industry focus allowed for an in-depth engagement with the relevant industry in understanding key employers and their needs.

A four-year operational period for the grants allowed the programs to mature and strengthen over time.

The RTW grantees were able to operate their programs at least four years (and longer with extensions). Staff reported that this period of time was sufficient enough to allow staff to make adjustments and improvements to program design and services, particularly regarding recruitment, industry partnerships, work-based learning, and the structure of occupational training.

Overall the RTW implementation study found that the four grantees each developed, operated, and refined a set of program services designed to improve the employment prospects of a long-term unemployed or underemployed population. Furthermore, while the RTW programs ended as planned, grantees identified strategies developed under the RTW programs that they hoped to continue if funding could be identified.

Appendix: Job Titles of Grantee Program Staff Interviewed for Implementation Study

This appendix lists the titles and organizational affiliations of individuals interviewed during evaluation site visits.

Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation (AAWDC)—Maryland Tech Connection (MTC)

President and CEO, AAWDC

Project Director, MTC

Project Coordinator, MTC

Career Coaches, MTC (for all regions)

Industry Talent Consultants, MTC

Recruiter, MTC

Partners and Employers:

- Bio Technical Institute of Maryland
- International Cancer Alliance for Research and Education
- Inovious Technologies
- KamTek, Inc.
- Seedco, EarnBenefits Online
- Vendor, LinkedIn Workshop

Jewish Vocational Services (JVS)—Skills to Work in Technology (STW-T) / Job Search Accelerator (JSA)

Director of Technology Training Programs, JVS

Director of JSA Program, JVS

Chief Executive Officer, JVS

Chief Program Officers, JVS

Client Success Strategy Coordinator, JVS/JSA

Company Relations Associate, JVS

Strategic Corporate Partnership Coordinator, JSA/JVS

Technology Training Program Coordinator, Bootcamp/JVS

Senior Training Coordinator, JVS

Coordinator, Digital Marketing, STW-T/JVS

Program Instructor, Bootcamp, STW-T/JVS

Instructor, Salesforce, STW-T/JVS

Trainer, Salesforce, STW-T/JVS

Career Advisor, JVS

Partners and Employers:

- California Department of Rehabilitation
- SNAP Business Intelligence
- Wells Fargo

RochesterWorks!—Finger Lakes Hired (FLH)

Executive Director, RochesterWorks!

Technical Assistance and Training Manager, RochesterWorks!

Director of Community & Business Services, RochesterWorks!

Career Center Manager, RochesterWorks!

Project Manager, Finger Lakes Hired

Education & Employment Specialists, Finger Lakes Hired

Outreach Specialists, Finger Lakes Hired

Business Services Specialist, Finger Lakes Hired

College Liaisons (at Monroe and Finger Lakes Community Colleges), Finger Lakes Hired

Career Services Advisors, RochesterWorks!

Partners and Employers:

- Hill Haven Rehabilitation and Transitional Care Center
- Innovative Solutions
- Monroe-2 Orleans BOCES (Boards of Cooperative Educational Services)
- Optimax SI

Worksystems Inc. (Worksystems)—Reboot Northwest

Director of Programs, Workforce Southwest Washington

Business Solutions Manager, WorkSource Washington

Program Managers, Worksystems Inc. and Clackamas Workforce Partnership

Business Services Manager, Worksystems Inc.

Executive Director, Clackamas WorkSource

Reboot Coach, Clackamas WorkSource

Operations Manager, Clackamas WorkSource

Career Coaches, Reboot Northwest and Portland Region

Sector Leads for Manufacturing and IT, Worksystems Inc.

Sector Leads for Technology and Manufacturing, Workforce Southwest Washington

Instructors, Career Link

Partners and Employers:

- Cranston Machinery
- Creating IT Futures Foundation
- DiscoverOrg
- New Horizons

- Oregon Department of Human Services
- Oregon Employment Department
- ResCare
- Tosoh Quartz

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