

**SkillWorks Initiative,
Evaluation Report—
Year 4**

From Insight to Impact
– worldwide

June 2008

Prepared for
SkillWorks Funders Group

Prepared by
Amy Minzner, Abt Associates
Beth Siegel, Mt. Auburn Associates
Devon Winey, Mt. Auburn Associates
Glen Schneider, Abt Associates
Josh Cox, Abt Associates



Contents

Executive Summary	i
Introduction.....	i
Summary of Activities and Accomplishments.....	ii
Key Learnings.....	viii
Organization of the Report.....	xii
Chapter 1: Methodology	1
Key Informant Interviews.....	1
Participant Data.....	1
Employer Survey	1
Chapter 2: Health Care and Research Training Institute (Round 1 Grantee).....	2
Changes in Program Design, Activities, and Administration During Year 4	2
Who Is the Project Serving?.....	4
Participant Outcomes	7
Employer Outcomes.....	9
System Change Outcomes	12
Key Learnings/Implications for Partnership Selection in Phase 2.....	14
Chapter 3: International Institute of Boston and the Hospitality Career Center (Round 1 Grantee).....	16
Changes in Program Design, Activities, and Administration During Year 4	16
Who is the Project Serving?.....	18
Participant Outcomes	20
Employer Outcomes.....	24
System Change Outcomes	25
Key Learnings/Implications for Partnership Selection in Phase 2.....	27
Chapter 4: Partners in Career and Workforce Development (Round 1 Grantee).....	29
Changes in Program Design, Activities, and Administration During Year 4	29
Participant Outcomes	31
Employer Outcomes.....	36
System Change Outcomes	36
Key Learnings/Implications for Partnership Selection in Phase 2.....	38
Chapter 5: Building Services Career Path Project (Round 2 Grantee).....	41
Changes in Program Design, Activities, and Administration During Year 4	42
Who Is the Project Serving?.....	44
Participant Outcomes	46
Employer Outcomes.....	50
System Change Outcomes	53
Conclusions.....	54

Chapter 6: Partnership for Automotive Career Education—(Round 2 Grantee).....	57
Changes in Program Design, Activities, and Administration During Year 4	57
Who is the Project Serving?.....	59
Participant Outcomes	61
Employer Outcomes.....	65
System Change Outcomes	66
Key Learnings/Implications for Partnership Selection in Phase 2.....	68
Chapter 7: Community Health Worker Initiative of Boston—(Round 3 Grantee)	70
Initiative Background.....	70
Year 1 Approach to Implementation.....	71
Outcomes	76
Key Learnings/Implications for Partnership Selection in Phase 2.....	84
Chapter 8: SkillWorks Public Policy Component	87
Introduction.....	87
Changes in Partnership and Approach	87
Year 4 Activities and Progress.....	88
Progress in Achieving Outcomes	95
Progress in Addressing Challenges.....	97
Conclusion	100
Chapter 9: Key Learnings	102
Pre-Employment Learnings	102
Incumbent Learnings	104
Program Development Learnings	106
Employer Engagement Learnings.....	107
System Change.....	110

Executive Summary

Introduction

SkillWorks is a five-year public-private investment of approximately \$15 million on the part of philanthropy, government, community organizations, and employers to change how workforce development is done in Boston and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. SkillWorks' goals are to:

- Help low- and moderate-income individuals attain family-supporting jobs.
- Help businesses to find and retain skilled employees.
- Increase the resources targeted to education and skills training, especially for low-skilled, entry-level employees.
- Build the capacity of workforce development providers to meet the human resource needs of employers and low-income individuals.
- Promote public policies that help low- and moderate-income individuals to advance into family-sustaining jobs.

As part of the overall initiative, the SkillWorks Funders Group is supporting a comprehensive evaluation being conducted by Abt Associates and Mt. Auburn Associates. The purpose of this evaluation is to document the participant and policy outcomes achieved, to highlight the improved practices that emerged, and to identify the continuing challenges that will need to be addressed. In the process of documenting and assessing the initiative's progress and accomplishments to date, the evaluation team also provides feedback to the Funders Group and the SkillWorks grantees that can inform their future activities.

This document presents the evaluation team's findings regarding Year 4 of the SkillWorks Initiative, focusing on the program year spanning the period from January 1, 2007 through December 31, 2007. It focuses on the activities and accomplishments in the fourth year of program operations for the following sectoral workforce partnerships:

Round 1 Implementation Partnerships (which received their first SkillWorks operational funds in Year 1):

- Hotel Career Center (HCC) of the International Institute of Boston (IIB)
- Partners in Career and Workforce Development (PCWD)
- Health Care and Research Training Institute (HCRTI)

Round 2 Implementation Partnerships (which received their first SkillWorks operational funds in Year 2):

- Building Services Career Path Project (BSCPP) of the Voices and Future Fund
- Partnership for Automotive Career Education (PACE)

Round 3 Implementation Partnerships (which received their first SkillWorks operational funds in Year 4):

- Community Health Worker Initiative of Boston (CHW Initiative)

The report also examines the Year 4 experience of SkillWorks’s public policy work including the efforts of its advocacy grantee, the Workforce Solutions Group (WSG).

Summary of Activities and Accomplishments

SkillWorks grantees were active in Year 4—the partnerships’ progressed in implementing existing programs, revising approaches where outcomes were less than expected, and piloting new ideas to meet evolving participant and employer needs; WSG focused on engaging the new administration and maintaining or expanding available resources for workforce development.¹ The following section outlines the partnerships’ progress in meeting intended Initiative outcomes.

➤ *Have the Partnerships achieved their targets in terms of the number and types of individuals that they were serving in Years 1–4?*

In Year 4, the partnerships were generally more realistic about the number of individuals they were likely to recruit for their programs and the number they would have capacity to serve. Overall, 323 new individuals were enrolled in the six SkillWorks-funded partnerships. This is less than half the number of individuals enrolled in Year 3. Three contributing reasons for the decline include a substantial decrease in the number of courses offered by the HCRTI, PCWD’s decision to stop providing services under the SkillWorks grant in Year 4, and the fact that in the fourth year of implementation, some partnerships, like HCC, had reached a saturation point in their incumbent programs.

SkillWorks partnerships have been successful in serving low-skilled, low-income residents. Over the four years of implementation, about 85 percent of participants have made less than \$40,000 at enrollment. The educational achievement of participants was similarly modest, with 75 percent having completed high school or less. Participant educational achievements varied, to a limited degree, between partnerships, with the healthcare-focused partnerships serving individuals with slightly higher education levels.

¹ PCWD decided not to reapply for SkillWorks funding in Year 4. It was able and willing to continue portions of the work that had been funded by SkillWorks with internal resources. It did, however, continue to provide the evaluation with data on Year 1–3 participants.

Table E.1: Total Enrollments

	Year 1 Cohort		Year 2 Cohort		Year 3 Cohort		Year 4 Cohort		Totals	
	Pre-employment	Incumbent								
HCC	52	31	52	83	50	31	44	34	198	179
HCRTI*	125	208	52	244	50	236	17	92	244	914
HCRTI walk-in participants	37		51		89		0		177	
PCWD	44	182	51	167	42	117			137	466
BSCPP				60		142		32		234
PACE**			34	114	33	22	41	2	108	138
CHWI								61		61
Totals	258	421	240	668	264	548	102	221	864	1992

Four-year total for pre-employment and incumbents^

2819

*Table E.1 includes previously reported Year 1–Year 3 enrollment figures for HCRTI incumbents, though the evaluation team was unable to verify that each participant was only counted once, upon initial enrollment. Given the state of the database, it is likely that some participants were double-counted, and there may have been individuals counted as enrolled that never fully enrolled for courses. As such, Year 1–3 enrollment figures will not be carried forward in subsequent tables. Instead, HCRTI data will reflect only those active in 2007.

** PACE Incumbent enrollment totals include individuals who enrolled in Module 2, as well as those who only took an ASE Test Preparation Course.

^Over the first three years, 37 PCWD enrollees took classes at HCRTI.

Table E.2: Demographic Data (Pre-employment and Incumbent Combined)						
	Year 1 Cohort	Year 2 Cohort	Year 3 Cohort	Years 1-3 Cohort	Year 4 Cohort	Total
Primary language						
English	55%	52%	56%		64%	56%
Not English	45%	48%	44%		36%	44%
Total	100%	100%	100%		100%	100%
<i>% of enrolled with missing data</i>	4%	11%	10%		18%	10%
Highest educational level and certification at enrollment						
Did not complete high school	12%	18%	18%		24%	18%
Completed high school only	64%	61%	57%		35%	57%
Some post-secondary course work	7%	14%	11%		20%	12%
Completed post-secondary	17%	7%	14%		20%	14%
Total	100%	100%	100%		100%	100%
<i>% of enrolled with missing data</i>	3%	15%	13%		25%	13%
Boston residency						
Yes, Boston resident	57%	52%	44%		37%	48%
No, not Boston resident	43%	48%	56%		63%	52%
Total	100%	100%	100%		100%	100%
<i>% of enrolled with missing data</i>	0%	14%	9%		21%	10%
Non-English speakers' primary language*						
Spanish				49%		49%
French or Creole				19%		19%
Vietnamese				2%		2%
Chinese				7%		7%
Arabic				3%		3%
Other				19%		19%
Total				100%		100%
<i>% of enrolled with missing data</i>				17%		17%
Age at enrollment*						
20 years old and under				2%		2%
21-25 years old				16%		16%
26-30 years old				17%		17%
31-35 years old				16%		16%
36-40 years old				14%		14%
41-50 years old				26%		26%
Over 50 years old				9%		9%
Total				100%		100%
<i>% of enrolled with missing data</i>				3%		3%
Annual household income						
Under \$10,000	27%	21%	16%		16%	20%
Between \$10,000 and \$24,999	27%	35%	34%		33%	32%
Between \$25,000 and 39,999	33%	30%	34%		35%	33%
Over \$40,000	13%	15%	16%		16%	15%
Total	100%	100%	100%		100%	100%
<i>% of enrolled with missing data</i>	22%	7%	38%		54%	26%

* "Primary Language" and "Age at Enrollment" do not include data for PACE or HCRTI.

A little more than half of all participants indicated that English was their primary language, reflecting many of the partnerships' emphases on *English as a Second Language* courses. And, about half of all participants are Boston residents, though the percentage of Boston residents has consistently declined over the four years of Initiative implementation.

Interestingly, the participants who enrolled in Year 4 are the most unique cohort, in terms of their independent comparison to previous cohorts. The percentage of primary English speakers increased to 64 percent, and the educational attainment distribution became more extreme with high numbers of individuals having less or more than a high school degree (e.g., across all four years, 18 percent of participants had less than a high school degree; in Year 4, 24 percent fall into this category). Potential causes of this shift include participant self-selection, the fact that partnerships have been in place for

four years with similar employers and participants in the middle skill range have already enrolled if interested, and immigration policy that has provided IIB with a more highly skilled participant pool; partnerships confirmed that they did not intentionally change their recruiting strategies.

➤ ***Have the partnerships been successful in graduating pre-employment participants from the SkillWorks-funded training programs and placing them into industry jobs?***

In Year 4, three partnerships offered pre-employment training; PCWD opted not to provide service in Year 4, and the BSCPP and CHW Initiative program designs did not include a pre-employment component. The combined graduation rate of the three programs was 88 percent, with IIB graduating 100 percent of enrollees and 76 percent of PACE enrollees completing Module 1.

	Enrollment		Program Completion		Placement				
	# Enrolled	# Graduating	% of Enrolled	# Placed with Partner Employer	% of Graduates	# Placed in Industry with Non-Partner	% of Graduates	Total Placed	% of Graduates
HCC**	44	44	100.0%	6	13.6%	27	61.4%	33	75.0%
HCRTI	19	16	84.2%	7	43.8%	4	25.0%	11	68.8%
PACE^	41	31	75.6%	2	14.3%	5	35.7%	7	50.0%
Totals	104	91	87.5%	15	16.5%	36	39.6%	51	68.9%

*This table reflects the number of Year 4 enrollees placed. In Year 4, HCC placed an additional five and PACE placed an additional nine Year 3 enrollees.
 **Five additional graduates were placed in January 2008
 ^For PACE, the number graduating is the number of individuals completing Module 1 because completion of Module 1 is the threshold PACE uses to begin placing participants. Actual program graduation does not occur until a participant completes Modules 1 and 2. Additionally, placement activities for 17 of the 31 Module 1 completers did not begin until December 2007. Therefore, the placement rate was calculated by dividing the number placed by the number eligible for placement (14 participants).

The placement rate was lower than the graduation rate; only 69 percent of program graduates were placed. Forty percent of enrollees were placed in a partnership’s target industry, and an additional 17 percent were placed in the industry with partner employers. HCRTI was most successful in placing participants with employer partners. The low placement totals were caused by participant barriers to placement (e.g., CORIs and medical problems) and low skill levels that did not meet employer standards.

➤ ***Have the partnerships been successful in helping participants achieve employment and wage objectives?***

The average placement wage ranged from \$10.70 for PACE participants to \$13.46 for HCC participants. These wages represent an increase of almost four dollars over what participants who were employed at enrollment and who enrolled with HCC and HCRTI were earning. The calculated increase for PACE participants was only \$0.25; however, this may be an underestimation of the true experience of participants since very few were actually working at enrollment (the calculation does not capture the wage increase for those who were not working at enrollment).

	Year 1 Cohort	Year 2 Cohort	Year 3 Cohort	Year 4 Cohort
HCC	\$9.75	\$10.61	\$12.45	\$13.46
HCRTI**	\$12.27	\$11.92	\$11.99	\$13.19
PCWD	\$11.43	\$12.00	\$12.32	
PACE		\$10.26	\$10.63	\$10.70

*Hourly wage rates of individuals in tip-eligible positions were not included in the calculation of averages.
 **Participant-level data were unavailable to verify partnership-reported aggregate average placement wages for Years 1–3.

	HCC	HCRTI	PCWD	PACE
Average hourly wage increase from last job held	\$3.79	\$3.42		\$0.25
Number of participants included in this calculation*	19	7		3

*To be included in the calculation, the participant must have been employed at enrollment, been placed, and not have experienced a decrease in hourly wage due to being placed in a “tip-eligible” job.

	Wage Increase	% of Still Employed Incumbents
HCC	114	82.0%
PCWD	357	100.0%
BSCPP	225	103.6%
PACE	26	56.5%
CHW Initiative	8	15.4%
HCRTI	136	79.1%
TOTAL	730	91.2%

*Note that this table includes all wage increases, not necessarily those that were the result of program training.

Incumbent participants also experienced wage gains and promotions. However, there is limited evidence that many of the wage increases were tied directly to the training or services received through SkillWorks. Of those still employed in Year 4, 91 percent received a wage increase at some point over the last four years of implementation. The potential significance of wage increases as a measure of program effectiveness is greater for some partnerships than others, however. PCWD and

BSCPP participants would likely have received wage increases regardless of their participation in the program. For PACE and CHW Initiative participants, the wage increases are more likely to be merit based because cost of living increases are less common in the industries.

For all partnerships, promotions are the best indicator of advancement. Over 230 participants have received promotions since the SkillWorks Initiative began, with the largest percentages coming from PCWD and HCC participants. However, again, at least in the case of PCWD, there is limited evidence that these promotions were tied directly to services received. Only one CHW Initiative participant received a promotion in Year 4, but this is likely due to the fact that program participants

	Promotions	% of Incumbents
HCC	35	19.6%
PCWD*	93	20.0%
BSCPP	15	6.4%
PACE	9	6.5%
CHW Initiative	1	1.6%
HCRTI*	77	
TOTAL	230	19.1%

* Six HCRTI participants and 34 PCWD participants (all Year 1–3 enrollees) received promotions in 2007. Because they may have already received a promotion in a previous year and data reporting does not allow for checking for duplication, they have been excluded.

have only been engaging with the initiative for less than a year (the program is in its first year of implementation).

➤ ***Have the partnerships been successful in helping participants make progress along a career or educational pathway?***

Skill enhancement outcomes are measured in terms of participants enrolling in advancement related programs and participants graduating from advancement programs. Partnership participants did actively enroll in programs, with 53 individuals enrolling in college and over 150 enrolled in some sort of credentialed program. The credentialed programs ranged from courses in preparation for the ASE (Automotive Service Excellence) exam to course work leading up to HVAC (heating, ventilating, and air conditioning) certification. Forty-five participants also enrolled in less formal sector training (e.g., HCC’s Front-Office training and CHW Initiative related Community and Outreach Education Program).

	Number of Participants Who Have Realized Skill Enhancement Outcomes						Total
	HCC	PCWD*	BSCPP	PACE	CHW Initiative	HCRTI	
<i>Enrollment</i>							
Entered college	2	40	0	8	3	26	118
Enrolled in credentialed program	3	21	34	129	13	0	167
Enrolled in sector-specific training	8	0	30	0	5	2	45
<i>Completion</i>							
Graduated from college	1	11	0	0	0	12	24
Received industry-recognized credential	2	4	2	44	7	63	133
Completed sector-specific training	9	0	29	0	4	38	80

*Totals for PCWD only reflect accomplishments through the end of Year 3. Though a survey was completed in Dec 2007 by current employees, there was no way for evaluation team to identify participants in order to avoid duplicate reporting from previous years.

On a step beyond the enrollment outcomes are those individuals who met their goals and achieved graduation or certification. Twenty-four participants graduated from college, 133 participants received industry-recognized credentials, and 80 completed sector-specific training. For each of these participants, new opportunities have been created because of their accomplishments and the work facilitated by SkillWorks partnership staff.

Overall, participant outcomes related to wage increases, promotions, and skill enhancements have been smaller than anticipated. Meaningful progress has been made in the lives of individual participants, but the scale initially anticipated by SkillWorks funders has not materialized. Barriers to this large-scale advancement have ranged from participants’ low starting skills to limited advancement opportunities to system barriers, such as the still-developing bridge between adult education and community colleges.

➤ ***Have the partnerships led to any documented employer outcomes?***

Partner employers experienced positive outcomes as a result of their participation in the Initiative. Most employers reported some level of improvement in worker performance and productivity, though the improvements were anecdotal and fairly specific. IIB, PCWD, and PACE employers mentioned that their access to entry-level workers improved; and a few employers described their enhanced relationships with community-based organization partners.

Unfortunately, there were also expected outcomes that were notably absent from employer experience—increased retention of workers, improved ability to fill critical occupational positions, and an improved ability to promote from within. Employers did not experience these benefits, primarily because of the low skill levels of participants engaging in the SkillWorks partnerships’ programs.

➤ *Have longer-term institutional or system related implications been achieved?*

There were three types of institutional or system-related changes that occurred as a result of SkillWorks funding—changes made by service providers, changes made by employers, and changes in the overall workforce system. Modest changes were accomplished across the Initiative, including all partnerships and SkillWorks’s public policy component.

Service providers working within the context of SkillWorks partnerships increased their overall awareness of workforce issues and evolved the way they delivered services, considering ways to more intentionally link adult education and workforce development services. Additionally, BSCPP was successful, during contract negotiations completed in 2007, in securing commercial employers agreement to fund a joint union-management training fund supported by an hourly contribution that will provide ongoing support for educational activities of building services employees.

Employers implemented institutional changes in varying degrees. Some partner employers made no long-term changes to the way they interact with low-skilled workers. Other employers learned from their experience with a SkillWorks partnership, and took the lessons learned about worker barriers to learning and advancement and refined their internal approach to training and staff development. Finally, another group of employers used the SkillWorks experience to more deeply engage in workforce efforts, adopting release time policies and understanding external resources available to assist employees with skill building (e.g., ESOL).

At a policy level, SkillWorks’s public policy efforts, in partnership with other workforce development advocates, resulted in sustainable funding for the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund (WCTF), additional funding for WCTF in the 2008 budget, inclusion of workforce development funding in the Life Sciences legislation, and an increased profile for workforce development as a public policy issue in the state of Massachusetts and with the Patrick Administration.

In addition to SkillWorks’s general public policy work, the CHW Initiative partnership worked to increase employer, worker and funder awareness of the Community Health Worker (CHW) term. It also seed-funded the development of CHW education tracks at two community colleges in the Boston area.

Key Learnings

At the end of Year 4, a significant amount of work had been completed by the SkillWorks partnerships, funders, and public policy grantee. In order to maximize the funders’ ability to learn from these experiences, the evaluation team synthesized our insights across the Initiative’s various efforts and documented key learnings that emerged. The learnings were organized into the following categories: pre-employment, incumbent, program development, employer engagement, and system change.

Pre-Employment

- ***Learning #1: It is critical to customize applicant screening and participant skill assessments based on understanding of employer needs.***

Over the four years of SkillWorks funding, partnerships have realized how critical it is to understand employer needs and expectations and then translate these into screening protocols, skill assessments, and program design. This serves to minimize potential mismatches between job requirements and expectations and interests and aptitudes of participants. This in turn helps to minimize the number of enrolled participants who drop out of the training before graduation, and increase the likelihood of partner employers choosing to hire graduates.

- ***Learning #2: A more deliberate transition strategy is required to engage placed pre-employment participants in further training and career development activities.***

Many of the jobs in which pre-employment participants are placed can be broadly characterized as low-skilled and low-wage. SkillWorks's initial expectation was that participants would be placed in these jobs and then would enter the incumbent training pipeline to advance along a career ladder into higher paying, more highly skilled jobs at their placement employers. In very few cases, though, did pre-employment participants actually engage in incumbent services.

There are a few reasons why the transitions didn't occur as expected. First, most pre-employment participants were placed into entry level jobs and participants generally had to work for awhile to accumulate the experience needed to advance or even to take advantage of training opportunities. Second, many workers were not able to participate right away in further training due to employer policies. Finally, in many partnerships, the number of pre-employment participants placed at employer partners was not large enough to result in a significant number of participants transitioning to further training or advancement opportunities.

Of those who stayed at their initial placement, some have advanced on their own, using the skills they learned in the pre-employment training and their own drive to meet with success. However, most of the pre-employment participants in the partnerships have continued in their initial placement position or have left the employer, falling short of the advancement expectation.

With a more deliberate strategy to help participants transition from the pre-employment training to incumbent services, including targeted post placement trainings, coaching around short-term ways to further career goals, and introduction to incumbent coaching staff and resources, pre-employment participants might reengage in the advancement process more quickly.

Incumbent

- ***Learning #1: The intensity of incumbent services delivered was highly variable and overall, less integrated than had been anticipated, which may have affected the career development outcomes of the participants.***

The intensity and level of integration of services provided to incumbent participants varied considerably across the partnerships, particularly in terms of the types and number of classes offered and the intensity of the coaching. The different coaching models, as well as the variation in the type and number of classes offered, challenge the evaluation team to make meaningful comparisons across the partnerships. One consistent finding, though, is that most of the partnerships implemented an approach to incumbent worker training and coaching that was focused on providing individual

services to participants rather than helping participants see a pathway of steps that could lead to advancement. Without the integration, the intensity of services was highly variable and may have limited participant outcomes, as was described in the outcomes section above. Further examination of participant-level service and outcome data in the future could help to illuminate the effects of program design on outcomes.

➤ ***Learning #2: Viable and meaningful career pathways are critical to participant engagement.***

Career pathways are in various stages of development in the partnerships' target industries. Regardless of the development stage, the importance of the pathways was evidenced in partnership experience. Where the pathways are informal and limited, participant engagement has been challenging. Where partnerships have been successful in articulating pathways, and participants have been well positioned in terms of skill levels, advancement has been feasible. IIB is an example of a partnership that has been able to match participant skills with advancement opportunities. Though many of the participants are very low skilled, course instruction, one-on-one coaching and supportive HR staff has resulted in job shadowing, cross-job experience, and eventual advancement.

Program Development

➤ ***Learning #1: Core system-wide metrics should be supplemented and/or refined to better reflect industry structure and unique participant mix.***

As the sector partnerships have evolved, it has become clear to partnership directors and the evaluation team that meaningful outcome metrics must take into consideration unique characteristics of each partnership's target industry. These additional metrics cannot replace the importance of consistent definitions for key indicators that are collected across all partnerships. However, neither can key indicators replace the more nuanced ways of understanding and measuring outcomes in each particular sector or industry. For example, PACE has wrestled with how to best measure wage increases in a way that respects SkillWorks common metrics and reflects common compensation practices in the automotive industry. While wage increases are important, knowing who is promoted to flat rate technician and when this happens, is a better measure of career advancement and overall success in the industry. PACE did not originally capture this data point and therefore has not been able to accurately measure this important advancement milestone.

Employer Engagement

➤ ***Learning #1: There is an inherent challenge in employers functioning as both partners and customers.***

It is common in workforce programs to talk about employers being partners. It is also common to hear employers described as one of the core customers of dual-customer initiatives. What is not discussed is the fact that there are competing priorities between these two roles, specifically what an employer can expect as a customer vs. what is expected of an employer as a partner.

The SkillWorks partnerships have witnessed a variety of employer engagement models—strategic advisors; strategic partners and business partners with business goals; and business customers with little to no role for employers to function as strategic partners. Each partnership has faced challenges and opportunities related to the structure that they have chosen. One consistent theme across all partnerships is that employers desire transparency in what is expected of them and what they can expect in return. Too often, in the hope of keeping employers engaged, partnerships are not clear

about what they hope employers will do for the partnership and for participants. Employers are asking for greater clarity.

➤ ***Learning #2: Simultaneously meeting the needs of employers and low skilled participants can be an elusive challenge with short lived success***

At the outset of the SkillWorks partnerships, there were stronger business reasons for employers to participate in the partnerships. The economy was tight and employers were seeking skilled entry-level workers, institutions were expanding and were seeking city and neighborhood support for their expansions, and policy changes were desired that the partnership and employers could rally together around.

As the years passed these external factors shifted and partnerships struggled to adapt quickly to these changes and continue to balance employer needs with participant skills. In the new economic environment, it is more difficult to find the “win” for employers which may impact their likelihood of financially supporting these programs after the completion of SkillWorks funding.

➤ ***Learning #3: The motivation for participation will affect an employer’s willingness to implement system changes.***

As has been described, employers engage with partnerships for a variety of reasons. When the reasons are not directly related to the job performance of those being trained, it will be more challenging to marshal their energy in support of the type of system changes necessary to engage participants and help improve their educational experience or work environment.

System Change

A substantial amount of progress has been made by the Initiative related to its system change goals. The capacity of the partnership lead agencies has been increased through SkillWorks capacity building resources and the funders’ approach to partnership management. Specifically, through resources invested in targeted technical assistance, strategic planning, communication (project director meetings), and data integration, organizations are better positioned to deliver workforce services than they were at the beginning of the Initiative.

Partner employers have made modest improvements in their human resource practices to increase their employees’ ability to advance. A couple of the most substantial changes include PCWD’s becoming a more integral part of the human resource approach of the entire Partners system and BSCPP and its union sponsors’ achievement of a groundbreaking bargaining agreement in 2007 that resulted in commercial employers agreeing to fund a joint union-management training fund supported by an hourly contribution that will provide ongoing support for educational activities for building services employees.

SkillWorks’ positive workforce system achievements were the infusion of resources into the system and the “Performance Standards and Accountability Task Force,” whose efforts ultimately transitioned to the reinvigorated Massachusetts Workforce Investment Board. Both of these achievements were advocated for by SkillWorks public policy grantee. Beyond these resources though, the structure of the system has not changed substantially since SkillWorks’ inception.

Organization of the Report

The remainder of this report is organized into eight chapters. Chapter 1 explains the methodology used to gather data, data interpretation, and insights about the SkillWorks implementation experience and impact. Chapters 2 through 7 provide profiles of Year 4 experience of each of the implementation partnerships, beginning with the three Round 1 partnerships, following with the two Round 2 partnerships, and ending with the one Round 3 partnership. Chapter 8 offers an examination of the public policy activities of Workforce Solutions Group during Year 4. Chapter 9 provides a more in-depth perspective on initiative-wide learnings from the first four years of the SkillWorks effort.

Chapter 1: Methodology

The evaluation team used three primary methods to gather data for this report: key informant interviews, participant data, and an employer survey.

Key Informant Interviews

Key informant interviews were conducted with partnership staff, a sampling of partner employers, SkillWorks staff, and members of the public policy grantee team. The interviews were generally an hour in length, though interviews with partnership staff ranged from 1–4 hours, depending on the number of staff members participating (e.g., coaches, instructors, those responsible for data management, etc.). Participant perspectives were gathered through participant interviews, a participant survey, or through coaches.

Participant Data

Participant data were collected by each partnership, entered into the partnership database, and then shared with the evaluation team. The evaluation team then reviewed the data and worked with partnership staff to clean data as needed to ensure consistency and accuracy. All data reported in this report were reviewed at the participant level to ensure no duplicate counts of outcomes.

Employer Survey

A formal employer survey was completed by CHW Initiative employers. The survey was originally implemented in support of the Return on Investment (ROI) study also being conducted on the CHW Initiative efforts. The data received back were so rich, though, with information about the employer and participant experience, that the data were incorporated into the overall evaluation.

Chapter 2: Health Care and Research Training Institute (Round 1 Grantee)

The Health Care and Research Training Institute (HCRTI) represents a partnership involving six health care-related employers and three community organizations. Led by the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation (JPNDC) and the Fenway Community Development Corporation, in collaboration with MissionWorks, the HCRTI partnership sought to institutionalize a sectoral career ladders project in health care focused on the Longwood Medical and Academic Area (LMA). Through an employment pipeline for residents that streamlined and simplified the recruiting and hiring process for health care employers, the goal was for partner employers to be able to access a well-qualified and trained entry-level workforce. Additionally, HCRTI has worked to establish itself as a permanent health care training center for LMA's existing entry-level workers.

Changes in Program Design, Activities, and Administration During Year 4²

Changes in Staffing, Administration, and/or Governance of the Partnership

Early in 2007, HCRTI staff were told by the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation and the Fenway Community Development Corporation that the CDCs would not be able to serve as institutional sponsor of the HCRTI going forward beyond 2007. Armed with this information, HCRTI staff spent most of the year seeking a new institutional host for the Institute. A set of criteria were established to assist in the search. The criteria included:

- An educational institution with an interest in as many of the Institute's major content areas as possible: healthcare, ESOL, workforce development
- Operationally sound organization: stable, good logistics, with available space
- Share HCRTI values about supporting low-income people in moving into family-supporting jobs
- Enthusiastic about what HCRTI would bring to its organization
- Potential for future growth
- Abreast of trends in the healthcare and workforce development fields

HCRTI staff investigated sponsorship opportunities with Ben Franklin Institute of Technology (BFIT) and Northeastern University, but neither resulted in a successful partnership.

Simultaneously with the search for a new institutional home, HCRTI staff were critically evaluating the healthcare business climate and employer demand for services. In Year 3 and early in Year 4, it became clear that the full slate of services previously offered by the Institute was no longer in demand by employers, particularly pre-employment placements, pre-college courses, college courses, and extensive career coaching. The hospitals had begun to provide many of these services themselves or felt that there were other better solutions available through directly partnering with educational

² Much of the information in this section was taken from the HCRTI/JVS Continuation Proposal submitted to SkillWorks in January 2008.

providers. The shift in employer demand was driven by a few reasons, each documented in the HCRTI/JVS continuation proposal. These reasons include a decreased “need for the entry-level employees provided by the pre-employment program,” “shortcomings in the relationships with partners and the quality of services—(including) below-par services from community colleges with whom (the Institute) contracted for instruction,” and a “diminished need for the political advantages of partnership with the Institute.”³ Ultimately, the main area where there was continued support for HCRTI courses was in the area of providing contextualized ESOL courses for incumbents.

There was a significant downsizing of HCRTI staff throughout Year 4. Due to diminished employer support for HCRTI’s Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund Proposal, the proposal was not funded, which led to further staff cutbacks. The Operations Manager/Database Administrator left and could not be replaced for budgetary reasons; the training manager went on maternity leave; two career coaches were laid off; and one employment specialist was reassigned to career coaching.

In fall 2007, after unsuccessful conversations with BFIT and Northeastern University, HCRTI staff began talking with staff at Jewish Vocational Services (JVS). JVS has a history of providing workforce courses and coaching in the healthcare field. It also had experience with sectoral initiatives and industry partnerships. A sampling of its healthcare competencies include:

- Assisting employees in medical and administrative positions
- Working directly for employers
- Providing career coaching
- Designing and providing Medical Terminology courses
- Designing and providing ESOL courses 1–5
- Designing and providing pre-college courses
- Designing and providing pre-employment training programs

In late fall, JVS and HCRTI jointly applied to SkillWorks for continuation funding. Ultimately, the funding was granted to cover the transition and to provide career coaching to participants enrolled in employer-funded contextualized ESOL courses to be offered in spring 2008. With SkillWorks support, HCRTI’s programs, services, and clients transferred over to JVS in January 2008 and were rebranded the “Healthcare Training Institute.” JVS’s goals for the January through July 2008 timeframe include:

- Stabilizing program services and providing continuity for participants and employers, primarily through the delivery of high quality contextualized ESOL
- Carrying forward the Institute’s program capital and assets and continuing its brand awareness for LMA employers, residents and investors in a new merged entity
- Revitalizing and expanding employer partnerships
- Moving the program toward scale and sustainability

³ At the time of HCRTI’s development, many of the hospitals in the LMA were expanding their facilities. Some of the development plans’ approvals were contingent upon community investment, for which HCRTI qualified. Other hospitals were seeking to invest in the surrounding neighborhoods, not as a requirement, but as a good-faith effort to ensure that the hospitals were a benefit to the community. Either way, this incentive diminished as facility expansions were completed.

Major Changes in Services and/or Course Content

The courses offered by the Institute in 2007 were a pared-down set of courses, similar to previous years. For pre-employment, only one course was offered in 2007, in the spring. The course was an enhanced version of a course taught in previous years; it was more focused, providing specialized tracks in Central Processing/Central Sterile Supply, Animal Laboratory Technician, and Food/Environmental Services/Patient Transport. All of the participants studied together for the first five weeks. After this general course, the different tracks broke off and received specialized instruction and internships.

Incumbent courses in 2007 were streamlined and simplified. Table 2.1 presents the courses that were offered in 2007. In addition to these courses, Surg Tech and Nursing students took classes offered at a community college rather than by the Institute.

Career coaching for incumbent participants continued to narrow in Year 4. HCRTI coaching was diminished as more employers brought coaching in-house. In Year 3, three HCRTI coaches were providing coaching to participants at five of the six employer partners. In Year 4, two HCRTI coaches provided coaching to subsets of employees at four of the six employer partners. Forty-one participants were documented as having been coached in 2007 by HCRTI career coaches. This is only 18 percent of total enrollment.

Computer (1-111)
ESOL (1-1V)
ESOL Literacy
Effective Communication
Pre College English 090
Pre College English 095
Fundamentals of Algebra 207
Fundamentals of Math 207
Pre College Math 090
Pre College Math 095

Looking forward to 2008, only contextualized ESOL courses will be offered in the spring. Additional courses may be offered in the fall, depending on the findings of JVS's current planning process. In addition, JVS is now conducting planning around college transitions as the focus for pre-employment services under the Healthcare Training Institute. Services that result from this planning process will be implemented in fall 2008.

Who Is the Project Serving?

All HCRTI data in this report relate solely to participants who were active in 2007 (Year 4).⁴ Participants who enrolled in previous years and were active in Year 4 represented a variety of experiences with the Institute. A few participants were consistently active since enrollment, taking courses and participating in career coaching on an ongoing basis. Other participants had periodically

⁴ In previous years, SkillWorks funders decided that all partnerships would report program activities and outcomes in the aggregate, leaving no way for the evaluation team to verify the accuracy of data. For the current report, HCRTI staff provided the evaluation team with access to the HCRTI database. The database review revealed a number of duplicate records, participants with missing enrollment years, and inconsistent data for participants who enrolled in Years 1–3 (e.g., a participant may have a termination date but then updated employment information for the same employer). In order to balance the burden of data cleaning on staff and the need for accurate evaluation data, a compromise was reached—HCRTI staff verified and completed the data for all participants active in 2007; and participant data for inactive Year 1, 2, and 3 enrollees is not presented in the evaluation since the data could not be validated. This means that the participant data listed from cohorts in Years 1–3 represent only a fraction of those who actually enrolled in those years because only those active in Year 4 are included.

enrolled in classes since their enrollment dates and may have completed a course and/or worked with a coach in 2007.

Has the Project Met its Enrollment Goals?

Year 4 enrollment data are presented in Table 2.2, along with a count of previously enrolled individuals who continued to be active in Year 4.

	Year 1 Cohort	Year 2 Cohort	Year 3 Cohort	Year 4 Cohort	Total
Pre-employment*	1	2	3	17	23
Incumbent	29	34	71	92	226
Active Pre-employment and Incumbent Participants in Year 4					249

*Four pre-employment participants who enrolled in previous years continued to be active with HCRTI in Year 4, taking advantage of incumbent services.

HCRTI did not meet its enrollment goals for the pre-employment or incumbent programs in Year 4. For pre-employment,

the enrollment goal was 130 participants – 40 in pre-employment training and 90 receiving walk-in job-placement services. The actual enrollment total of 17 in pre-employment training fell well short of the 40-participant target, and walk in services generally were not provided in year 4.

While the incumbent courses enrolled many more participants in Year 4 (92), they also missed their target of 317 by a considerable amount. The lower than expected enrollment figures for incumbent services was due to a number of factors, a main factor was the shift in focus from recruiting new participants to maintenance of services in light of the transition to a new sponsor organization. Additionally, for both pre-employment and incumbent workers, a more limited slate of course offerings, as well as diminished staffing to help with outreach and recruitment, may likely have contributed to the diminished enrollment totals.

Is the Project Serving the Targeted Population?

Tables 2.3 and 2.4 illustrate that HCRTI was successful in serving the SkillWorks target population—low-skilled, low-income Boston residents.

In Year 4, 100 percent of pre-employment participants and 60 percent of incumbent participants were Boston residents.

About 60 percent of both pre-employment and incumbent participants have a high school diploma or less, indicating that HCRTI is indeed serving a low-skilled population. Additionally, 59 percent of pre-employment participants and 71 percent of incumbent participants speak a primary language other than English.

Eighty-five percent of pre-employment participants earn less than \$24,999 at enrollment. Incumbent participants earn slightly more at enrollment—only 25 percent earn less than \$24,999, but an additional 55 percent earn between \$25,000 and \$39,999.

	Year 1 Cohort		Year 2 Cohort		Year 3 Cohort		Year 4 Cohort	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Enrollment								
Total number enrolled	1		2		3		17	
Primary language								
English	1	100%	0	0%	2	67%	7	41%
Not English	0	0%	2	100%	1	33%	10	59%
Total	1	100%	2	100%	3	100%	17	100%
Missing	0		0		0		0	
Boston								
Yes, Boston resident	1	100%	1	50%	3	100%	16	100%
No, not Boston resident	0	0%	1	50%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	1	100%	2	100%	3	100%	16	100%
Missing	0		0		0		1	
Highest educational level and certification at enrollment								
Neither GED or high school diploma	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	8	47%
GED certificate or high school diploma	1	100%	1	50%	1	33%	2	12%
Some post-secondary course work	0	0%	1	50%	2	67%	7	41%
Received post-secondary degree	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	1	100%	2	100%	3	100%	17	100%
Missing	0		0		0		0	
Annual household income								
Under \$10,000	0	0%	0	0%	1	100%	9	75%
Between \$10,000 and \$24,999	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	17%
Between \$25,000 and 39,999	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%	1	8%
Over \$40,000	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	0	0%	1	100%	1	100%	12	100%
Missing	1		1		2		5	

	Year 1 Cohort		Year 2 Cohort		Year 3 Cohort		Year 4 Cohort	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Enrollment								
Total number enrolled	29		34		71		92	
Primary language								
English	6	21%	10	29%	30	43%	27	29%
Not English	23	79%	24	71%	40	57%	65	71%
Total	29	100%	34	100%	70	100%	92	100%
Missing	0		0		1		0	
Boston								
Yes, Boston resident	16	55%	16	47%	56	88%	55	60%
No, not Boston resident	13	45%	18	53%	8	13%	37	40%
Total	29	100%	34	100%	64	100%	92	100%
Missing	0		0		7		0	
Highest educational level and certification at enrollment								
Neither GED or high school diploma	10	34%	11	32%	24	34%	27	30%
GED certificate or high school diploma	8	28%	10	29%	23	32%	25	27%
Some post-secondary course work	8	28%	11	32%	17	24%	22	24%
Received post-secondary degree	3	10%	2	6%	7	10%	17	19%
Total	29	100%	34	100%	71	100%	91	100%
Missing	0		0		0		1	
Annual household income								
Under \$10,000	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%
Between \$10,000 and \$24,999	3	17%	7	44%	8	33%	17	24%
Between \$25,000 and 39,999	13	72%	6	38%	10	42%	39	55%
Over \$40,000	2	11%	3	19%	6	25%	14	20%
Total	18	100%	16	100%	24	100%	71	100%
Missing	11		18		47		21	

Participant Outcomes

Employment Outcomes For Pre-Employment Participants

The Year 4 pre-employment course was offered in spring 2007; it had 19 enrollees. Twelve of these individuals were employed at enrollment, 6 in full-time jobs and 4 in part-time jobs. At graduation, 16 of the enrollees graduated and 11 were placed (Table 2.5).

	#	% of Enrolled
Enrolled*	19	100.0%
Graduated	16	84.2%
Placed**	11	57.9%

*Two of the individuals who enrolled in the Pre-Employment training in 2007 had previously enrolled at the Institute as Pre-employment participants; one in the Year 2 cohort and one in the Year 3 cohort.
 **One additional person was placed in a non-industry job.

The 11 pre-employment graduates were placed in a range of employment scenarios, with varying levels of permanency, access to benefits, and work hours. Table 2.6 documents these scenarios.

Forty-four percent of graduates were placed with employer partners. Nine of the 11 were placed in full-time positions. Seventy-three percent (8) of placed participants were placed in permanent positions with access to employer benefits. At the end of Year 4, 82 percent of those placed in Year 4 were still employed.

	Initial Placements	
	Placed in Jobs	% of Graduates
Placed with partner employers	7	43.8%
Full-time jobs (at least 30 hrs/week)	5	71.4%
Part-time jobs	2	28.6%
Permanent positions	4	57.1%
With benefits	4	57.1%
Placed with non-partner employers	4	25.0%
Full-time jobs (at least 30 hrs/week)	4	100.0%
Part-time jobs	0	0.0%
Permanent positions	4	100.0%
With benefits	4	100.0%
Total	11	68.8%

An additional participant placement outcome is that three of the nine placed in full-time positions had been working in part-time positions at enrollment.

The average placement wage for pre-employment participants was \$13.19. It's interesting to note that all of the participants who graduated from the pre-employment program and were placed in Year 4 had been employed at the time of enrollment. As a group these graduates experienced an average increase of \$3.42/hour.

Pre-employment participants active in Year 4 did achieve a few educational advances. These include participants completing a series of courses, a listing of which is presented in Table 2.7.

	# Enrolled	# Graduated	Unknown
PE ESOL 107	5	4	1
PE ESOL 205	1	1	0
ESOL II	1		0
P206	1	0	1
Reading/Writing Non-Native Speakers	1	1	0
English 090-107	1	1	0
Pre College English 095	1	1	0
Pre College Math 090	1	0	0
Fundamentals of Math 207	1	1	0
Computer II	1	1	0
Computer III	1	1	0

Additionally, *four participants passed their initial Central Processing Examination* (all four are now studying for their licensure exam); two previous pre-employment graduates enrolled in pre-college courses; and one came back for pre-employment after having taken PE ESOL.

Employment Outcomes for Incumbent Workers

Ninety percent of those active in 2007 were still employed in December 2007. Excluded from this calculation are those individuals for whom employment status was not provided by the partnership or the employer (approximately 15 percent of those active in 2007).

	Year 1 Cohort	Year 2 Cohort	Year 3 Cohort*	Year 4 Cohort	Total
Total participants enrolled	29	34	71	92	226
Participants still employed at initial employer partner	25	25	30	82	172**
% of participants still employed at initial employer partner	86%	74%	81%	89%	90%

* There were 34 participants enrolled in the Math & Science program or the Surg Tech program for which there was no initial or follow-up employment information.
 **Data received from one employer partner were aggregated, so they could not be broken out by cohort (12 participants, 10 are still employed).

In Year 4, 136 participants (79 percent of still-employed incumbents) received a wage increase. Of these increases, 15 percent were merit related. The remaining 85 percent were cost of living or standard wage increases. Additionally, a couple of employers have a cash award/spot-bonus system for merit rewards that are not captured in payroll numbers provided to HCRTI.

Sixteen promotions were achieved in 2007 by HCRTI participants, nearly 10 percent of still-employed incumbents.

N=174	Wage Increases	% of Still-Employed Incumbents	Promotions*	% of Still-Employed Incumbents
Total	136	79.1%	16	9.3%
Verified merit-related achievement	27	15.7%	16	9.3%

*All promotions are assumed to be merit-related

Skill Enhancement Outcomes

Of those active in 2007, 28 participants have while still in the program enrolled in training or college programs, beyond the courses offered by HCRTI (Table 2.10). Fourteen active participants enrolled in a college Surg Tech program and seven enrolled in a college nursing program through HCRTI. These enrollment numbers are similar to the number reported in the Year 3 evaluation report, indicating that there was little attrition in these programs in Year 4.

	Number of Participants Who Have Realized Skill Enhancement Outcomes			
	Year 1 Cohort	Year 2 Cohort	Year 3 Cohort	Year 4 Cohort
Enrollment				
Entered college	1	8	13	4
Enrolled in credentialed program	0	0	0	0
Enrolled in sector-specific training	0	0	2	0
Completion				
Graduated from college	0	0	0	0
Received Industry-recognized credential	0	0	0	0
Completed sector-specific training	0	0	0	0
*Data in this table reflect outcomes that the partnership was able to verify. It is likely an underreporting of outcomes because coaches have not remained in contact with all participants.				

Additionally, five participants enrolled in college and two participants enrolled in a sector-specific training (medical billing and coding; early childhood education).

While there were no degrees, certifications, or completed trainings documented during Year 4, this may or may not mean that none were received. As the number of individuals who actually received HCRTI coaching diminished, the documentation of accomplishments was also diminished.

Employer Outcomes⁵

Initial Employer Participation Goals

Employer partners' primary goal for participating with HCRTI was their desire to provide incumbent employees with a resource for improving their skills and advancing within their institutions. Additional goals included developing a direct pipeline between Boston community residents and entry-level positions, increasing the employer's ability to promote from within, and improving the community perceptions of the employer.

The following section describes the outcomes accomplished by and for employer partners. The discussion is based on employers' perception of what has been achieved. In discussing their perceived accomplishments and goal achievement it should be noted that employer partners had significantly more limited expectations relative to the SkillWorks Initiative's broader aims for its employer partners. Whereas there was mutual agreement on the goals of building a pipeline between neighborhood residents and employers and increasing employers' ability to promote from within, SkillWorks's expected outcomes also included increased incumbent productivity, increased employer ability to fill hard-to-fill occupations, and enhancement of the employers' permanent workforce development and human resource policies. While the employers understood that these were goals of the Initiative, employers did not perceive these to be reasonable goals based on the HCRTI program intervention and engagement with their employees.

⁵ As part of the evaluation process, an employer focus group was held with three of the key employer partners. Additionally, an interview was held with another partner who could not participate in the focus group. Information gathered from these employer interactions, as well as information provided by HCRTI staff, form the basis of information in the following section.

Because employers did not have the goal of increasing productivity, improving their ability to fill hard-to-fill occupations, or changing workforce development or human resource capabilities, it should not be surprising that they have had a hard time measuring any changes in these areas and that significant change did not occur.

Outcomes

The employers were asked to comment on whether accomplishments were achieved by participants and/or the employer in each of the outcome areas over the four years they had participated with the Institute. In each outcome area, employers acknowledged small achievements. Specifically, they stated that significant changes were seen in a small number of participants' lives and workplace performance. However, the employers also described ways that HCRTI's influence on their employees was less than expected.

Overall Increases in Incumbent Skills

Interviewed employers had mixed opinions about whether the primary goal of incumbent skill building and advancement was achieved. One said yes—"through the Training Institute, we have been able to offer to our employees the ability to improve their English and math skills. These skills are necessary to advance their careers." Most of the employers acknowledged that there was some success in employee skill building, but that they wished the scale had been larger. The employers also said that they were often unsure of actual skill improvements because they were never able to access data from the Institute on participants' pre and post test scores, nor achievement of career goals through career coaching.

Improvements in Performance or Productivity

Employers did not intentionally measure changes in performance or productivity resulting from participation in HCRTI training or coaching. Anecdotally, a few employers interpreted the fact that supervisors consistently encouraged their staff to take classes through HCRTI as evidence that the curriculum was valuable in improving performance; supervisors would not have approved participation otherwise. Supervisors at one employer also provided feedback to management that participants gained confidence as a result of HCRTI participation, which resulted in performance improvements.

Other employers felt uncomfortable saying that participation in HCRTI courses and coaching resulted in improved employee performance and productivity. The employers discussed the fact that employees taking ESOL courses continue to make slow progress in increasing their language skills; for this population of participants, which is often the largest, no significant performance and/or productivity increases have been noted. Additionally, employers stated that employees were inappropriately enrolled in pre-college courses without basic foundational skills, resulting in course failures, and that employees took skill-building courses that were not necessarily related to their work responsibilities. Ultimately, it is the employers' hope that the investments in employees' skill development will result in increased productivity, but it will likely require better targeting of program resources.

Increased Retention of Workers

Employers were unable to verify a direct link between employee retention and HCRTI participation, but employers did say that employees have a sense of gratitude that their employers provide release time and/or support for their participation. One employer said "HCRTI participation provided an

opportunity to engage our entry-level staff in professional development curriculum. Although no official data were collected, we know that it had added value and was viewed as a benefit by our employees.” Ultimately, however, it is difficult to document the extent to which the program contributed to employees’ decision to stay in their position.

A couple of employers saw a diminished link between HCRTI and job retention because they believed that employees did not necessarily understand the link between their classes at the Institute and their employer’s role in making them available. In fact, this reality is part of the reason employers want to bring the services/courses in-house, so that employees better understand employers’ commitment to and investment in their professional development.

Improved Access to Entry-Level Workers

Employers perceive that there was limited success in improving access to entry-level workers from the surrounding neighborhoods. Employers said that a few HCRTI pre-employment participants interned at the hospitals and smaller percentage of those who interned were hired. Unfortunately, the partner employers had hoped for more trainees from the target neighborhoods, larger numbers of graduates, and more prepared candidates—most of the pre-employment participants did not meet the hospital qualification requirements.

Ability to Fill Critical Occupational Positions

Employers interviewed clearly stated that filling critical occupational positions was not one of their objectives in participating with HCRTI. Employers believed, from the start, that the employees targeted to receive incumbent services were not the individuals who would help fill open nursing positions and other critical vacancies.

That being said, Children’s Hospital did say that it will have three incumbent employees graduate from the Surg Tech training program in 2008. These individuals will move into an area of critical need for the hospital and are seen as a fruitful return on the hospital’s HCRTI investment.

Improved Ability to Promote from Within

Employers have seen a small but real increase in their ability to promote from within. Some specific examples from the 16 promotions seen in 2007 were from a nursing assistant to an in-patient clinical assistant and from a data transactor to a revenue control representative.

Improved Community Relations

Employers agree that they have built new and sustainable relationships with learning partners and CBOs as a result of their HCRTI participation. One employer explained that they would not have understood the Community Development Corporation (CDC) culture and known of CDC organizations without participating. Now, this employer uses the CDCs as another recruiting tool for entry-level workers. For another employer, the HCRTI partnership connected the employer with a local community college that is helping to provide industry-specific instruction. All of the employers expect their relationships with the CDCs to continue despite changes in relationships with HCRTI.

System Change Outcomes

Enhanced Capacity of Service Providers

HCRTI was the main provider of service to program participants in Year 4, and there were improvements in the way it provided pre-employment services, despite its uncertain future. In the pre-employment program, HCRTI offered a more integrated training approach and improved the implementation of program tracks. HCRTI staff were more selective in the admissions process and made sure that students were committed to their chosen tracks. The revised program resulted in an 84 percent graduation rate and a 69 percent placement rate (the five unplaced individuals were limited by low English skills, sickness, and the lack of job openings in the desired department at a given institution). Though HCRTI is not providing services in 2008, the insights gathered by the HCRTI staff have been transferred to JVS through the files and program materials.

Additionally, the CDCs that sponsored HCRTI, Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation (JPND) and Fenway CDC, also experienced enhanced capacity over the four years of their involvement with the Initiative. One of the key capacities built was around partnership formation. As a result of the HCRTI partnership, the CDCs now have a better sense of how to structure the partnerships, particularly not trying to share leadership between two organizations; how to interact as partners; and how to get work done. This is particularly important as funding is reduced from grant makers and strategic alliances become more attractive.

Another increased CDC capacity is around employer engagement. The depth of the employer relationships with HCRTI was unique. After the experience, CDC staff feel more confident about building future employer relationships, knowing what demands upon the employers and upon themselves are reasonable.

Changes in Employer Practices

Feedback from employer partners suggests that changes in employer practices (e.g., workforce development capabilities, investment in career advancement for workers, and improvements in human resource policies) resulting from the HCRTI partnership have been relatively few. However it is important to note that when the Institute began, most of the hospitals were not providing workforce development services to their entry-level staff. The HCRTI services helped to fill a gap in service for a population that would not be served by the existing training and/or workforce services provided by employers. Since that time, most of the employer partners have increased their internal workforce development staffing to such a degree that they are now providing in house some of the services previously only provided by the Institute.

In Year 4, one hospital hired its first director of workforce development. This new position indicates the institution's evolving commitment to developing incumbent staff and creating strong partnerships with community agencies. Another employer launched a new pipeline program to train employees to become Medical Laboratory Technicians and launched a program to help employees develop a career goal, assess their current academic skills, and take pre-college courses and prerequisite courses on site. The program goal is to encourage employees to pursue careers in allied health. In previous years, this employer has added four other pipeline programs and begun to provide coaching services in house.

There is general consensus among employer partners that they learned through observation of the Institute. Based on this observation, each partner has decided which program elements to incorporate into its existing training and workforce development services, and which services to provide through subcontractors, such as JVS. Regardless of the specific structural decisions, all partners have revised their workforce development offerings to integrate some level of coaching and developmental coursework.

Changes in Human Resource policies have been more limited, though some have occurred. As has been reported in previous reports, one partner revised the amount of tuition reimbursement available to employees and the timing of payment—prepayment directly to the college or institution is now available. In Year 4, the most significant HR policy change is one that has not yet been made: one employer partner has recognized the need to clarify its release time policy so that more employees can take advantage of ESOL courses. With a clearer understanding of the importance of ESOL courses to entry-level workers, the employer is committed to identifying the best solution to increasing employee access to the courses.

Increased Employer Engagement in the Initiative

In 2007, HCRTI staff worked at various levels to increase employer engagement. Career coaching staff worked diligently to build relationships with a number of new supervisors and departments in order to expand the reach of incumbent classes in partner institutions. This resulted in more engaged supervisors, willing to talk with their staff about career planning, and new participant enrollees.

HCRTI and JVS staff also worked together to reengage employer partners, listening to the employer partners' needs and revising the HCRTI course offerings to reflect employer requests. All six employer partners were willing to remain engaged at some level with JVS in 2008, though the commitments ranged from paying for a number of ESOL seats in the spring courses to a willingness to discuss opportunities in the future. It should be noted that while employers have sustained their interest in partnering with HCRTI, the scope of the initiative and their corresponding financial contributions have decreased substantially for year five, in part due to the changing nature of the partnership.

Impacts on the Healthcare Sector

Most major hospitals in Boston have been touched by HCRTI. While the outcomes of the Institute have not been as significant as was originally hoped, hospitals learned significant lessons about how to deliver sector-based workforce development training to the lowest skilled, currently employed individuals. These lessons include realistically acknowledging the time and commitment involved in helping a low-skilled worker move to a higher paying position; understanding the barriers faced by low-skilled workers, including limited time availability, English limitations, and fear of the formal educational system; the need for concrete and transparent career paths; the critical nature of career coaching to ongoing participant engagement; and employers' desire to control as much of the coaching and training process as possible to ensure quality and understanding of employee outcomes.

Employers are accepting the responsibility for providing meaningful career advancement opportunities for their employees, while simultaneously grappling with how to provide the services most effectively and inexpensively. The Institute provided a learning environment where the employers could understand employee needs, observe strategies being implemented, and decide for

themselves which elements of the Institute are most appropriate for outside contractors to provide and which are best supplied in-house within the healthcare institutions.

Impacts Related to Public Policy

Although HCRTI encouraged employers to advocate for workforce issues, they are highly sophisticated advocates on their own behalf. No specific impacts related to public policy are attributable to HCRTI's work.

Key Learnings/Implications for Partnership Selection in Phase 2

Employer as Partner vs. Employer as Customer

Lesson Learned: Early in partnership development, the role of the employer must be clearly defined by answering two questions: what can the employer expect as a customer of a training program? and, what is expected from an employer as a key partner in a larger partnership?

HCRTI Experience: The employer role in the HCRTI partnership was never fully agreed upon by staff and employers. HCRTI employers have expressed that they periodically felt pushed to support elements of the program that did not fit their needs or goals. One example of this is the hiring process for pre-employment graduates. Employers were generally dissatisfied with the quality of graduates being referred by HCRTI and the fact that graduates did not live in the employers' target neighborhoods. These two factors added up to a situation where the employers, as customers, did not want to hire what they considered to be poor employment candidates, and where they felt pressured by HCRTI staff to hire "their share" of graduates. Staff implied that it was their duty as partners to contribute to the success of the program by hiring program participants. Ultimately, all parties have agreed that there must be a better match between pre-employment participant skills and employer needs.

Another example of conflict between employers' partner/customer roles was in the type of feedback HCRTI provided to employers about employees' progress in courses and career coaching. Employers wanted data from HCRTI that would allow them to better understand what they were buying in terms of services and whether or not the work they were funding was making a difference to their employees. The Institute was never able to fully provide this information.

Career Coaching

Lesson Learned: Career coaches must do much more than outreach and case management during courses if coaching is to be effective at guiding participants to advancement.

HCRTI Experience: HCRTI's incumbent career coaches spent the majority of their time enrolling participants in courses, monitoring their participation, and ensuring that as many barriers as possible were removed so that participants could complete courses. This is all valuable and vital work. However, it stopped short of being in-depth career coaching, where career goals are established,

career pathways/maps are evaluated, short- and long-term goals are established, and viable action steps are developed.⁶

The result of HCRTI's approach to coaching was that coaching achieved what it was designed to achieve—fill training courses and ensure that participants complete them. It did not achieve other Initiative goals, such as tracking participants' educational progress, understanding participants' career movements and opportunities, and creatively thinking about training options to reach participant goals. It is true that the coaches were limited by the low skill levels of participants and the lack of bridge programs to help low-skilled individuals prepare for certificate and college programs. However, one would expect that over four years, program development could have adapted to address participants' career goals if the coaches had been gathering and tracking this information.

Through the HCRTI experience, hospital partners have realized that coaching is critical to advancement. They have also left the experience with the belief that they can do the coaching better in house because they will have access to the participant data, have an understanding of hospital career paths, are able to ensure regular follow-up, and will have accountability for staff to ensure that the coaching is being done effectively and as expected.

Employers Remain Committed, Despite Limited Outcomes

Lesson Learned: Despite the inherent challenges, employers are not abandoning the effort to support and train low-skilled employees.

HCRTI Experience: In the four years of implementation, HCRTI has served over a thousand participants, resulting in improvements in the lives of those who have participated. However, the improvements have not been as significant as had been hoped: employees have advanced from one level of ESOL to another, or from getting a GED to completing pre-college courses, rather than from ESOL to pre-college work or from pre-college to associate's degree. Employer outcomes have also been tangible but limited. Individual supervisors have seen improved performance and productivity but HR representatives have seen only limited changes in employee turnover, advancements, and changes in community perceptions.

Despite these modest outcomes, employers are continuing to seek solutions to help low-skilled workers advance. Rather than turning away from the Institute in frustration, the employers have been analyzing what they have learned from their participation and how this knowledge can be used to design even more effective programs. A key employer learning was that employees have many more barriers than anticipated. In light of these barriers, employers are experimenting with pipeline programs, bridge programs, and expanded coaching services.

⁶ System-wide career maps were developed by HCRTI at the outset of the initiative but were never effectively utilized by career coaches. In follow-up interviews with employers, the evaluators asked whether the maps had been used by employers to understand viable career pathways for employees or in the coaching employers offered in-house and the employers said no.

Chapter 3: International Institute of Boston and the Hospitality Career Center (Round 1 Grantee)

The partnership between the International Institute of Boston (IIB), the Hilton Hotel Corporation, and the Massachusetts Lodging Association Education Foundation is intended to help low-income immigrants move towards economic self-sufficiency, while at the same time helping Hilton Hotels train and retain high-performing employees. The partnership accomplishes this by providing training, placement and career coaching to Hospitality Training Program participants and job-specific language and computer skills training and intensive career coaching to incumbent employees. The focused career coaching helps participants develop and pursue short- and long-term career goals.

Pre-employment graduates of the Hospitality Training Program (HTP) are placed in positions with growth potential at both partner and non-partner hotels. Hilton hotels are IIB's priority location for placing participants due to Hilton employees' ability to access incumbent services through HCC; however, if positions are not available at Hilton, IIB places participants in other hotels in the Boston area. Incumbent Hilton employees enroll in the Hotel Career Center (HCC) in order to perform better in their current job, increase their ability to be promoted, and increase their earning potential.⁷

Changes in Program Design, Activities, and Administration During Year 4

Changes in Staffing, Administration, and/or Governance of the Partnership

Hospitality Career Institute

In 2007, IIB jointly submitted an application to the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund with Jewish Vocational Services (JVS) to create the Hospitality Career Institute (HCI). Their proposal was funded and HCI has begun operations, working with six major hospitality employers.⁸ HCI is implementing a program to provide a continuum of pre-employment and career development services for hospitality employers and their entry-level workers. Services, delivered at the workplace, are designed to help employees climb career paths and will include ESOL, math and computer skills, career coaching, and supervisory skills.

Prior to the grant, IIB and JVS both ran successful pre-employment and incumbent programs in the hospitality industry, with IIB largely focused on the lodging side of the industry and JVS focused on the culinary. By merging their efforts, a clearer process for cross-referrals was established and funding was secured to provide incumbent services at new locations in Greater Boston. Incumbent services, including training and limited career coaching, are being provided at partner properties, most of which had strong relationships with JVS and/or IIB through the pre-employment training programs and positive experience hiring graduates. JVS and IIB have divided the providers between

⁷ The complete partnership is called the Hotel Career Center, as are the services directed toward incumbent workers. To avoid confusion, the phrase Hotel Career Center (HCC) will almost exclusively be used to refer to the incumbent component rather than the entire program.

⁸ Hilton is not a formal partner in the Hospitality Career Institute, though it does participate in the Employer Advisory Committee.

them, with one organization providing services to all property employees regardless of whether they work in lodging or culinary positions. IIB is providing services at the Charles Hotel and the Residence Inn by Marriott, two properties that participated previously with HTP as job shadowing sites. JVS is providing similar services at the Seaport Hotel, Radisson Hotel, and the Boston Convention Center.

The main benefit of adding the Hospitality Career Institute to IIB's service offerings is that it expands the number of properties where placed HTP graduates can access incumbent services.

Employer Advisory Committee

A joint Employer Advisory Committee to advise IIB on both the HCC and HCI programs was created in 2007. During the first few meetings, employers were introduced to the joint structure and asked to participate in a facilitated discussion on the gaps in available skills among employers and potential new hires.

Pre-employment Employer Partners

A framework for understanding employers' level of support for HTP students and graduates was solidified in 2007. Three levels of support have been articulated:

- Level One: Employment opportunities are available for participants and some level of preferential interviewing is offered to HTP graduates.
- Level Two: Level One services are provided plus the employer will provide hotel tours for HTP students during the HTP course.
- Level Three: Level One and Two services are provided plus the employer will provide 2-week job shadowing positions for program graduates.

There are 28 Level One employers, 20 Level Two employers, including the Boston Park Plaza Hotel and Towers, the Four Seasons Hotel, the Westin Copley Hotel and the InterContinental Hotel, and 8 Level Three partners, including 3 Hilton properties and 2 HCI partners.

Major Changes in Services and/or Course Content

Changes to the HTP program offerings in 2007 revolved around increasing services/opportunities for participants after graduation and placement. HTP graduates were invited to attend a series of workshops in the early spring. One of the workshops focused on career ladders and was presented by the Massachusetts Lodging Association; another focused on higher education opportunities and included a visit to the TERI Center at the Boston Public Library where students could access resources about higher education and meet with an education counselor.

HTP staff also recruited program graduates for an English for Advancement (EFA) class offered at IIB and the Front Office Training (FOT) program which was offered part-time in the evenings rather than full-time during the day. The EFA class met twice a week for 1.5 hours and ran for 8 weeks, and the FOT program met twice a week for 3 hours for 14 weeks. The EFA class was geared towards Low Advanced Level ESOL learners and focused on enhancing their writing skills and improving their ability to interact verbally in a professional/academic environment. The FOT class was designed for clients currently working in the hospitality industry or with hospitality experience, strong English skills, and a desire to work in positions that require more interaction with guests. Eleven individuals

enrolled in the course, ten from the HCC and HTP programs. The graduation rate was 91 percent, indicating participants' interest in the course and commitment to advancing.

The Hotel Career Center staff has continued to modify the content of courses offered at each property on a cycle by cycle basis to respond to employer and employee needs. In Year 4, computer courses were in higher demand so at least one computer class was offered at each property in each cycle. In Year 5, Hilton has asked for more advanced courses, targeting those who have progressed beyond the skill level of previous EFA courses and those who never participated because they were too highly skilled for the basic skill courses. Year 5 computer courses are more focused on email communication and the EFA courses have been redesigned to focus on writing.

The supervisory training that was piloted in Year 3 was not offered in Year 4. While the class had been well received by participants, the standardized test proved to be more difficult than anticipated. It requires high reading and comprehension skills. Although tutoring was offered to participants taking the test, most failed, which indicated that this class was not a good fit for current HCC participants. Instead of offering the course, HCC participants who have been promoted to supervisory positions are encouraged to participate in the Hilton Supervisory Training.

Table 3.1: IIB's 2007 HTP and HCC Courses

	Incumbent		Pre-Employment	
	# Enrolled	# Graduated	# Enrolled	# Graduated
HTP Course	0	0	44	44
English For Advancement	34	28	4	4
Computer class	31	28	0	0
IIB Front Office Training	5	5	5	4
Resume Workshop	7	7	0	0
Career Ladder Workshop	16	16	0	0

Who is the Project Serving?

Has the Project Met its Enrollment Goals?

IIB was on target with its enrollment activities in 2007 (Table 3.2). Though the 44 HTP enrollments fell slightly short of the projected target (48), HCC actually exceeded its goal (34 vs. 30).

Table 3.2: Total Enrollments

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
	Cohort	Cohort	Cohort	Cohort	
Pre-employment*	52	52	50	44	198
Incumbent	31	83	31	34	179
Four-year total for pre-employment and incumbents					377

Is the Project Serving the Targeted Population?

The IIB has continued to attract and serve its own primary target population comprised of low-income individuals who are recent immigrants to this country. However, it has experienced less success in enrolling Boston residents, which is an explicit target priority of SkillWorks. Serving Boston residents has always been a challenge for HTP and HCC because they can not (and philosophically will not) choose to exclude immigrant clients from services because of where they live. That being said, there has been some improvement in the percentage of HTP clients who reside in Boston over the four program years (Tables 3.3 and 3.4). In Year 4, 73 percent of HTP enrollees were Boston residents. This is up from 50 percent in Year 1. HCC's resident ratio has actually decreased, with only

35 percent of Year 4 enrollees being Boston residents. Overall, across all four years, 50 percent of HCC’s participants have been Boston residents.

HTP Year 4 enrollees are a slightly different group than in years past. IIB has explained that the main applicants for the pre-employment program are recently resettled immigrants. In recent years, the resettled populations have tended to be more highly educated and more likely to speak English, therefore so have the HTP enrollees. In Year 4, nearly 50 percent of HTP enrollees have received a post-secondary degree and an additional 30 percent have completed some post-secondary course work. For HTP staff, the increased skills level presents an opportunity to place graduates in higher skilled hospitality positions, like those in food and beverage, and in properties that have rigid service standards, like the Four Seasons Hotel, since they require higher levels of customer service and English.

Table 3.3: Pre-Employment Demographic Data								
	Year 1 Cohort		Year 2 Cohort		Year 3 Cohort		Year 4 Cohort	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Enrollment								
Total number enrolled	52		52		50		44	
Primary language								
English	5	10%	2	4%	4	8%	14	32%
Not English	47	90%	50	96%	46	92%	30	68%
Total	52	100%	52	100%	50	100%	44	100%
Missing	0		0		0		0	
Boston								
Yes, Boston resident	26	50%	36	69%	31	62%	32	73%
No, not Boston resident	26	50%	16	31%	19	38%	12	27%
Total	52	100%	52	100%	50	100%	44	100%
Missing	0		0		0		0	
Highest educational level and certification at enrollment								
Neither GED or high school diploma	10	19%	6	12%	8	16%	0	0%
GED certificate or high school diploma	10	19%	24	47%	13	26%	9	20%
Some post-secondary course work	15	29%	7	14%	12	24%	12	31%
Received post-secondary degree	17	33%	14	27%	17	34%	12	49%
Total	52	100%	51	100%	50	100%	44	100%
Missing	0		1		0		0	
Annual household income								
Under \$10,000					6	13%	7	28%
Between \$10,000 and \$24,999					33	70%	14	56%
Between \$25,000 and 39,999					8	17%	3	12%
Over \$40,000					0	0%	1	4%
Total					47	100%	25	100%
Missing					3		19	

Years 1 and 2 taken from previous reports.

Interestingly, HCC has experienced the opposite trend. That is, current participants have lower education attainment than in previous years, with 44 percent having neither a GED nor a high school diploma. The lower educational attainment rates may, in part, be driven by Human Resources’ desire for HCC to work with a targeted sub-population that was operating at a very basic skill level.

The annual household income of HTP participants was well below \$40,000: 84 percent earned less than \$24,999. The HCC household income was higher, with 43 percent earning more than \$40,000, partially influenced by many participants holding more than one job.

Table 3.4: Incumbent Demographic Data								
	Year 1 Cohort		Year 2 Cohort		Year 3 Cohort		Year 4 Cohort	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Enrollment								
Total number enrolled	31		83		31		34	
Primary language								
English	10	36%	31	46%	13	68%	15	54%
Not English	18	64%	36	54%	6	32%	13	46%
Total	28	100%	67	100%	19	100%	28	100%
Missing	3		16		12		6	
Boston								
Yes, Boston resident	17	55%	40	48%	22	71%	12	35%
No, not Boston resident	14	45%	43	52%	9	29%	22	65%
Total	31	100%	83	100%	31	100%	34	100%
Missing	0		0		0		0	
Highest educational level and certification at enrollment								
Neither GED or high school diploma	6	19%	23	31%	10	32%	14	44%
GED certificate or high school diploma	18	58%	24	32%	14	45%	12	38%
Some post-secondary course work	1	3%	12	16%	2	6%	2	6%
Received post-secondary degree	6	19%	15	20%	5	16%	4	13%
Total	31	100%	74	100%	31	100%	32	100%
Missing	0		9		0		2	
Annual household income								
Under \$10,000	1	3%	8	10%	1	3%	0	0%
Between \$10,000 and \$24,999	17	57%	42	53%	17	57%	6	21%
Between \$25,000 and 39,999	6	20%	15	19%	9	30%	10	36%
Over \$40,000	6	20%	15	19%	3	10%	12	43%
Total	30	100%	80	100%	30	100%	28	100%
Missing	1		3		1		6	

Participant Outcomes

Employment Outcomes For Pre-Employment Participants

Of the 44 individuals who enrolled in HTP in Year 4, 100 percent graduated and 75 percent were placed in the hospitality industry. Five additional participants were placed in 2008, increasing the placement rate to 81 percent.

Table 3.5: Pre-employment Placement Experiences (Years 1-4)										
	Year 1 Cohort		Year 2 Cohort		Year 3 Cohort		Year 4 Cohort		Total	
	#	% of Enrolled	#	% of Enrolled						
Enrolled	52	100.0%	52	100.0%	50	100.0%	44	100.0%	198	100.0%
Graduated	42	80.8%	50	96.2%	50	100.0%	44	100.0%	186	93.9%
Placed*	40	76.9%	42	80.8%	40	80.0%	33	75.0%	155	78.3%

*In addition to the 33 Year 4 participants who were placed in 2007, 2 Year 4 participants were placed outside of the hospitality industry and 5 Year 4 participants have been placed in 2008. With the five 2008 placements, the Year 4 placement rate increases to 86.4% and the overall placement rate increases to 80.9%.

Table 3.6 illustrates one of the strengths of the HTP program—its ability to place individuals quickly into jobs upon graduation. Seventy-seven percent of graduates were placed within three months of graduation in Year 4, which slightly exceeds the similarly strong performance reported in Year 3.

Table 3.6: Pre-employment Graduates Placed within 3 Months of Graduation					
Year 3 Cohort		Year 4 Cohort		Total	
#	% of Graduates	#	% of Graduates	#	% of Graduates
36	72.0%	34	77.3%	70	74.5%

While the percentage of participants placed at partner properties remains relatively low it did increase slightly in Year 4, from 10 percent to 14 percent. The low number of placements continued to be caused by Hilton’s slower hiring process and fewer entry-level job openings.

One change in Year 4 was that five individuals placed at the Charles Hotel could technically be counted as “partner” placements, since they were eligible for incumbent services now that the property is an HCI partner. Adding these individuals to the number placed at partner hotels increases the percentage to nearly a third.

It is important to note that all placements were into full-time permanent positions with access to benefits (Table 3.8). In these positions, participants earned an average of \$13.46 an hour, without considering tips earned on top of the hourly wage.⁹

For those participants who were working at the time of their enrollment, the evaluation team is able to calculate the average hourly increase from the last job held to be \$4.34 per hour (Table 3.9). The actual increase was likely even higher since about half of graduates were placed into jobs likely to generate tips, which are not factored into hourly wages.

There is significant variability in the hourly wages received by individuals who are in tip-eligible positions, partially due to the amount of tips the employees are likely to earn while on the job. For example, in Year 4, the lowest wage received is by a room service server and the highest wage received is by room attendants. The room service server generally always receives a 10-12 percent tip for each meal delivered, while a room attendant may or may not receive a tip for each room cleaned. Overall, the median wage received by placed individuals in Year 4 was \$13.50 (Table 3.10).

	Initial Placements	
	Placed in Jobs	% of Graduates
Placed with partner employers	6	13.6%
Full-time jobs (at least 30 hrs/week)	6	100.0%
Part-time jobs	0	0.0%
Permanent positions	6	100.0%
With benefits	6	100.0%
Placed with non-partner employers	27	61.4%
Full-time jobs (at least 30 hrs/week)	27	100.0%
Part-time jobs	0	0.0%
Permanent positions	27	100.0%
With benefits	27	100.0%
Total	33	75.0%

	Year 1 Cohort	Year 2 Cohort	Year 3 Cohort	Year 4 Cohort
Pre-employment average wage at placement	\$9.75	\$10.61	\$12.45	\$13.46

	Year 1 Cohort	Year 2 Cohort	Year 3 Cohort	Year 4 Cohort
Of placed individuals, total employed at enrollment			22	18
Average hourly wage increase from last job held			\$4.49	\$4.34

*Totals and averages do not include wage changes for two participants with tip jobs that offer a lower wage at placement than they were receiving at enrollment.

	Pre-Employment
Low	\$5.79 (Room Service Server)
High	\$13.75 (Room Attendant)
Median	\$13.50

⁹ Only two individuals placed received a base wage, before tips, lower than the wage they earned prior to enrollment. The hourly wages of these individuals were not included in the average wage calculations because they would have incorrectly deflated the average wage.

The year-end retention rate for HTP participants who graduated and were placed in Year 4 was 100 percent; 20 of these participants achieved at least 6-month retention, and 12 achieved at least 3-month retention.

Twelve-month retention was measured for participants who were placed in Year 3. Eighty-one percent of these placed participants remained on the job for more than 12 months.¹⁰

In terms of educational outcomes, 29 HTP graduates expressed an interest in attending an English for Advancement Class at IIB and attended orientation sessions and were tested. Of those, 17 were invited to join the class; the 12 who were not invited either had schedule conflicts that could not be resolved or tested at a competency level too advanced for the course. Classes met two days a week from 4:30–6:00 for eight weeks. During the course 6 clients had to drop out because of schedule changes and 3 were not able to meet the attendance requirements. Six met the course competencies and attendance requirements and were awarded a certificate of completion. The challenges clients faced coordinating their variable work schedules around the class meeting time was a significant contributor to the low graduation rate and in the future IIB will offer shorter courses with a more specific focus.

Eleven clients expressed an interest in attending the Front Office Training Program at IIB. Of those, seven were HTP graduates (one from HTP Year 2, four Year 3, two from Year 4), two were Hilton team members, and one was a graduate of IIB's evening ESOL program. Classes met two nights a week from 5:30–8:30 and an additional two weeks was added to the cycle to provide enrollees with more opportunities to practice interviewing and receive feedback on their resumes and support in strategies for job searching (14 weeks). In the end, eight participants were awarded certificates of completion and two, certificates of participation.

In addition to IIB's EFA class, students enrolled in ESOL courses at Bunker Hill Community College, which offers more classes at different times, and IIB for the evening courses, which are more advanced. Finally, three HTP graduates enrolled in college in Year 4.

¹⁰ Since IIB only collected 9-month retention in Years 1–3, it is impossible to accurately compare retention rates with previous years' accomplishments.

Employment Outcomes for Incumbent Workers

One hundred and seventy-nine individuals have enrolled in HCC courses since 2004. As of December 2007, 128 (72 percent) continue to be employed with their original employer.¹¹ Ten additional participants were employed but had moved to a different hospitality employer.

	Year 1 Cohort	Year 2 Cohort	Year 3 Cohort	Year 4 Cohort	Total
Total participants enrolled	31	83	31	34	179
Participants still employed at initial employer partner	22	48	27	31	128
% of participants still employed at initial employer partner	71%	58%	87%	91%	72%

Over 20 percent of the total cohort of HCC enrollees received a promotion over the last four years; 13 of these advancements occurred in Year 4 (Table 3.12). Some of the promotion success stories include a housekeeper who became a housekeeping supervisor, a dishwasher who advanced to banquet houseman, a cook, educated in his home country as an accountant, who advanced to become an income auditor, a front desk agent who was promoted twice, first to administrative assistant in the sales department and then to senior event manager, and finally a kitchen supervisor who moved to the Back Bay Restaurant Group to become a sous-chef.

In addition to developing skills needed to qualify for promotions, the HCC coaches are guiding people towards thinking long-term about their careers and futures. Evidence of this is the experience of one participant who was offered a supervisory position. He talked with his coach about it and initially said that he was going to decline the promotion because he would be making less money than at his current two jobs. Through coaching, the individual realized that his short-term loss would be a long-term gain in his overall career. He eventually accepted the position.

N=150*	Wage Increases**	% of Still-Employed Incumbents	Promotions	% of Still-Employed Incumbents
Total	114	76.0%	35	23.3%

*N equals the number of employed individuals as of 12/07 plus 11 individuals for whom IIB had wage increase information.
**Wage increases reported include both merit and non-merit raises.

Incumbent Workers—Skill Enhancement Outcomes

A few HCC participants have achieved skill enhancement outcomes since enrolling in HCC. One participant received his GED and three participants enrolled in college, with one having successfully completed her associate's degree and subsequently enrolled in a bachelor's degree program at U-Mass Amherst.

¹¹ Data are unavailable for the 40 participants who were not listed as employed. For the majority of these individuals (27), data are unavailable because the properties where they worked while enrolled are no longer participating with HCC and did not provide any employment information. For the remaining individuals, their status is unknown because they left their positions at partner employers.

The HCC program also had five participants enroll and successfully complete the IIB Front Office Training, two start GED courses, and four enroll in various certification and sector-specific trainings (bartending school, lab tech training, Quickbooks training, and nursing).

	Number of Participants Who Have Realized Skill Enhancement Outcomes			
	Year 1 Cohort	Year 2 Cohort	Year 3 Cohort	Year 4 Cohort
Enrollment	31	83	31	34
Entered college	2	1	0	0
Enrolled in credentialed program	1	1	0	1
Enrolled in sector-specific training	0	1	2	3
Completion				
Graduated from college	1	0	0	0
Received industry-recognized credential	1	1	0	0
Completed sector-specific training	0	1	2	2

Employer Outcomes

Through interviews with employer partners and staff feedback on previous employer communications, the evaluation team examined whether accomplishments had been achieved by participants and/or the employers in each of the outcome areas over the last year. In each outcome area, employers acknowledged achievements. Specifically, they stated that significant changes were seen in employees’ productivity and performance. However, the employers also described ways that HCC’s influence on their employees was less than expected, particularly around advancement.

There are three outcome areas in which employers noted significant achievement: improvements in employee performance or productivity, improved employer access to entry-level workers, and improved community relations. In terms of performance, supervisors and managers have noticed improved self-confidence in employees who have participated in HCC courses. Employees are more comfortable working independently, taking initiative, and responding to clients’ requests. Some employees have moved from being functionally illiterate and barely able to communicate to taking on responsibilities like training fellow staff and dealing with vendors. IIB can support the assertion that job performance is improving based on the fact that property management is requesting more advanced skill training in the HCC courses. Most employees have improved sufficiently to benefit from more complex instruction in such areas as writing memos, reports, and email communication.

Finally, community relations have improved. Increasingly, community members come in looking for work and mention HCC, saying that they have heard about the program. This level of word of mouth evidences the infiltration of the program’s value into the mind frame of the immigrant community.

The second significant area of achievement is in properties’ improved access to entry-level workers. HTP has long been one of the sources Boston hotels access for quality employees. Now, however, hotels are establishing special interviewing sessions to get first access to graduates. At Hilton, HTP is a trusted source for entry-level workers. Management’s perception is that graduates are of superb quality and generally are retained longer than average (at one property, only one HTP hire has ever left).

In addition to these widely confirmed success measures there are outcomes that have been partially achieved. As mentioned previously, there is some evidence that employee retention has increased

with participation in HTP and HCC. For example, one human resource director said that having HCC available for new employees has helped reduce turnover during the initial 60 days for those who have never worked in the hospitality industry. Turnover for this group averaged about 25 percent. Now, there is virtually no turnover for those who enroll in HCC. However, beyond anecdotal stories, partnering properties are unable to quantify retention differences between HCC participants and employees not participating in the programs.

Another partial outcome achieved is employers' ability to fill critical occupational positions through career advancement of existing workers. Property staff have described the fact that they can fill internal positions more easily, but they are not necessarily "critical positions" and the scale is smaller than anticipated or desired. According to employers, the most significant obstacles to large-scale advancement of participants is employees' hesitancy to change schedules, colleagues, routines and/or properties and the lack of available positions within Hilton properties. HCC staff have consistently targeted these obstacles by incorporating them into discussions during career coaching sessions with each participant.

System Change Outcomes

While systems change outcomes tend to be broad and overlapping, three overarching indicators have been identified and are being examined in this report. These include enhanced service provider capacity, changes in employer practices, and impacts on the sector.

Enhanced Capacity of Service Providers

IIB staff have expanded their ability to conduct more extensive data collection for HTP candidates placed at non-partners. In the Year 4 evaluation, HTP was able to report on the employment status of most Year 3 enrollees, regardless of where individuals were placed. This ability to report is critical to interpreting evaluation results, since relatively few placements have occurred at employer partners.

IIB's partnership with Hilton has increased staff's ability to adapt to employer needs and respond quickly and flexibly. This ability is demonstrated most profoundly by the fact that HCC instructors are constantly modifying the course content and adapting their coaching method to the individual needs of participants. The curriculum flexibility has always been a part of the HCC model but has been embodied by staff more extensively in Year 4.

Finally, the most significant increase in provider capacity is IIB becoming a more sophisticated workforce development organization. Through IIB's experience designing and implementing HCC, it has become a more effective training provider, with a greater number of staff familiar with workplace education in general and the hospitality industry in particular. Education staff are now known to ask during intake for evening ESOL courses participants where they work—if they work for a partner employer, either through HCC or HCI, the staff tell participants about on-site courses and/or backfill the data from the enrollment form into the HCC/HCI database. This began organically with the staff taking initiative and demonstrates an awareness on the part of staff about the integration of programs and need to maximize each participant interaction.

The staff are also thinking ambitiously about adapting skills learned through the HCC experience (e.g., coaching, training, and placement) and applying them to different industries and to individuals with higher skills, thinking particularly about how to prepare participants for the hospitality industry

as well as the creative economy, green economy, and casino economy. Staff are also beginning to consider how to best re-place participants after they have stabilized in the U.S., taking into account the skills they bring from their countries (accounting, medicine, etc.).

Changes in Employer Practices

Two major policy changes have occurred at employer partners over the last few years of program implementation. First, employers now allow HCC students to take as many EFA sessions as needed to reach the desired competency level, rather than setting a limit on the number of courses allowed. Employers have also changed the practice that employees had to be employed for 6 months before being eligible to participate. This practice has changed: now, on approval, people can participate immediately with HCC. In fact, properties now hire individuals who might be slightly less skilled in English but have the potential to be a productive employee, knowing that the applicant can immediately be funneled into the HCC program for skill development.

On-the-job changes in employer practices have also occurred. An example of this: a recent recruiting event at one of the properties, a housekeeper attended to learn more about the program. During the presentation she expressed her concern about the time commitment and stated that she probably would not participate. HR asked her to talk with a team member currently enrolled in the program before making a final decision. After talking to the team member enrolled in the program and being reassured that the time commitment was manageable and the benefits were worth it, the housekeeper enrolled in the program.

Ultimately, Hilton properties have developed a solid foundation in workforce activities that they hope to continue, regardless of IIB's funding for the program. One manager stated that the participating properties feel it would be detrimental to employees and employer/employee relations if HCC ended and was not replaced with something of equal value.

Impacts on the Sector

In Year 4, IIB implemented two new initiatives that built on the core foundation of HCC and HTP: the Hotel Career Institute and an ESOL Train-the-Trainer course. Through HCI, IIB expanded incumbent services to other properties, providing services to former HTP graduates and property employees who were previously unserved. Through the ESOL course, IIB used grant resources provided from the Workforce Training Fund to offer a ESOL Train-the-Trainer course. In conjunction with the Massachusetts Lodging Association and Bunker Hill Community College, IIB invited hotel management to observe ESOL courses so that they would be able to offer ESOL courses on-site to their employees. As a result of the training, the Marriott Copley Place formed a class of about 20 employees that was team taught by two individuals who participated in the Train the Trainer course. HCC staff were asked by the Marriott to perform employee assessments before the course began and to attend graduation. Staff completed both of these requests.

IIB has been successful in making inroads into how the hospitality sector hires and trains its entry-level workforce. Initial evidence of IIB's success can be seen in the fact that HTP staff were asked to make a presentation at the HR Association during Year 4 about the HTP program and the hiring opportunities available through it. After the presentation new, high quality hotels (Omni Parker House, Boston Park Plaza, and Four Season Hotel) asked for follow-up meetings with staff.

Additionally, hotels are beginning to perceive themselves as competing for HTP graduates. To combat this, hotels are offering preferential interviewing and on-the-spot job offers.

Key Learnings/Implications for Partnership Selection in Phase 2

Career Coaching and Advancement

Lesson Learned: Intense coaching seems to decrease the time it takes to achieve substantial progress on career advancement.

IIB Experience: HCC's model of coaching includes not only intense one-on-one interactions between participants and coaches; it also includes regular meetings between coaches, HR personnel, and managers or supervisors. The interactions with participants focus on the participant's goals, real-time on-the-job challenges, and skill-building. The interactions with Hilton HR and managers maximize Hilton staff's awareness of participants and knowledge of existing and potential openings for advancement. HR has a strong sense of participating staff, what they need in terms of skill development, and where they might fit best next in terms of advancement. Coaches access this information during quarterly meetings and update HR on which staff might be ready to fill any new voids that have developed.

With this level of intense interaction, participants who have invested themselves in the program and the coaching generally have seen advancement in terms of promotions or wage gains.¹²

Employer Partner Consistency and its Effect on Career Advancement

Lesson Learned: A strong career coaching model can be compromised by lack of placements and shifting commitments from employer partners.

IIB Experience: Throughout the SkillWorks grant cycle, the Hilton Corporation has remained a strong and committed employer partner. Despite this commitment, placements have been challenging. Current Hilton employees have not advanced at the rate expected, which has limited the number of entry-level spots available. Additionally, Hilton's hiring process is somewhat slower than other hotels, leading to participants being placed at other employers before offers are extended by Hilton. As has been discussed in previous evaluation reports, the ultimate result of the small Hilton placement totals is a reduction in the effectiveness of the career advancement model designed to function between the HTP and HCC programs. Even with the additional partner hotels offered through IIB's new partnership with JVS, only one third of HTP's Year 4 placements have access to ongoing incumbent services.

The second limitation of IIB's career coaching model is the decreasing number of Hilton properties that have chosen to offer HCC services to their employees—there have been as many as five properties participating (Year 2) and as few as two (Year 5). The shifting number of properties has not been related to the performance of HCC staff but rather to external reasons such as changing

¹² One question of interest is the starting skill level of those who have advanced and whether they consistently achieved a skill threshold before they were able to advance. While the Year 4 evaluation did not analyze participant data individually, and therefore can not answer this question, there is potential for deeper examination of these questions in the Year 5 evaluation.

property ownership (Hotel at MIT in Year 5) or an inability to fund release time (Doubletree Back Bay and Doubletree Downtown in Year 3).

While the number of new enrollees has not changed much with the change in property partners, what has changed is HCC's ability to follow up and continue coaching participants at hotels that are no longer participating. Without coaches being able to continue to assist participants, through both one-on-one interactions and engagement with management, the IIB coaching model's effectiveness is limited. The investment made in each of the participants at now "non-partner" hotels will remain but the benefit gained from an ongoing coaching relationship is diminished.

It is conceivable that the overall outcomes of moving participants to family-sustaining wages have been limited by a significant number of incumbent enrollees with whom coaches have not been able to maintain relationships due to employers ending partnership affiliation. The impact of this is potentially significant in that it involves 27 participants between Double Tree Back Bay and Double Tree Downtown and 42 participants at Hotel at MIT. This is nearly 40 percent of the total HCC enrollment.

IIB, aware of these challenges, and confident of the importance of engaging participants on an on-going basis have devised alternative strategies for serving participants beyond coaching. Two of these strategies are the English for Advancement course offered at IIB and the Front Desk Training.

Chapter 4: Partners in Career and Workforce Development (Round 1 Grantee)

Partners in Career and Workforce Development (PCWD) is a workforce project led by the Partners HealthCare System. Within Partners, the primary employers that were involved in the program are Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH), Brigham and Women's Hospital, and Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital. Other key stakeholders included WorkSource Partners (which provided some of the career coaching services), Project Hope (which provided the pre-employment outreach, screening, and case management services), and Jewish Vocational Service (which provided pre-employment instruction and pre-college training). PCWD focused on expanding on what some of the individual healthcare employers within the Partners system had been doing in the area of workforce development and on bringing the various pre-employment and career development efforts under one umbrella. Two of the major outcomes that were of interest to the Partners system were (1) to develop new pipelines for entry-level workers; and (2) to fill positions that have high vacancy rates with existing employees who rise up a career ladder.

Changes in Program Design, Activities, and Administration During Year 4

During Year 3, Partners HealthCare made the decision not to pursue additional funding from SkillWorks. While Partners learned a significant amount about engaging in workforce development activities through its participation in the grant, it concluded that the level of time and resources involved in participating in SkillWorks outweighed the financial benefits. Partners came to believe that it required increased flexibility in pursuing its workforce goals, particularly in its efforts to provide incumbent employees with the basic skills that would be needed to make more substantial educational advancements in the healthcare arena.

While no longer receiving financial support for its workforce development activities through the SkillWorks Initiative, Partners remains firmly committed to the original workforce-related goals that led to its initial involvement in SkillWorks. Partners continues to pursue a number of workforce activities with close connections to the SkillWorks Initiative:

- PCWD continues to track and report on the progress of the participants in its pre-employment and incumbent worker activities. The partnership has received a SkillWorks Capacity Building grant to support its continuing efforts to track the progress of both the pre-employment and incumbent participants who continue to work in the Partners system. In addition to continuing to track the employment status of all participants still employed at Partners, PCWD completed an online survey of both pre-employment and incumbent participants still employed. The purpose of the survey was to track their progress in skill advancement in 2006–2007 (Year 4), after PCWD had stopped receiving SkillWorks funding.¹³

¹³ Career development questionnaires were both emailed and mailed to the homes of all 357 PCWD incumbent workers and the 62 pre-employment participants who continued to be employed by Partners. The survey had a high return rate with 141 of the incumbent employees responding to the survey (39 percent) and 42, or 68 percent, of the pre-employment participants responding.

- The staff of PCWD continue to participate and play an active role in the capacity building activities that have been sponsored by SkillWorks.
- The staff of PCWD continue to participate in public policy activities, both directly with SkillWorks as well as through the Workforce Solutions Group (the public policy grantee of SkillWorks).

In addition to the direct role that it continues to play in the SkillWorks Initiative, Partners as a system has continued to support PCWD as a workforce resource within the system. During the three years that it participated in the SkillWorks Initiative, Partners invested a total of about \$1 million in PCWD activities to match SkillWorks funding. Currently, Partners is spending about \$800,000 a year on its own to support the workforce development activities within the system.

PCWD continues to be involved in the following activities:

- PCWD continues to operate its pre-employment program with its own internal funding. During Year 4, PCWD enrolled a total of 42 new participants in its pre-employment program. For the most part, the program has been a continuation of the previous pre-employment program, with some slight modifications. JVS, which runs the pre-employment training, hired a new lead instructor in August 2007. The previous instructor was hired by Project Hope to lead its pre pre-employment program. Partners is considering increasing the scale of this activity in future years, expanding beyond the current 40 participants..
- PCWD has finalized a comprehensive career and workforce development website for the Partners system. This website, developed with previous financial support from SkillWorks, provides information relevant to managers and supervisors, employees, jobseekers, human resource professionals, and youth. It brings together all of the workforce-related resources available both within the Partners system, as well as links to community-based resources.
- PCWD provides advice, training, support , and value-added resources and system-leverage for a wide range of workforce development activities at its partner institutions.

Finally, during the past year, there have been two new initiatives that have broadened the overall workforce development activities within the Partners system. These efforts have built upon the learnings from both the PCWD project and the Health Care Research and Training Institute, the two healthcare partnerships funded through SkillWorks:

- The Partners system has initiated a new program, Partners Healthcare Allied Health Initiative. The Allied Health Initiative is “a career advancement program for employees interested in pursuing a career in allied health.” This effort, started in October 2007, is an internal career advancement program aimed at helping incumbent workers enter allied health occupations. The project is partially supported through grants to affiliates received as part of the Boston Foundation’s Allied Health Workforce Project.
- Project Hope has developed a pre pre-employment program, Community Partners in Health Professions, aimed at providing basic support and training to many community residents who did not meet the threshold of the PCWD pre-employment program. In addition, Project Hope has a separate contract with Brigham and Women’s Hospital to help fill entry-level positions being created in the new Carl J. and Ruth Shapiro

Cardiovascular Center with residents from Mission Hill and other surrounding neighborhoods. Project Hope provides the outreach, recruitment, and screening for these positions.

Participant Outcomes

As part of its Capacity Building grant with SkillWorks, PCWD agreed to continue to provide employment and wage status data on all of the Year 1 to Year 3 PCWD pre-employment participants and incumbent workers who continued to work at Partners. PCWD also agreed to follow up with this group through an outreach effort and an online survey to assemble updated information on the group’s progress in terms of education and skill levels.

It is important to note that PCWD, like each of the other partnerships, has not been able to track and follow up on the progress of those participants who have left the Partners system. Thus, a good deal of the outcome data provide only one part of the picture, the outcomes for those individuals who remain employed at Partners. It is likely that a number of the people who are no longer employed at Partners have received wage increases or promotions in new healthcare-related jobs outside of the Partners employers, are continuing to pursue their education on either a full-time or part-time basis, or have pursued new careers outside healthcare. In other words, much of the outcome data are based primarily on the outcomes experienced by the 419 PCWD participants still working at Partners (357 PCWD incumbent, 62 pre-employment). There are probably significant positive outcomes related to the 184 individuals who left Partners, some to pursue career advancement at new healthcare providers and others to continue on their path of skill attainment.

Employment Outcomes For Pre-Employment Participants

The last pre-employment training cohort funded through SkillWorks graduated in November 2006. Since this was only one month prior to the completion of Year 3 funding, a number of the Year 3 pre-employment participants had not been placed in jobs at the time of the last evaluation report. One year later, a total of 33, or approximately 79 percent of the Year 3 cohort, had been placed in a job at Partners and 92 percent of those who had graduated from the program were placed. Over the three years, a total of 113 individuals were placed in jobs, 82.5 percent of those who enrolled in the program.

	Year 1 Cohort		Year 2 Cohort		Year 3 Cohort		Year 4 Cohort		Total	
	#	% of Enrolled	#	% of Enrolled						
Enrolled	44	100.0%	51	100.0%	42	100.0%	NA	NA	137	100.0%
Graduated	38	86.4%	51	100.0%	36	85.7%	NA	NA	125	91.2%
Placed	30	68.2%	50	98.0%	33	78.6%	NA	NA	113	82.5%

In general, PCWD prides itself in placing individuals in relatively high quality jobs within the Partners system. One reason that it held such high standards in its pre-employment program was to ensure that individuals could be placed in some of the higher-level entry-level jobs within the hospitals. As Tables 4.2–4.3 illustrate, over time the quality of the jobs in which pre-employment participants were placed improved. The average wage at placement increased by \$0.89 an hour between the Year 1 cohort and the Year 3 cohort.

Another area in which PCWD improved over the three years was in the placement of participants in full-time positions with benefits. During its first year of operation, the majority of pre-employment participants were initially placed in temporary positions with Bulfinch Temporary Services, a valuable transitional opportunity for PCWD pre-employment graduates since such positions allow employees more scheduling flexibility and an opportunity to explore a variety of job settings before making the commitment to permanent employment. Only 34 percent were placed in full-time positions with benefits. By Year 3, the majority of participants were placed in full-time jobs with benefits and fewer than one-third were placed in temporary positions.

	Year 1 Cohort	Year 2 Cohort	Year 3 Cohort	Year 4 Cohort
Pre-employment average wage at placement	\$11.43	\$12.00	\$12.32	NA

One concern that PCWD has had about the pre-employment program involved the number of days it took between the time an individual graduated from the program and placement in a job. Over the three years, PCWD sought to both enhance the services to the participants during this “gap” period, as well as to reduce the number of days it took to place an individual.

	Year 1*		Year 2		Year 3	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Part-time	4	14%	3	6%	4	12%
Temporary	15	52%	19	38%	9	27%
Full-time	10	34%	28	56%	20	61%
Total	29*	100%	50	100%	33	100%

*1 Missing

Year 1	68
Year 2	66
Year 3	48

As Table 4.4 illustrates, PCWD has been successful in this effort. Over the three-year period, the average number of days prior to placement after graduation was reduced by almost one-third.

Part of the reason for this improvement is probably the growing recognition the program had within the Partners system. Many of the supervisors who hired PCWD graduates had positive experiences, leading them to hire through PCWD and to spread the word about the program to other supervisors and become champions and advocates of the program. One of the supervisors who worked with PCWD participants noted, “In the beginning, I was the only one hiring and taking on interns. More recently, I was not able to get the interns I hoped for because they went to other departments. The word has spread. And, in MGH, PCWD has now gotten a reputation as something to look into.”

PCWD has also been relatively successful in retaining and advancing a large number of pre-employment participants. At the end of Year 4, December 2007, a total of 62, or 49 percent, of the pre-employment participants who were placed at Partners remained working in the system. While there are no comparative data available, our sense is that the fact that over 70 percent of the Year 2 cohort remain employed two years after their placement represents a relatively good retention rate.

The data suggest that the individuals who remain employed have also done very well. Close to one-third have received promotions. Examples include an individual who went from being an operating room assistant to an orthopedic equipment technician, and individuals who were promoted from sterile processing tech I to sterile processing tech II. The average wage increase for those with continued employment at Partners was \$2.07. Even better news, the 10 participants from Year 1 who remain working at Partners have received an average wage increase of \$3.16.

In addition to wage increases and promotions, many of the pre-employment participants who remain employed at Partners have also participated in a variety of skill enhancement activities. At the end of Year 3, nine of the Year 1 pre-employment participants had made significant advances:

- Two had been accepted into nursing programs.
- One had left Partners to attend school.
- Six were taking pre-college classes and the prerequisites needed for enrolling in a nursing program.

	Year 1 Cohort	Year 2 Cohort	Year 3 Cohort
Total enrolled	44	51	42
Total placed in Partners system tracking*	30	45	31
Total still employed 1/01/08	10	32	20
Number receiving promotions	5	8	6
Average wage increase	\$3.16	\$2.45	\$0.95
% still employed	33%	71%	65%
% still employed who received a promotion	50%	25%	30%

*Note: There were five Year 2 participants and two Year 3 participants who were placed in employers not covered in the People Soft System.

Nine of the Year 2 participants had made significant educational progress at the end of Year 3:

- Two had been awarded One Family Scholarships and were taking prerequisite classes for nursing at Bunker Hill.
- Two had completed the PCWD pre-college classes run by JVS.
- One had completed the Partners Medical Terminology Class.
- One had completed the prerequisites for a radiological technology program and has applied for the program.
- One had enrolled in college for a social work degree and a second participant completed a semester at college.
- One had successfully passed the pharmacy licensing exam and was taking prerequisite classes at Bunker Hill.

A number of the pre-employment participants continued to take the following steps to advance their careers between 2006 and 2007 (Year 4 of SkillWorks, following the end of SkillWorks funding):

- Six of the 23 respondents to the online survey completed a pre-college math class, 3 completed a pre-college English class, and 14 reported completing some type of skill training class.
- Thirty-five percent of the 40 respondents to the online survey had applied to a college program and 8 were currently enrolled in college.
- Sixty-seven percent of the 41 respondents to the online survey reported that they were continuing to explore health careers, with 6 reporting interest in a radiological technology career and approximately 5 in nursing.
- Eighty-eight percent of the 41 respondents to the online survey reported that they expected to take additional steps in advancing their careers in the next 12 months, including applying to college or taking pre-college classes.

Interviews with two supervisors who have provided internships to pre-employment participants and hired them into positions in their departments confirm the positive outcomes of PCWD on many individuals. For example, in the operating room department, one of the biggest departments at MGH,

the manager has worked with between 15 and 20 PCWD interns and has hired close to 80 percent of those who have interned in the department. The internship provided the department with the opportunity to see if there was a good fit between the individual and its needs and vice versa. The supervisor of another department reported, “We have hired six or seven graduates. We prefer these graduates to those off the street because they come with a great attitude and ready to work. This is probably due to the great screening process at PCWD.”

Employment Outcomes for Incumbent Workers

The evidence of any direct employment outcomes for the incumbent workers at PCWD is weak or harder to measure. Overall, the level of engagement with incumbent workers was not as strong as with the pre-employment participants. The depth of the services provided through PCWD was relatively shallow for a large number of the incumbent participants. Many attended one of the ESOL or pre-college classes sponsored by PCWD and may have had contact with their coach one or two times. Given the large number of participants, the coaches involved in the incumbent worker program did not have the same level of involvement with the participants and thus the level of information about their career development progress is more limited.

Given this more limited level of engagement, the evaluation was not able to assess with any confidence whether retention, wage increases, or promotions were tied to the specific services being provided to incumbent workers. However, it is not likely that wage increases and promotions were tied directly to the ESOL or pre-college classes. Moreover, since the goal of the PCWD project focused on educational advancement, most of the interventions for incumbent workers emphasized longer term skill development that would allow the employee to qualify for an allied health degree or certificate program, not immediate job advancement.

	Year 1 Cohort	Year 2 Cohort	Year 3 Cohort	Year 4 Cohort	Total
Total participants enrolled	182	167	117	NA	466
Participants still employed at Partners 12/07	123	131	103	NA	357
Percentage of participants who were still employed at initial employer in 2007	68%	78%	88%	0%	77%

While not likely attributable to the PCWD interventions, over the past four years the following employment-related outcomes were identified:

- A large proportion of the incumbent employees enrolled in PCWD remain employed within the Partners system. Partners, however, had not been experiencing a very high level of staff turnover in lower level positions during this timeframe and did not see reducing turnover as a primary goal of the PCWD project.
- At the end of Year 3, the evaluation found that a total of 93 incumbent participants had received a promotion.¹⁴ During Year 4, a total of 34 incumbent participants still employed at Partners received a promotion.
- Essentially every incumbent participant who remains at Partners has received raises over

¹⁴ The database provided by Partners for Year 4 only includes those individuals still employed at Partners. As a result, one cannot conclude that there are an additional 34 individuals who had not previously been counted as having received a promotion.

the past three years. Except for those individuals who received promotions, these wage increases were tied to the normal across the board or merit increases that all Partners employees receive.

Skill Enhancement Outcomes for Incumbent Workers

At the end of Year 3, relatively modest educational outcomes were identified. PCWD was very aware that the skill development outcomes that it was able to achieve were considerably more limited than expected at the outset of the program. This has been an area of continuous learning and focus for PCWD staff.

Table 4.7: Educational Advancement PCWD Participants: End of Year Three*			
	Year 1 Participants	Year 2 Participants	Year 3 Participants
Completed GED	4	2	1
Enrolled in skill training or certificate program	2	4	17
Completed certificate program**	0	0	5
Taking prerequisites for professional healthcare degree (Nursing, Rad Tech, Surg Tech)	20	22	17
Applied to associates degree or college program	2	5	2
Enrolled in college program	25	13	2
Completed postsecondary degree: Associates/BA/BS	9	2	0
*Data in this table reflect outcomes that the partnership was able to verify. It is likely an underreporting of outcomes because coaches have not remained in contact with all participants.			
**A number of Year 3 participants participated in the Central Processing Certificate Program, a joint effort of MGH and BWH operating rooms and Bunker Hill Community College.			

As noted, PCWD has not been able to track the continued progress of every incumbent worker. Very few of the individuals who had enrolled in the PCWD incumbent worker program remain engaged in coaching or other activities. In order to get some sense of the continued progress of incumbent workers, PCWD developed an online survey that was sent to all of the 357 incumbent participants still employed. Of those who received a survey, 141 individuals, or 39 percent, completed the survey. While the findings only represent a portion of the participants, given the relatively high return rate, the survey probably provides a good estimate of the skill and career development gains of the participants.

The survey of incumbent workers found:

- A relatively large number of incumbent participants remain engaged in skill enhancement and career development activities. A very large number of participants have continued to be involved in ESOL classes, remedial education classes, and other skills training classes. In addition, 44 percent of the respondents to the survey reported that they have continued to explore health careers over the past year. A large proportion of the respondents reported that they expect to continue to engage in education and skill development activities, including a total of 57 who hope to apply to or enroll in college in the future.
- A surprisingly large number of employees, 37, or 27 percent of the respondents, reported that they have applied to a college program in the past year. This included 16 individuals applying for nursing programs, 4 for radiological tech, 6 for surgical tech, and 5 for other technical healthcare positions. The remaining 8 individual applied for non-healthcare-related college programs.
- Six individuals reported that they had completed a college program in the past year.

Employer Outcomes

Improving the pipeline for well-prepared entry-level workers is probably the most direct benefit of PCWD for the Partner hospitals. Supervisors who have worked with some of the pre-employment participants noted the benefits of the program to their department:

- One hundred percent of the supervisors surveyed by PCWD reported that PCWD added value to their ability to hire qualified entry level employees.
- The PCWD pre-employment program is increasingly seen by supervisors as a preferred pipeline for entry-level employees. These employees are preferable to those hired “off the street” because they are better screened, have a better attitude, are more prepared for the healthcare environment, and are more motivated than other entry-level employees.
- The internship provided supervisors with an opportunity to see if there was a good fit and vice-versa.
- The coaches provided an additional level of support for the supervisors, allowing them to keep some workers who would otherwise probably could not remain employed because of personal problems. In their online survey of managers, 51.5 percent reported that the PCWD staff helped a great deal in helping them to retain PCWD graduates through their coaching and troubleshooting services.

There are fewer measurable direct outcomes related to the incumbent program. Many of the anticipated outcomes, most notably the ability to fill hard-to-fill positions with existing employees, have not been achieved. As noted, PCWD realized that providing its employees with the skills and support needed to successfully enter and complete allied health training programs was much more difficult than anticipated. Other direct employer outcomes such as increased productivity or reduced turnover have not been measured. Interviews revealed few specific examples of these types of outcomes.

System Change Outcomes

Enhanced Capacity of Service Providers

Project Hope has seen some significant benefits associated with its relationship with PCWD. According to Project Hope staff, their participation in the PCWD program has not only provided the organization with new opportunities in the workforce development arena, but has built Project Hope’s own internal capacity and changed its overall approach to addressing the needs of its constituency.

As a result of its work with PCWD, Project Hope was able to develop two new programs:

- Project Hope realized as a result of its outreach activities for the PCWD pre-employment program that there were a large number of individuals in the community who could not qualify for the PCWD program because they lacked basic computer skills or had some minor issues on the reading and language portion of the TABE test. Many of these individuals had not taken a standardized test in many years and needed some minor brush-up. To meet the needs of these individuals, Project Hope established the

Community Partners in Health Professions Program, a six-week training program partially funded through the Boston PIC.

- Project Hope is under contract with Brigham and Women’s Hospital to provide the outreach, recruitment, and screening for identifying entry-level workers to staff its new facility.

More importantly, Project Hope’s involvement with PCWD has changed its overall institutional approach to workforce development. As noted by Project Hope staff, “Our relationship with PCWD taught us how important employer expectations are. It caused us to raise our own standards and expectations. We now know more about what it takes to be successful at work.” In addition, Project Hope has a new awareness of the linkages between adult education and workforce development and has worked to better integrate these two services within its own organization.

Given the two new programs, Project Hope is continuing to focus on and build upon its experience and knowledge of the healthcare industry. Over time, the organization may consider taking its learning from its work in the healthcare sector to other Boston industries.

Changes in Employer Culture and Institutional Practices

From its inception, one of the primary goals of PCWD was to help change the larger culture of the Partners HealthCare System in terms of its commitment and support of the career development of its employees. It is in this area that the PCWD program has been the most successful and achieved the biggest change.

The most direct outcome of the PCWD effort has been the learning that has taken place related to the most effective ways to support the workforce and to create new pipelines of entry-level employees. Senior managers at Partners HealthCare believe that their participation in SkillWorks has helped to bring the workforce development work at Partners to a new level. Prior to SkillWorks, Partners was involved in a variety of workforce development-related activities, most notably Project Rise, the pre-employment program that preceded PCWD, and career coaching activities with WorkSource Partners at Brigham and Women’s Hospital. Being part of the SkillWorks Initiative allowed Partners to be more intentional about its approach to workforce development and to bring it to a higher level of scale and visibility within the organization.

Senior managers note that PCWD is no longer just a community outreach project, but a more integral part of the human resource approach of the entire system. Indications of its commitment that they noted include:

- Within Partners, a number of senior staff from the human resources department are now involved directly in the workforce development activity.
- Partners’ director of compensation now participates in PCWD.
- A data analyst has been assigned to work with PCWD on tracking the employment status and compensation of all employees involved in workforce development programs.
- Partners has created a new position in the human resource department, Partners Workforce Development Manager.
- At the individual hospitals that are part of the Partners system, there is also evidence of a greater commitment to employee advancement. This is particularly true at Brigham and Women’s Hospital. The commitment is found in the promotion of Beverly Sobers,

manager of workforce development at the Brigham, to a more senior management position within the hospital, the opening of its storefront workforce office, and its commitment to hiring from within for staffing the new Cardiovascular Center.

- There is a line item in the Brigham and Women’s budget to support its contract with Project Hope. Project Hope is now paid directly as a community funnel, recruiting and screening neighborhood residents for jobs within the hospital.
- There is a new steering committee for the Partners Workforce System that includes senior staff for human resources, community benefits, individuals involved in data, and the staff of PCWD. This committee reviews the direction of the current workforce activities within the Partners system, identifies data needs, and helps to bring system resources together around workforce issues. This group also vets new ideas and is currently looking at how to approach ESOL and how to manage the internship component of PCWD.

Another direct indication of the new internal commitment to workforce development is the implementation of a new program, the Partners Healthcare Allied Health Initiative. The Allied Health Initiative is “a career advancement program for employees interested in pursuing a career in allied health. The initiative will assist employees to prepare for and successfully complete an allied health educational program, while helping to address hospital staffing shortages in several important patient care areas.” The initiative is funded in part by a grant from the Boston Foundation to Partners HealthCare affiliates based in Boston. The grant will also help to fund the development of advanced modality courses (CT, MRI, and mammography) for individuals who are currently radiographers and who are interested in gaining certification in one or more of those areas

Finally, the PCWD project has been an important internal effort for Partners HealthCare. Partners includes a wide variety of academic medical centers, community health centers, and continuing care organizations. Developing new internal workforce development capacity through PCWD, which can serve all of its members, is seen as a “model” within the Partners system. It is a good example of how through working together the Partners system is able to add value and benefit individual employers within the system.

Key Learnings/Implications for Partnership Selection in Phase 2

Organization Capacity and Staffing

Lesson Learned: Consistent and stable leadership and staffing is key to the success of a sector partnership.

PCWD Experience: PCWD has been led by the same individuals and team throughout the four years of the SkillWorks Initiative. This consistency has ensured that learning is incorporated into program design and increases the credibility and visibility of the program within the system. For example, over time many of the supervisors have come to know and trust Cynthia Briggs. This trust took a number of years to build. So, by the end of Year 4, a number of supervisors have reported that they now turn to PCWD if they are having an issue with an employee and as a pipeline for dependable entry-level workers.

Employer Leadership

Lesson Learned: PCWD was the only partnership led by an individual employer and collaborative team. As an employer-led partnership, there was greater capacity as well as ownership of the activities.

PCWD Experience: The fact that PCWD was led by an employer has been a critical element of its success. For one, there are greater system resources that can be leveraged. Second, the program managers have access to a larger support system as well as access to more sophisticated data systems. Finally, Partners identified the resources internally to sustain the program without outside philanthropic or public funding.

Strategic Focus and Learning Orientation

Lesson Learned: An effective sector workforce project must use performance data and track the progress of individual participants not because the funder demands it, but because it wants the information to improve the effectiveness of the program.

PCWD Experience: From its inception, PCWD has used its database to learn, inform program design and make revisions where and when appropriate. For example, it has reviewed the progress of different cohorts, compared the outcomes of participants being coached by different individuals, and looked at the completion rates and education progress of those involved in its pre-college training courses. The data were used to refine the program and improve operations.

Pre-employment Program

Lesson Learned: Setting high standards and being rigorous in enforcing these standards ensures that those going through a pre-employment program are prepared for the healthcare environment.

PCWD Experience: PCWD set relatively high standards for those entering the pre-employment program, but these standards reflected the expectations of the managers who would be hiring program graduates, which was critical to placement and retention. PCWD expected participants to meet the high threshold that was set. The result is that those who graduated the program had a better chance of being hired and being successful on their jobs.

Employer Engagement

Lesson Learned: Sector partnerships may be able to demonstrate and pilot new ideas for employers that they may be unwilling to invest in on their own. However once some ideas are piloted, there are certain functions that need to occur in house.

PCWD Experience : PCWD found that there needs to be ownership of the activities from the human resource and community benefit departments and from other senior managers. This ownership is sometimes diffused in a partnership with other employers.

Lesson Learned: It is important to recognize and reward supervisors who have made a commitment to supporting the career development of their employees.

PCWD Experience: PCWD recognized workforce “champions” and “ambassadors” through providing them with a Partners in Excellence Award. This recognition helped to increase the visibility of PCWD in the Partners System and created a cohort of committed managers in the hospitals. PCWD attributes the greatly increased interest in hosting PCWD interns to this recognition.

Career Pathways

Lesson Learned: More experimentation and attention needs to focus on those individuals with a high school degree who need remediation in order to qualify for high-level occupational training programs. Who is responsible for providing this training, be it the employer, the public education system, the community college system, or others, has not been fully established.

PCWD Experience: PCWD was very disappointed with the results of the pre-college math and language classes. Few of the graduates of these programs were able to successfully go on to pass the eligibility requirements for higher-level allied health degrees. PCWD went through a number of refinements over the three years of SkillWorks funding—such as using pre- and post- class assessments and changing the timing and structure of the pre college math and English classes. However, in the end, it was still not satisfied that it had an effective approach. PCWD continues to look at and pilot other approaches to meeting this need.

Chapter 5: Building Services Career Path Project (Round 2 Grantee)

The Building Services Career Path Project (BSCPP) is a labor-management collaboration among SEIU Local 615 and several employers of building services.¹⁵ The project is tripartite, involving the union, the employers, and the Voice and Future Fund (VFF), which is responsible for the project design and delivery of services. BSCPP currently defines its overall goal as developing a multi-employer, regional approach that links improved jobs across the industry with individual development. In addition, BSCPP has placed a strong emphasis on ensuring the sustainability of sector-wide training once SkillWorks funding is no longer available. BSCPP has focused its services on: (1) building-based English classes; (2) a class to prepare maintenance workers for advancement into a licensed skilled trade position; (3) a program for advancement within Harvard University; and (4) a more generalized program promoting individual advancement of building service workers not specifically tied to a particular employer.

BSCPP has a different partnership model than many of the other SkillWorks projects. Rather than forming a strong partnership with a small set of industry employers who are involved in all aspects of the project, BSCPP has created a menu of activities that involve differing sets of employers as appropriate for the particular program. The partnership model has allowed BSCPP to pursue a broad set of training interventions including offerings relevant to only a small subset of partner employers. Unikko and One Source have been the most active commercial cleaning employers in the program. Harvard University has been the most active higher education institution, although a number of other higher education and other institutions have been involved to a lesser degree. The industry structure of building services means that there is a secondary set of industry partners who are not direct employers of participants but are equally important to BSCPP's success: the owners of Boston's office properties who hold the contracts with the commercial cleaners. In the case of the Massachusetts Convention Center Authority (MCCA), the property owner has become a critical advocate for the project.

Most BSCPP services fall into three program components:

- *English classes:* ESL classes are offered at the employer work site, half on employer release time. Classes have primarily been geared to people with very limited English abilities. English class participants do not receive career coaching.
- *Occupational training:* In Year 4, occupational training focused on preparing maintenance workers for a licensed skilled trade, specifically, an HVAC license. This has included some career coaching for participants.
- *Multi-service career advancement programs:* The career advancement programs involve crafting an individual plan for each participant to reach his specific educational or career goal.

¹⁵ Building services includes a variety of occupations including janitors, security officers, maintenance and custodial workers, and some skilled trades, particularly in higher education institutions.

Changes in Program Design, Activities, and Administration During Year 4

Readers should note that while this chapter refers to activities carried out by BSCPP in “Year 4,” “Year 4” refers to the fourth year of the SkillWorks Initiative and BSCPP’s third year of program implementation. BSCPP received its first implementation grant in March 2005, Year 2 of the SkillWorks Initiative. For consistency across partnerships, this document will refer to 2007 BSCPP activities as Year 4, 2006 activities as Year 3, and its 2005 activities as Year 2, although 2005 was, in actuality, BSCPP’s first year of implementation.

Major Changes in Services and/or Course Content

Heating, Ventilating, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) and Refrigeration Technician Training

The HVAC training program had been planned in Year 3 but came to fruition in Year 4. In 2006, BSCPP identified a need to help building service workers with some experience in HVAC attain their HVAC license in order to advance into higher skilled and higher wage jobs at their current employers. After an extensive planning and recruitment effort in 2006, the first class started in January 2007. The 300-hour class on electrical theory and control enrolled 27 participants. The second class required for licensure is in refrigeration. That class is being offered in 2008. Participating employers have agreed to document the 6,000 hours of supervised work on HVAC-related tasks required for participants to apply for licensure. The International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE 877) has provided the curriculum and the teacher. In exchange, half of the participants are members of IUOE 877. The class, which finished in June, met at Boston’s Madison Park Vocational Technical School.

A few of those who enrolled in the HVAC training already had completed their required hours of classroom training. A few more had already completed their refrigeration training and upon completion of the electrical class were eligible to take the licensure exam. For these groups of individuals, BSCPP conducted a four-session refresher course through the summer to prepare them to take the licensure exam. In addition, the program coordinator has been working with these individuals to obtain the required documentation from employers and to complete the application to request the licensure exam.

Opportunity Program

In late 2006 (Year 3), BSCPP created a general advancement program aimed at workers from key BSCPP sites (but also open to those workers’ families and friends) who are seeking to acquire new skills in order to advance in their careers. BSCPP also enrolled participants from beyond these specific partnering sites. BSCPP modeled this Opportunity Program on some of the elements that were proving successful in Harvard’s Advancement Program. At the end of Year 3, BSCPP was completing assessments of individual skill levels and desired career goals. Based on assessments and discussions with the BSCPP career coach, Opportunity Program participants primarily enrolled in union-sponsored classes. With the departure of BSCPP’s longstanding career coach, the program slowed. BSCPP later decided to discontinue the program in its current form and is in the process of redesigning services for 2008 with an emphasis on group delivery of services such as resume workshops.

Career Advancement Support for Security Workers

BSCPP has a history of being responsive in its service offerings, acting quickly on new developments that create opportunities for advancement. One such opportunity arose midway through Year 4, when SEIU 615 successfully negotiated a new contract with Allied Barton covering security workers employed at Harvard University. The new contract reserved a portion of wage increases for credential- and skill-based increases. Security officers could receive a series of negotiated wage increases if they were able to pass written tests offered by Allied Barton. In total, there were five levels of tests that security officers could take over a minimum of 18 months to reach the top of the pay scale. If a security officer passed all five tests, his pay could increase by more than \$2 per hour.

Although it was not part of the original work plan set forth in BSCPP's re-funding proposal, staff set out to offer assistance to the security officers to aid them in availing themselves of this new path for advancement. BSCPP staff worked with Allied Barton to ensure that tests were available to the employees and then conducted outreach, sending letters to all union members covered by the new contract, informing them of their current skill level and their eligibility to take the new tests. BSCPP received copies of the Allied Barton tests and analyzed what skills and knowledge would be needed to pass. BSCPP held focus groups with Allied Barton employees who had already taken the tests to better understand any particular barrier that would keep the Harvard employees from passing the tests. Approximately 25 of the 250 security officers covered by the contract reached out to BSCPP for some type of assistance. Sometimes the assistance was just as simple as telling people where to go and take the tests. In a number of cases, it was explaining how the series of tests worked. In some cases, BSCPP coached individuals who might have been apprehensive about taking a test, occasionally matching them up with someone who had already passed that test successfully.

At the time that BSCPP applied for re-funding, the project anticipated expanding this type of service to downtown once a new contract for Boston security officers was put in place. SkillWorks funders were not prepared to financially support this new line of activity for BSCPP, preferring that staff focus on the original participant constituency, janitors, and the secondary constituency, skilled tradesman. Given the lack of SkillWorks funding for security officer assistance, BSCPP has not counted the individuals who received this assistance in Year 4 as part of BSCPP enrollment for this year.

Changes in Staffing, Administration, and/or Governance of the Partnership

In general, BSCPP has enjoyed greater stability in its staffing than have other SkillWorks partnerships. BSCPP has had one project director since its inception. There was, however, one significant loss in the project's staffing this year. The career coach, who had been with BSCPP since its first implementation year, left midway through the year and a junior BSCPP staff member without significant experience in workforce development took over the position on an interim basis. BSCPP has recently hired an experienced workforce development professional with significant career coaching experience who will take over that function and, most importantly, develop a new system for the delivery of career coaching for BSCPP.

This career coach staffing change also represents a further change in BSCPP administration. The previous career coach resided at VFF but was actually an employee of Jewish Vocational Services (JVS) and received some supervision from a JVS manager of incumbent worker programs. The new hire will be on staff at VFF. JVS's role in BSCPP will be smaller in 2008.

Who Is the Project Serving?

Has the Project Met its Enrollment Goals?

BSCPP enrolled 32 individuals in 2007 (Table 5.1). While 2007 enrollment was less than half the anticipated 86 enrollees for the year, at 234 enrolled over the project’s three years, BSCPP is only 12 percent below its anticipated cumulative enrollment of 266.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
Pre-employment*					
Incumbent		60	142	32	234
Four-year total for pre-employment and incumbents					234

Several factors impacted the enrollment figures in 2007. The sharp drop in enrollment from Year 3 to Year 4 was, in part, built into the project design. BSCPP recognized that negotiating the new contract with downtown commercial cleaners would take much of the physical and psychic energy not only of staff, but also of union members, during the second half of 2007. The emphasis of union members and staff was on gains through collective action, not individual advancement. Negotiating meetings involved hundreds of members. Many classes were suspended during the period of intense negotiating and no new classes were scheduled. In the words of a BSCPP project director, “You don’t run business as usual in the middle of a war zone.” BSCPP anticipated the impact of collective bargaining and planned lower enrollment targets for 2007.

Enrollment figures do not fully reflect all of the individuals served by BSCPP in 2007. As was discussed previously in this chapter, BSCPP provided some assistance to Harvard security workers. Since this work had not been proposed to SkillWorks funders in BSCPP’s re-funding application and was not approved by funders when it was proposed for Year 5, BSCPP has not counted those participants in its enrollment totals.

Enrollment still turned out to be lower than expected. BSCPP anticipated that Harvard would enroll 15 new individuals in its Advancement Program but only 2 were enrolled.¹⁶ Harvard staff reported that they were close to capacity with current participants and did not conduct broad outreach in 2007. Enrollment in building-based English classes at three of the four sites was lower than desired. BSCPP had also anticipated running an Advancement Program at the Hancock Building, but that never came to fruition due to lack of management interest. BSCPP had anticipated running an additional financial management class in 2007, but that was never offered.

While new enrollment in Year 4 declined from Year 3, many more participants received services in 2007. In fact, 50 of the participants enrolled at the end of Year 3 received the majority or the entirety of their services in Year 4. Participants enrolled in the HVAC class in Year 3 actually started their electrical class in 2007, and participants enrolled in the Opportunity Program were primarily going through assessments at the end of 2006 and enrolled in classes and worked with the career coach more closely in 2007. Detailed enrollment figures are given in Table 5.2.

¹⁶ The Harvard Advancement Program is managed and staffed by Harvard’s Bridge to Learning and Literacy Program, which acts as the service provider. The program grew out of SEIU’s 2005 collective bargaining agreement with the university, which set aside \$300,000 over the life of the six-year contract to build career path opportunities for SEIU workers at the university. BSCPP is in regular communication with Harvard, although SkillWorks funds do not directly support services.

Table 5.2: Breakdown of BSCPP Classes and Enrollment in 2007					
Program/Class	2005 Enrolled*	2006 Enrolled	2007 Enrolled	Status	Description
Services with New Enrollment in 2007					
<i>Multi-Service Advancement Programs</i>					
Opportunity Program		25	1	2006 enrollees primarily received services in 2007. Program activity in first half of 2007. Discontinued in later half of year while service delivery underwent redesign.	Services vary depending on need of participant. Includes career coaching as necessary. No explicit timeframe for completion.
Harvard Advancement		40	2	Ongoing.	Services vary depending on need of participant. Includes career coaching as necessary. No explicit timeframe for completion.
<i>Occupational Training</i>					
HVAC services		5	1	Four session refresher class offered in summer of 2007. Ongoing work with BSCPP program manager.	These participants have completed course work and supervised hours. Currently receiving assistance in documenting hours and preparing for licensing exam.
<i>Workplace ESL Classes</i>					
Hancock			14	Completed late 2007.	Two hours per week for one year.
State			11	Completed late 2007.	Two hours per week for one year.
Hynes			5	Completed late 2007.	Two hours per week for one year.
BCEC II		8	3	Completed late 2007.	Two hours per week for one year.
Services Continued from 2006					
<i>Occupational Training</i>					
HVAC class		27		Electrical module ended in June 2007. Refrigeration started in 2008.	Two 19-week modules: electrical and refrigeration. Each module includes a four-hour class twice a week.
<i>Workplace ESL Classes</i>					
MBTA		5		Completed late 2007	Two hours per week for one year.
<i>Financial Literacy</i>					
Financial planning		15		Original course offered Fall 2006. 2006 participants have continued monthly follow up based on participant interest.	Three-session class followed by counseling and group follow-up.
*No one who originally enrolled in 2005 participated in these classes in 2007					

Is the Project Serving the Targeted Population?

The profile of newly enrolled participants is similar to earlier years, particularly to BSCPP's first year of enrollment. Participants were generally immigrants, with limited English capability and limited education. Only one participant enrolled in 2007 listed English as his primary language. More than two-thirds of enrollees did not have a high school diploma. Educational attainment and language proficiency dropped in Year 4 as compared to Year 3, but this has to do with the programs for which BSCPP enrolled participants. In Year 3, BSCPP had enrolled more than 30 participants in the HVAC program. HVAC participants, who are mostly American-born, are required to have their high school degree in order to enroll. In Year 4, BSCPP only enrolled one individual into HVAC and the vast majority of new enrollment was for building-based English classes. Boston residents account for less than half of Year 4 enrollment, although the portion living in Boston did increase from the previous year.

Table 5.3: Incumbent Demographic Data								
	Year 1 Cohort		Year 2 Cohort		Year 3 Cohort		Year 4 Cohort	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Enrollment								
Total number enrolled			60		142		32	
Primary language								
English			1	2%	27	21%	1	3%
Not English			55	98%	104	79%	29	97%
Total			56	100%	131	100%	30	100%
Missing			4		11		2	
Boston								
Yes, Boston resident			36	62%	45	32%	13	43%
No, not Boston resident			22	38%	96	68%	17	57%
Total			58	100%	141	100%	30	100%
Missing			2		1		2	
Highest educational level and certification at enrollment								
Neither GED or high school diploma			30	56%	37	32%	16	67%
GED certificate or high school diploma			14	26%	49	43%	5	21%
Some post-secondary course work			6	11%	14	12%	2	8%
Received post-secondary degree			4	7%	14	12%	1	4%
Total			54	100%	114	100%	24	100%
Missing			6		28		8	
Annual household income								
Under \$10,000			D/U*	D/U	D/U	D/U	D/U	D/U
Between \$10,000 and \$24,999			D/U	D/U	D/U	D/U	D/U	D/U
Between \$25,000 and 39,999			D/U	D/U	D/U	D/U	D/U	D/U
Over \$40,000			D/U	D/U	D/U	D/U	D/U	D/U
Total			D/U	D/U	D/U	D/U	D/U	D/U
Missing			D/U		D/U		D/U	

*D/U = Data unavailable.

As was the case in previous years, no information is provided from BSCPP on the income level of participants because many are employed at two or three jobs. In addition, many are supporting families in their native countries and may live in a house with several unrelated individuals, making it difficult to report on their earner status.

Participant Outcomes

Employment Outcomes

Job retention is impressively high among BSCPP participants, although this rate of retention may have more to do with industry dynamics than program activities. The building services industry has little turnover and the BSCPP participant pool reflects that high rate of industry-wide retention. While the overall turnover rate among union members is unknown, BSCPP staff feel that that the 94 percent retention rate for participants is on average with the norm, although it could be slightly higher than the norm.

	Year 1 Cohort	Year 2 Cohort	Year 3 Cohort	Year 4 Cohort	Total
Total participants enrolled		60	142	32	234
Participants with known employment status*		59	140	32	231
Percentage of participants with known employment status who are still employed in 2007		97%	92%	94%	94%

The high retention rate is explained by the relatively good wages and benefits negotiated by the union and the dearth of better or even comparable employment alternatives given the language and educational barriers faced by many in the industry.

An analysis of wage gains in 2007 illustrates why retention is so high. Union contracts ensured that all members, and hence all BSCPP participants, received a wage increase in 2007. In fact, many participants working for the downtown commercial cleaning companies or those working at BCEC or Hynes received two wage increases over the course of the year.

N=216*	Wage Increases or Other Economic Gains	% of Still-Employed Incumbents	Promotions*	% of Still-Employed Incumbents
Total	216	100.0%	5	2.3%
Verified merit-related achievement**	7	4.2%	5	2.3%

*N is the number of participants with known employment status who are still employed with partner employers.
**Merit-related achievements reported by BSCPP. No independent employer verification.

N=216*	Wage Increases or Other Economic Gains	% of Still-Employed Incumbents	Promotions*	% of Still-Employed Incumbents
Total	216	100%	15	6.9%
Verified merit-related achievement**	22	10.2%	15	6.9%

*N is the number of participants with known employment status who are still employed with partner employers.
**Merit-related achievements reported by BSCPP. No independent employer verification.

In addition to the contractually negotiated wage increases, seven participants received a merit-based economic gain in 2007 that BSCPP attributes to program services. Most of the economic gains were the result of promotions. Of the seven individuals who received an economic gain, five received it as the result of a promotion. These included:

- A BCEC English class participant was promoted to crew chief.
- A janitor who received career and higher education counseling in the Harvard University Advancement Program received a new full-time job in the mailroom.
- An HVAC participant was promoted to a management position in the facilities division of the university and the vacancy created by his promotion was filled by another HVAC participant.
- Another HVAC participant who only needed one course to complete the credits needed to apply for HVAC licensure received a promotion from \$21/hour to \$31/hour contingent on his timely receipt of the HVAC license.

In addition to the economic gains due to promotions, BSCPP notes two other economic gains for participants, in one case directly and in the other case indirectly, related to involvement in the career path program:

- A participant in the 2005 entry maintenance class who then continued on in classes at the union to prepare for citizenship, recently received a hair dressers license and is earning additional income from side work in that field.
- An HVAC participant earned additional overtime pay estimated at \$4,000 based on skills gained in the program.

Not counted in the above figures are two current individuals involved in paid internships as part of their participation in BSCPP. While not a permanent economic gain, the paid internships do supplement participants' existing wages.

The timing of the HVAC program means there are no gains to report as a result of licensure, but that should change in 2008. One HVAC participant has already received his license in 2008 and six more were ready as of early 2008 to apply for the licensure test.

Perhaps somewhat surprising is the fact that there were no new promotions or economic gains for the individuals who enrolled in the Opportunity Program that was designed to promote career path advancement with coaching for particularly motivated individuals. The Opportunity Program had shown immediate success when it started in late 2006. Although enrollment took place toward the end of the year, the Opportunity Program still yielded four advancements last year. The only progress noted this year is one paid internship. Most of the participants showed a continued commitment to skill enhancement, with 20 of the 26 enrolled taking classes at the union. However, this did not translate into promotions or economic gains. Based on discussions with BSCPP, there are a few factors that have contributed to these outcomes. First, it is difficult to judge which incumbent workers are truly ready to embrace a job change so initial enrollment is a challenge. The demands of their current jobs slow the process and their relatively good unionized wages decrease their willingness to risk change. The lack of clear career paths within cleaning companies further complicates the advancement process.

Not counted in Tables 5.5 and 5.6 are the economic advancements made by Allied Barton security guards employed at Harvard University. As was mentioned earlier, BSCPP worked with the security guards as a result of a new provision negotiated in their contract that enabled the security guards to earn incremental wage increases based on the completion of a series of exams that tested their knowledge of security operations. SEIU sent a letter (with BSCPP staff assistance in its preparation) to the roughly 250 security guards informing them of their right to take the exams to receive a wage increase, explaining the exam process, and letting them know where they could take the exams. BSCPP staff then provided assistance for roughly 10 percent (25) of the security guards. BSCPP provided individual coaching and exam preparation for approximately half of that group. Of the 250 security guards, approximately 180 have taken the exams with an approximately 91–92 percent pass rate. That translates into more than 160 guards receiving a wage increase as a result of taking and passing the exams. While BSCPP's role in actual "skill enhancement" for the security guards was relatively small, its research on the exams, its communication with workers, and its provision of test prep in some instances, ensured that the maximum number of guards could take advantage of the skill-led advancement negotiated by SEIU.

Despite the individual achievements described above, taken collectively, the number of promotions or economic gains in 2007 among BSCPP participants is quite low, just 4 percent, which is well below the 34 participants planned in BSCPP's re-funding proposal. The challenges to career advancement have been thoroughly discussed in BSCPP evaluations in prior years and many of them remain the same:

- Cleaning companies have notably flat organizational structures that offer limited paths for advancement.
- Participants in BSCPP's workplace English classes usually have very limited English capabilities entering the class. The English skills participants are gaining in the class generally allow them to perform their existing job better. To develop the English skills necessary for advancement represents a long-term, multi-year commitment.
- Many participants hold multiple jobs. To accept a promotion can disrupt the other jobs, making the change economically nonviable.
- HVAC participants need to meet steep requirements of class hours and work experience before applying for their license. While a few participants who entered the program with some classroom hours already completed and years of HVAC on-the-job experience are now ready to apply for their license, for others the timeframe may be much slower. One interview with an HVAC employer suggested that some participants may have trouble acquiring the 6,000 hours of experience given the amount of hands-on HVAC experience they currently receive on the job.

Given the constraints listed above, BSCPP's goals listed in its re-funding proposal for 2008 of 150 workers having an economic gain from specific services over the life of the project seems highly ambitious. The 150 likely included 80–90 economic gains for security officers whose training SkillWorks chose not to fund. Even if the targeted economic gains are adjusted downward to 60–70 over the life of the project, in Year 4 BSCPP would have to triple the economic gains seen cumulatively in the first three years to reach its goal.

Skill Enhancement Outcomes

Given the generally low levels of educational attainment among the BSCPP participants, completion of a high school education or its equivalent is a notable accomplishment. Three individuals have completed the Adult Diploma Program (ADP) during their enrollment in the Harvard University Career Advancement Program. Five others have started an ADP program. One participant who was in high school at the time of her participation in the entry maintenance class has since graduated from high school.

BSCPP service intervention has yet to lead to college enrollment. Based on interviews with Harvard University Bridge staff, there are some participants who are working toward that goal and may achieve that goal in 2008. Harvard's career coach is actively working with Bunker Hill Community College's Transitions Program for one participant who needs to improve her writing skills in order to enter the desired surgical tech program.

	Number of Participants Who Have Realized Skill Enhancement Outcomes			
	Year 1 Cohort	Year 2 Cohort	Year 3 Cohort	Year 4 Cohort
Enrollment				
Entered college		0	0	0
Enrolled in credentialed program		1	32	1
Enrolled in sector-specific training		20	10	0
Completion				
Graduated from college		0	0	0
Received industry-recognized credential		1	1	0
Completed sector-specific training		19	10	0

BSCPP has run classes to help participants receive both industry-recognized credentials and sector-specific training. BSCPP’s major foray into sector-specific training was its entry maintenance program, run in Year 2. In addition, it ran a one-day workshop in clean room cleaning practices in Year 3. Neither was run again. In Year 3, BSCPP enrolled participants in classes to prepare them for HVAC licenses. The 32 Year 3 cohort individuals and one member of the Year 4 cohort are enrolled in the HVAC credentialing program.

Other measures of educational activity perhaps better capture the commitment of BSCPP participants to skill enhancement. In fact, BSCPP sees one of the most significant outcomes of the SkillWorks project as an increasing commitment to skill enhancement on the part of participants as witnessed by the number of participants who have continued with their education beyond the completion of their BSCPP-sponsored course. Participants have been given a “taste” of educational opportunity through SkillWorks classes and many have then chosen to continue their education through classes offered at the union hall. These classes, primarily English and computer classes, are not financially supported by SkillWorks, but have proven to be an important vehicle for continued individual improvement.

Overall, 92 participants (40 percent) have gone on to take additional classes at the union. Of the participants in the first year cohort, 26 of the 60 enrolled have gone on to take more classes. An additional 57 of the 142 participants enrolled in Year 3 went on to pursue additional coursework. Even among those who enrolled as recently as 2007, 9 have pursued additional educational activity either sequentially or simultaneously.

Participants have benefited from skill enhancement in ways not directly tied to career advancement. For instance, the number of participants pursuing their U.S. citizenship is a notable outcome for BSCPP participants. In total, BSCPP reports 25 participants are actively pursuing citizenship either through the union-sponsored classes or on their own. The English classes have been an important contributor to this outcome. The classes have given workers the English competence as well as the confidence they need to seek citizenship.

Employer Outcomes

The outcomes of the Building Services Career Path Project from the employer perspective have been limited. However, this has more to do with the dynamics of the sector than any actions taken or not taken by BSCPP. BSCPP is unique among SkillWorks partnerships in that its long-term success has depended far less on positive employer outcomes. There are several reasons for this:

- From the program’s inception, employers were not demanding significant skill enhancement. Much of the building services sector does not place great weight on

occupational skill. Entry into the industry does not depend on holding a particular skill set and many advancement opportunities, such as supervisory roles, are not directly tied to obtaining a particular occupational skill. While employers were at times asking cleaners to step into maintenance positions, they did not necessarily reward that occupational advancement with a pay increase. Even English language skills are of limited value since the vast majority of workers speak Spanish on the job; there are few opportunities where English is regularly spoken. Even when employers recognize the value of English skills, the level of proficiency required is limited to simple phrases.¹⁷

- While other partnerships might offer higher retention rates as a desired employer outcome, the overall rate of retention is already so high in building services that it is difficult for BSCPP to offer that realistic program benefit. A few years ago, there was an assumption of high turnover in this industry as well. Immigration issues as well as improving conditions and the promise of continuing job quality improvements have slowed turnover industry wide.
- Building owners of commercial office buildings are a separate constituency. While they are not direct employers of commercial janitors, they influence how the actual employers, commercial cleaning companies, view the value of education and training offerings for janitors. As key real estate owners in the city, the building owners take a long-term perspective on the city's economy. While no building owners were interviewed for this evaluation, BSCPP argues that building owners recognize the importance of educating the city's immigrant population as critical to the city's long-term economic and civic success.
- The strength of the union impacts the traditional model for workforce development that suggests economic gains come through skill enhancement. In some ways, the union has pushed for a model of wage-led skill enhancement in which the union negotiates for higher wages and the employers then ask for higher skills in their workforce to justify the higher wages. As wage increases negotiated in SEIU's 2002 contract were put into place over the past five years, employers have increased their interest in English skills. With wage advancements set in the new 2007 contract, employers are becoming even more interested in skill enhancement to match the higher wages they will pay.
- The strength of the union also alters the path to project sustainability. The opinions of participants and the impact their opinions have on the larger union membership are at least as important to the long-term sustainability of the program as the employers' perspective. Ultimately, employers must value the training enough to contribute to the training fund, but the threat of a strike on the part of union members if the requested training is not supported clearly influences their decision making as well.

While the factors discussed above lay out a rationale for limited employer outcomes, there are still some positive program benefits from the employers' perspective.

Improved Customer Service

Employers have seen some improvement in English skills as a result of the building-based classes, which they believe allows them to better serve building customers. A cleaning services employer

¹⁷ There are exceptions to this characterization. The commercial cleaner for the Massachusetts Convention Center Authority (MCCA), Unicco, received a clear message from MCCA that basic English skills was a part of customer service critical to MCCA's business and hence important for Unicco to address.

working for MCCA suggested that now his employees who took the class can direct an exhibitor to a particular room within the convention center. MCCA, while not the direct employer, particularly values the customer service gains and has encouraged its food service vendor, Aramark, to introduce English classes for its employees as well.

A commercial cleaning employer providing services for one of the major downtown buildings said that she did not think that participants were using their English more as a result of the class, but that their comprehension increased. Now, students would understand when a customer asked them to dust their desk. Both employers mentioned that student progress was limited by the fact that the entire crew team and the supervisor generally speak in Spanish to each other, offering limited opportunity to practice English.

Improved Employee Confidence

English class graduates are more willing to put themselves in environments where English is the primary language. The employer active at the convention center noted that many of his employees with limited English would avoid performing any tasks that would take them onto the convention floor where they would encounter English speakers. Many of his class graduates are now more willing to venture into areas of the building where they might encounter someone speaking English.

Employee Job Satisfaction

Employers noted that some participants appear more committed to work as a result of their involvement in the program. Participants are appreciative of the release time opportunity for English classes and strive to be additionally productive in their other work hours. In workplaces such as Harvard where BSCPP participants have accessed promotions and wage gains through the Harvard Advancement Program, participants are additionally motivated to perform their current positions well in the hopes of securing a new position in the future.

Increased Awareness of Workers' Advancement Potential

One of the program benefits noted by Harvard University's Bridge Program, which administers the Harvard-SEIU 615 Advancement Program, is that it has increased awareness throughout the institution that "a custodian can do more than cleaning." Internships have been a particularly useful vehicle to demonstrate the potential of the SEIU 615 workers while workers simultaneously gain critical experience. To the extent this cultural shift is broadly shared, it should help the potential for advancement in the future.

Too Early to Assess Employer Outcomes on HVAC

Employers have yet to experience great benefits from the HVAC training program. One employer interviewed for the evaluation noted that there certainly could be an advantage to hiring from within for an HVAC opening because the ramp-up time for new employees is close to 18 months. Of concern, this same employer did not expect to reap any benefits of the program for quite some time. Anyone applying for the HVAC licensure must have documented 6,000 hours of direct time working on HVAC activities. The men he has sent to the program are not getting sufficient experience to apply any time soon for their HVAC license. BSCPP may need to look more closely at the work settings participants are in to determine whether achieving licensure is a realistic goal in the near term for these participants.

System Change Outcomes

Enhanced Capacity of Service Providers

BSCPP has had limited partnerships with other service providers, so its impact on other service providers is generally limited, but there appears to have been some impact in 2007. While BSCPP has worked with JVS over the years, perhaps the project's closest relationship has been with Harvard University's Bridge Program, the in-house service provider for the university's continuing education and career advancement programs. The Bridge Program is a highly regarded program for educational advancement; however, its course offerings since its inception have tended to reflect the academic nature of the institution and nothing has been offered that would be considered occupational or sector-specific. Interviews with Bridge staff suggest a modest shift in its offerings that is, in part, due to ongoing discussions with BSCPP regarding the need for career advancement. This year, the Bridge designed and piloted an "Introduction to Office Skills" course that is designed to help workers who have already gained sufficient English literacy skills, but need to develop comfort and competence in basic office skills such as answering the phone, transferring calls, and using the copier. The course was designed to help workers, such as the SEIU janitors, to access entry-level administrative positions at the university, a key stepping stone for career advancement. The Bridge views this type of occupational offering as critical moving forward for addressing workers' desire for internal mobility.

Impacts on the Sector

Sustainability of Education and Training Programs Guaranteed

In contract negotiations completed in 2007, commercial employers agreed to fund a joint union-management training fund supported by an hourly contribution that will provide ongoing support for educational activities of building services employees. In 2008, employers will contribute two cents an hour per employee hour to the fund, building to five cents an hour by the end of the contract. Once the employer contribution has fully ramped up, the training fund should contribute \$750,000 annually for education and training. This is the first time such a training fund has been supported by building service employers in Boston. This landmark agreement was at least in part due to BSCPP's work that reinforced the value of education and training to employers as well as to union members, making it a priority issue to be addressed in the new contract.

Enhanced Commitment to Education and Training throughout the Union

The sustainability of the education and training programs for building service workers is in large part due to the enhanced commitment of SEIU 615's membership to skill enhancement. One illustration of this point is the description of the final moments of the collective bargaining process with the commercial cleaners. The union had already secured impressive wage gains over the course of the contract. The training fund was the last issue on the table and workers made clear that they were willing to strike if employers did not agree to the training fund. In the final hour of negotiations, employers agreed to the training fund and the contract was settled.

Another sign of building service workers' increased commitment is seen in the demand for union-sponsored classes. Demand for ESOL, computer, and citizenship classes is growing among the union membership. Over the course of the SkillWorks project, SEIU's Voice and Future Fund has expanded

the union's class offerings, but demand far exceeds supply as the union is constrained by funds and facility space.

Yet another sign of the influence of the career path project on the larger building services workforce is apparent in the negotiating tactics of the higher education division of the union. There is strong interest in promoting career advancement opportunities within the area's colleges and universities. SEIU reached an agreement with Boston University to look first at internal candidates for job openings. SEIU has also successfully negotiated some new apprenticeship slots in the skilled trades for building service workers and is seeking more slots with other universities in upcoming negotiations.

Impacts Related to Public Policy

BSCPP'S executive director has been actively involved with Workforce Solutions Group in advancing the SkillWorks public policy agenda. Given its service population, BSCPP has been particularly involved in the policy agenda related to workplace English, responding to issues related to English Works and English for New Bostonians.

Conclusions

BSCPP's direct employment and skill enhancement outcomes resulting from service delivery are modest overall. However, this project's accomplishments, more than any of the other SkillWorks partnerships to date, rest more on system change. The successful negotiation of a jointly funded and administered training fund as part of the new downtown commercial cleaning contract ensures a steady source of funds for skill enhancement into perpetuity. Not only is the long-term sustainability of the education and training programs a cause to celebrate, so is the awareness and importance that the union and its membership now place on skill enhancement, as was evidenced by their hard-fought battle to win employer support of the training fund.

Key Learnings/Implications for Partnership Selection in Phase II

Carefully Consider Industry Dynamics in Choosing Future Partnerships

Lesson Learned: Industry dynamics strongly affect a partnership's ability to achieve SkillWorks's desired programmatic, participant, and employer outcomes.

BSCPP Experience: A sector focus can help create a clear advancement strategy with appropriate courses for advancement or it can provide access to a particular population in need of education. While perhaps the original intent of SkillWorks was the former, in many ways BSCPP represents the latter. BSCPP has faced an uphill battle driving skill-based career advancement within the building services sector. As has been discussed in this and previous evaluation reports, large portions of the sector, particularly within the commercial cleaning companies, have very flat hierarchies that offer minimal opportunity for advancement. Universities offer a greater variety of positions that could be accessed through education and skill enhancement. Despite this recognition, a large portion of BSCPP's efforts have focused on English classes for commercial cleaning workers. This makes complete sense in terms of the need of the population but not the opportunity for advancement. Ultimately, if setting the maximum number of participants on a career path is the primary goal of funders, building services may not be an appropriate sector choice.

Set Realistic Goals for Advancement and Identify Practical Interim Measures

Lesson Learned: In many cases, promotions or economic gains from skill enhancement is a long-term outcome. A set of more interim measures, potentially customized to the partnership, would provide a more realistic picture of progress and provide greater accountability for the partnerships.

BSCPP Experience: For instance, within BSCPP, participants have enrolled in a year-long English class, often with only the most basic English capabilities. In some cases, individuals are illiterate in their primary language. If advancement, as employers have suggested in interviews, is based on written and oral proficiency in English, that process could take five or more years. There needs to be some intermediate benchmarks testing, such as annual BEST Plus scores for oral and REEP for written proficiency, provided to funders. Similarly, if a maintenance worker in the HVAC program needs 6,000 hours to take the licensing exam, then BSCPP should be tracking the number of documented HVAC hours completed annually.

Value of Union Involvement

Lesson Learned: Unions have the potential to be strong partnership leaders

BSCPP Experience: BSCPP shows the value of union involvement in SkillWorks partnerships. The union is a natural link between the workplace and the workers. Sector understanding, employer knowledge, and participant relationships make the union well-suited to a sector-focused skill enhancement project. Furthermore, the collective bargaining process offers the potential to lock in career paths as well as potential funding streams that can keep career advancement viable long past the end of SkillWorks funding. It should be recognized, however, that the very core belief of unions is around collective gain as the strategy to achieve individual gain. Ultimately, the union's focus is on helping all members earn better wages rather than helping a few succeed above others. SEIU's highly successful 2007 negotiation with commercial cleaners in Boston shows the power of unions to raise the standard of living for all its members. While a highly successful model in this case, it is not always in sync with a workforce development mindset that encourages individual paths for career development.

The experience of 2007 suggests that some sacrifices in service delivery and individual employment outcomes may be necessary in order to achieve the collective gains that will benefit thousands. BSCPP enrollments were below targets. A number of courses that were proposed for the year did not get off the ground. Career coaching was limited for half the year. Even the courses that were running went on hiatus during the intense period of negotiations. The benefits to thousands of workers resulting from the contract make the tradeoff a worthwhile one to make, but a tradeoff nonetheless.

The union estimates a present value over the next generation of \$26 million for the new training fund. Such an investment has tremendous potential to impact individual skill development. To maximize that impact, continued vigilance will be required in assessing whether the training fund programs actually lead members to their desired employment and educational goals.

Test New Models

Lesson Learned: Testing new models of industry change and service delivery is a viable strategy, especially if achievement of systems change is considered as important as participant outcomes.

BSCPP Experience: The funding of BSCPP is a good example of the original intent of SkillWorks, which was to test new models of delivery of workforce development services. BSCPP has tested a

number of skill enhancement models. BSCPP has been quick to assess their success or failure and to rework its offerings. The learnings from programs that do not achieve expectations are at least as important as learnings from those that do, as long as the lessons are shared and understood. In Phase II, SkillWorks should not be risk averse in choosing a broad array of service models and should remain committed to sharing the lessons learned from the failures as well as the successes.

Chapter 6: Partnership for Automotive Career Education—(Round 2 Grantee)

The Partnership for Automotive Career Education (PACE) represents a partnership involving eight automotive service employers, two educational institutions, and two Boston community-based service organizations. Led by the Asian American Civic Association (AACA) as fiscal agent in partnership with the Urban League, PACE is seeking to create a structure for a lasting collaboration between the automotive industry and community-based organizations (CBOs) that will help low-income workers find successful career paths in the labor market. SkillWorks' Year 4 represented the PACE partnership's third year of program implementation.

PACE has chosen to focus on the unmet need for automotive maintenance technicians, a broad labor classification in the automotive industry. The career paths for automotive maintenance technicians across the spectrum of employers are strictly defined and well-rewarded, making advancement opportunities feasible across a range of employment levels. The PACE CBO-employer partnership has joined together with training organizations to help automotive service employers fill entry-level positions with workers who are qualified, trained, and motivated to access these career opportunities. PACE also provides training and limited coaching for incumbent workers, fostering improved retention rates and advancement opportunities. The two principal modules of PACE training, Module 1 and Module 2, are packaged together as a two-semester program. Depending on the student, job placement takes place at any time during the training. Students earn college credits at the end of each course, and these can be used towards an associate's degree at any higher education institution.

Changes in Program Design, Activities, and Administration During Year 4

Major Changes in Services and/or Course Content

In 2007, PACE staff added and/or refined critical program elements to improve the functioning of the pre-employment and incumbent programs.

- *Automotive English:* While this class was offered in previous years to Module 1 and Module 2 participants who needed the extra support, the curriculum was revised and improved significantly in Year 4. In terms of implementation, in 2007 any participant whose test scores showed the need for additional support was required to attend the class. It was offered for an hour and a half before each class meeting in the Auto Shop.
- *Job readiness curriculum:* The curriculum for the Workplace Communication I course was revised in 2007 to place greater emphasis on the job search process, soft skills needed in the auto industry, and participant confidence building.
- *Workplace Communications II:* Workplace Communications II is a job search/job readiness class that was added to the PACE courses in fall 2007. The course was added to continue offering job search skills and a time to discuss the job search process with those individuals who were not placed between Modules 1 and 2, as had originally been expected. The class is held weekly for Module 2 participants.
- *ESOL via Distance Learning:* PACE implemented its Distance Learning ESOL program in the fall of 2007. Five participants enrolled but no one completed the course. Barriers to

completion included a need for consistent computer access, significant time to commit to the course, and adequate discipline for independent self-direction. In 2008, a revised approach is being implemented—interested participants will be matched up with a tutor for 10–12 weeks before determining their ability, motivation, and readiness to transition to the distance learning format.

Table 6.1 provides a summary of courses offered, including enrollment numbers and course eligibility (“x” indicates that participants are eligible to register for the course).

	# Enrolled	Participants	
		Pre-employment	Incumbent
Automotive Repair 1 (Module 1)	41	X	
Automotive Repair 2 (Module 2)	25	X	X
Automotive English	12	X	
Workplace Communication 1	41	X	
Workplace Communication 2 (only offered in fall)	12	X	X
Job Readiness	41	X	
Money Management (provided by Acción)	32	X	
Credit (provided by Acción)	32	X	
ASE Test Prep—Brakes	20		X
ASE Test Prep—Steering and Suspension	24		X
ESOL Tutoring and Distance Learning	7	4	3

Changes in Staffing, Administration, and/or Governance of the Partnership

PACE experienced a number of changes in its staff and governance structure:

- Three new employer partners were added to the PACE partnership: Acura of Boston, Superior Auto Centers, and Herb Chambers Honda. Each of these partners has committed to interview and hire PACE graduates as it has openings, provide input into program design, conduct guest lectures in PACE classes, and participate in mock interviews, job shadowing, and on-the-job mentoring.
- PACE formalized a way to discuss and work with employers that are not full partners but have participated with PACE by reviewing graduate resumes, conducting interviews, working with the job developer, and hiring program graduates. These 40 employers are now called the “Hiring Network.” Currently, 19 of these employers have hired pre-employment participants and supported their continued training.
- At the beginning of 2007, La Alianza Hispana (LAH) decided that it would discontinue its participation as a partner. In 2005 and 2006, LAH was partially responsible for participant outreach and recruitment. The decision to leave the partnership was motivated by a combination of factors including a change in organizational leadership and the board’s decision to focus more intently on mission-critical programs (PACE was a small part of their overall portfolio). The other two community-based organizations, AACA and Urban League of Eastern Massachusetts (ULEM), have recruited more heavily to cover the gap. All other partners remained the same.
- As was stated in the Year 3 report, PACE’s program director left in late 2006 and an interim director oversaw the project until a new director, Sarah Kingsbury, was hired in early 2007.

- PACE created a new position in 2007: Operations Coordinator. This position was designed to assist with enrollment logistics, data management, and overall program operations. Jill Uchiyama was hired in February 2007 to fill the position.
- With the receipt of funding from the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund, PACE was able to hire a second career coach to help support incumbent participants. Shortly after the second career coach was hired, the first coach left his position. This coaching position has been vacant since late 2007. PACE is now in the process of reviewing resumes and applications.

Who is the Project Serving?

Has the Project Met its Enrollment Goals?

PACE enrolled 41 pre-employment participants in 2007 (see Table 6.2), which exactly matches its enrollment goal. This is also the largest number of pre-employment participants trained in one year by PACE. For incumbent courses, PACE did not enroll any new employer-referred participants in Module 1 or 2. It was only anticipating enrolling one per class so this is generally consistent with expectations. The number of incumbents who took an ASE Test Prep course for the first time, though, was lower than anticipated. The goal had been 40 participants and 2 were enrolled.¹⁸

	Year 1 Cohort	Year 2 Cohort	Year 3 Cohort	Year 4 Cohort	TOTAL
Pre-employment		34	33	41	108
Incumbent—new Module 2 enrollees*		8	1	0	9
Incumbent—ASE Test Prep enrollees**		106	21	2	129
Four-Year Total for Pre-employment and Incumbents					246

*“Module 2 enrollees” are employer-referred incumbents who enrolled in Module 1 and/or Module 2; they may or may not have completed an ASE Test Prep course.
 ***“ASE Test Prep enrollees” does not include enrollees who participated in Module 1 or Module 2. The number of participants enrolled in Years 2 and 3 has been adjusted from that reported in previous reports to reflect new information submitted by employers to PACE staff.

Is the Project Serving the Targeted Population?¹⁹

Tables 6.3 and 6.4 illustrate that PACE was successful in serving the SkillWorks target population—low-skilled, low-income, Boston residents—though slightly less so than in previous years.

In Year 4, 73 percent of pre-employment participants were Boston residents. This is down slightly from previous years, when the average was closer to 84 percent.

Participant recruitment is the dual responsibility of AACA and the Urban League. Since each of these organizations serves targeted populations (AACA serving limited English speaking immigrants and

¹⁸ Based on feedback from PACE staff, it seems that the enrollment goals for 2007 may have included individuals who had accessed services in previous years. If this was the case, PACE was closer to its target, with 34 individuals participating in an ASE Test Prep course in 2007.

¹⁹ Demographic data are only available for participants who enrolled in Module 1 and/or 2. Employers did not provide this information for ASE Test Preparation course enrollees. Since there were no new “Module 2 Incumbent Enrollees” in 2007, the discussion in this section only pertains to pre-employment participants.

their families and the Urban League serving African Americans and other people of color), the program participants reflect the organizational diversity.

	Year 1 Cohort		Year 2 Cohort		Year 3 Cohort		Year 4 Cohort	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Enrollment								
Total number enrolled			34		33		41	
Primary language								
English			18	55%	9	27%	20	49%
Not English			15	45%	24	73%	21	51%
Total			33	100%	33	100%	41	100%
Missing			1		0		0	
Boston								
Yes, Boston resident			29	85%	27	82%	30	73%
No, not Boston resident			5	15%	6	18%	11	27%
Total			34	100%	33	100%	41	100%
Missing			0		0		0	
Highest educational level and certification at enrollment								
Neither GED or high school diploma			2	6%	2	6%	2	5%
GED certificate or high school diploma			27	82%	29	88%	30	75%
Some post-secondary course work			4	12%	0	0%	2	5%
Received post-secondary degree			0	0%	2	6%	6	15%
Total			33	100%	33	100%	40	100%
Missing			1		0		1	
Annual household income								
Under \$10,000			8	28%	6	21%	10	26%
Between \$10,000 and \$24,999			10	34%	13	45%	19	50%
Between \$25,000 and 39,999			8	28%	7	24%	8	21%
Over \$40,000			3	10%	3	10%	1	3%
Total			29	100%	29	100%	38	100%
Missing			5		4		3	

Seventy-five percent of Year 4 participants have a high school diploma and 20 percent of participants have completed some post-secondary work (5 percent) or received a post-secondary degree (15 percent). PACE’s Year 4 population is more highly educated than in past years, where 85 percent in Year 2 and 94 percent in Year 3 had only a high-school diploma or less. The change in educational attainment is likely attributable to PACE’s more restrictive screening process and the fact that five of the six individuals who enrolled in 2007 received post-secondary degrees in their home country (outside the US), suggesting that they likely still face significant barriers to employment including English language competencies.

PACE participants continue to be a mix of immigrants and longer-term English-speaking Boston residents. The percentage split between these two groups is nearly equal, with 51 percent of the participant population indicating that their primary language is not English.

Despite the higher level of educational attainment, PACE’s Year 4 participants actually earn less than cohorts in previous years. In 2007, 76 percent of enrollees earned less than \$24,999 at the time of enrollment. This compares with 62 percent in Year 2 and 66 percent in Year 3. Only one current PACE participant had a household income over \$40,000 at enrollment, and they had a family of four. According to the information, we can assume that all PACE Year 4 participants are “low-income.”

	Year 1 Cohort		Year 2 Cohort		Year 3 Cohort		Year 4 Cohort	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Enrollment								
Total number enrolled			8		1			
Primary language								
English			2	25%	0	0%		
Not English			6	75%	1	100%		
Total			8	100%	1	100%		
Missing			0		0			
Boston								
Yes, Boston resident			3	38%	1	100%		
No, not Boston resident			5	63%	0	0%		
Total			8	100%	1	100%		
Missing			0		0			
Highest educational level and certification at enrollment								
Neither GED or high school diploma			1	13%	0	0%		
GED certificate or high school diploma			5	63%	1	100%		
Some post-secondary course work			2	25%	0	0%		
Received post-secondary degree			0	0%	0	0%		
Total			8	100%	1	100%		
Missing			0		0			
Annual household income								
Under \$10,000			1	25%	1	100%		
Between \$10,000 and \$24,999			2	50%	0	0%		
Between \$25,000 and 39,999			1	25%	0	0%		
Over \$40,000			0	0%	0	0%		
Total			4	100%	1	100%		
Missing			4		0			

Participant Outcomes

Employment Outcomes For Pre-Employment Participants

Placement

Forty-one individuals enrolled in PACE's Module 1 course in 2007 and 31 completed the course, a 76 percent graduation rate (see Table 6.5).

	Year 1 Cohort		Year 2 Cohort		Year 3 Cohort*		Year 4 Cohort		Total	
	#	% of Enrolled	#	% of Enrolled	#	% of Enrolled	#	% of Enrolled	#	% of Enrolled
Enrolled			34	100.0%	33	100.0%	41	100.0%	108	100.0%
Completed Module 1			27	79.4%	25	75.8%	31	75.6%	83	76.9%
Placed**			17	50.0%	16	48.5%	7	33.3%	40	45.5%

*Seven of the Year 3 cohort were placed in 2007, only one with an employer partner.
 **Year 4 "% of enrollment" calculations exclude 20 fall Module 1 enrollees who were not eligible for placement during Year 4.

Only those who completed the course in the spring (Class 5) completed it early enough to be placed in 2007 (Class 6 completed Module 1 at the end of November so placements are expected in early 2008). Of the 14 completers from Class 5, 6 were placed (43 percent) (see Table 6.6). PACE's career coaching staff also helped an additional eight participants, enrolled in previous years, find initial placements in 2007, seven who had enrolled in 2006 and one who completed Module 1 in fall 2007.

	Enrollment # Enrolled	Module 1 Completion		Placement					
		# Completing Module 1	% of Enrolled	# Placed in Partner Employer	% of Module 1 Completions	# Placed in Non- Partners	% of Module 1 Completions	Total Placed	% of Module 1 Completions
Class 5	21	14	66.7%	2	14.3%	4	28.6%	6	42.9%
Class 6*	20	17	85.0%	N/A	N/A	N/A**	N/A	N/A	N/A

* Placement activities for the 17 individuals who completed Module 1 in December 2007 had only just begun by year's end.
** One Class 6 Module 1 completer was placed in 2007.

Table 6.7 illustrates that only two Year 4 Cohort participants were placed with full employer partners in 2007. The other four individuals were placed with non-partner (or hiring partner) employers. Five of the six placements were in permanent, full-time jobs, with access to benefits. The sixth placement was at an MBTA internship. By the end of the year, that participant had been placed in a permanent, full-time position. The average wage at placement in 2007 was \$10.70, up slightly from previous years when the average wage was \$10.26 and \$10.63.

	Initial Placements	
	Placed in Jobs	% of Spring Module 1 Completers
Placed with partner employers	2	14.3%
Full-time jobs (at least 30 hrs/week)	2	100.0%
Part-time jobs	0	0.0%
Permanent positions	2	100.0%
With benefits	2	100.0%
Placed with non-partner employers	4	28.6%
Full-time jobs (at least 30 hrs/week)	3	75.0%
Part-time jobs	0	0.0%
Permanent positions	3	75.0%
With benefits	3	75.0%
Total	6	42.9%

PACE staff have explained that the low placement rate was the result of slower than usual winter business, with partner employers actually laying people off in the first quarter. When employers resumed hiring in April, they were seeking technicians with 4–5 years of experience. Normal hiring practices resumed in the summer although, as was the case in previous years, the overall economic slowdown has resulted in employers wanting technicians to have at least some of the skills learned in Module 2 before hiring.

Additional placement constraints include:

- Participants delaying interviews as long as possible because they wanted to increase their knowledge base by continuing into Module 2 before going on interviews
- Inconsistent application of career coaching resources, in terms of following up with Module 1 completers and with potential employers, which might have decreased the effectiveness of placement services
- Several participants with CORIs involving automobiles that inhibited their placement in the automotive industry.

PACE's 2007 placement outcomes are similar to those in previous years. Though Table 6.5 shows that the 2007 placement percentage is lower than in 2005 and 2006, it is expected that a number of hires will occur in the coming year, once participants have completed Module 2. This will likely bring the percentage placed to a level comparable to that achieved in 2005 and 2006. This dynamic has been observed in previous years, as evidenced by the seven additional placements that occurred in 2007 for 2006 enrollees.

Retention

Employee retention for those placed in 2007 was 83.3 percent. In December when the data were reported, most participants had been on the job for four to six months.

In terms of 12-month retention, Table 6.8 presents the percentage of placed participants who retained employment in the auto industry for 12 months after initial placement—approximately 70 percent in 2005 and 50 percent in 2006. Partner

	Year 1 Cohort	Year 2 Cohort	Year 3 Cohort	Year 4 Cohort*
12-month retention		69%	50%	
*Year 4 cohort is excluded from this measurement since 12 months has not elapsed since these participants were placed				

employers have said that this retention rate is approximately 9 percent better than the retention rate for off-the-street hires (see Employer Partner costs outlined in the cost benefit analysis). A second positive finding is that 91 percent of those who were still on the job 12 months after placement were still employed at the end of 2007. In some instances this could be as long as 26 months on the job.

Educational and Job-Related Advances

All PACE pre-employment participants with a high school degree or higher are enrolled at Ben Franklin Institute of Technology (BFIT) so that they can receive credits for successfully completing both Module 1 and Module 2. Table 6.9 presents data on the number of students who enrolled in BFIT and the number who have received credits to date.

	Number of Participants Who Have Realized Skill Enhancement Outcomes			
	Year 1 Cohort	Year 2 Cohort	Year 3 Cohort	Year 4 Cohort
Enrollment				
Entered college		32	31	39
Enrolled in credentialed program		4	0	0
Enrolled in sector-specific training		0	0	0
Completion				
Received college credit		15	20	12
Continued in college after PACE		2	3	N/A
Graduated from college		0	0	0
Received Industry-recognized credential		3	0	0
Completed sector-specific training		0	0	0

Additionally, five PACE graduates continued taking courses at BFIT after completing their PACE work. Three graduates have enrolled part-time in the evening Automotive Technology program and are working toward associate’s degrees in science. Another graduate shifted directions and enrolled in the Medical Electronics associate’s degree in science program.

PACE has also worked with three individuals on their English, seeing marked improvement as a result of the students’ work with an ESL tutor. One was a pre-enrollment participant, who at the end of six months of work with a tutor was willing to participate in a mock interview with one of the employer partners in front of the class. The two others were pre-employment participants who were placed successfully. For one of these individuals, his manager has reported that the individual’s conversational English has improved significantly and he is now voicing ideas and complaints more effectively

Employment Outcomes for Incumbent Workers

PACE’s incumbent worker programs are fourfold. First, employers can refer any of their current employees to PACE’s Module 2 course. Since the program began, there have been nine incumbents who have completed Module 1 or 2. There were no new incumbent Module 1 or 2 enrollees in 2007.

The second incumbent program is the ASE Test Preparation courses that have been offered at Sullivan Tire and Bridgestone/Firestone. These courses are one-day preparation courses offered at an employer’s work site. An employee is considered enrolled in PACE if they complete a Test Prep course. There were 2 new enrollees in one of the ASE Test Preparation courses in 2007. Note: In order to take the ASE tests, technicians must have at least one year’s experience working in the content area.

A third incumbent service is ESOL Tutoring and Distance learning. Individuals receive tutoring for 10 or more weeks at a mutually agreed upon location. AACA provides supervision for the tutors and progress is reported by the supervisor as well as the tutor.

The fourth incumbent service is Management Training for Employer Partners. This year, PACE delivered a 3-hour diversity program to 24 managers at Village Automotive.

The current employment status of all incumbents is presented in Table 6.10.²⁰ The percentage of individuals still employed at their original employer varies significantly by year of enrollment. For those who enrolled in 2007, 100 percent are still employed with the employer partner, which is a sharp contrast to, for instance, 2005. Only 42 percent (28 participants) of those who enrolled in 2005 and for whom employment information is known are still employed with an employer partner. No information is available to interpret these retention rates. It is possible that 2005 enrollees were able to leverage their additional ASE certifications into better positions at different employers.

	Year 1 Cohort	Year 2 Cohort	Year 3 Cohort	Year 4 Cohort	Total*
Total participants enrolled		114	22	2	138
Participants still employed at initial employer partner		28	16	2	46
% of participants still employed at initial employer partner		25%	73%	100%	52%

* “% of participants still employed” was calculated by dividing the number of participants employed by the number of participants for which known employment status is known.

In 2007, 26 incumbents received wage increases. Twenty of these increases were directly related to the participants taking the ASE Test Prep Course and passing the exam—18 received a raise and a bonus and 2 received a bonus only. Additionally, nine participants were promoted in 2007.

²⁰ Table 6.11 presents the total number of enrolled individuals for whom PACE was able to verify employment status; one of the employer partners was unable to verify employer status. The “Percentage Employed” is calculated by dividing the number of individuals known to be employed over the number of individuals with known employment status.

N=43	Wage Increases	% of Still-Employed Incumbents	Promotions*	% of Still-Employed Incumbents
Total	26	55.8%	9	20.9%
Verified merit-related achievement	20	18.6%		

Skill Enhancement Outcomes for Incumbent Workers

Five skill enhancement outcomes are tracked by PACE staff:

- Enrollment in college by Module 1 and Module 2 participants
- Achievement of college credit by Module 1 and Module 2 participants
- Continuation in college upon graduation from Module 2
- Enrollment in a credentialed program (ASE Test Prep)
- Receipt of a credential (ASE Credential)

A summary of outcomes achieved by participants over the last three years is provided in Table 6.12.

Eight incumbent employees enrolled in college as part of the PACE program, although none earned credit for their PACE work.²¹

For ASE-related outcomes, 129 individuals were enrolled in a credentialed program. Forty-four of the individuals trained received credentials, with eight earning two credentials.

	Number of Participants Who Have Realized Skill Enhancement Outcomes			
	Year 1 Cohort	Year 2 Cohort	Year 3 Cohort	Year 4 Cohort
Enrollment				
Entered college		7	1	0
Enrolled in credentialed program		106	21	2
Enrolled in sector-specific training		0	0	0
Completion				
Received college credit		0	0	0
Continued in college after PACE		0	0	N/A
Graduated from college		0	0	0
Received Industry-recognized credential		35	7	2
Completed sector-specific training		0	0	0

Employer Outcomes

There are many employer outcomes of interest to employers as well as to the PACE partnership, including improving employers' access to pre-screened, well-qualified pre-employment candidates. Other outcomes are driven by the interests of one group or another: employers seek reduced hiring costs, and PACE's SkillWorks funders desire employers to have an improved ability to fill critical occupations internally as a result of the PACE partnership.

²¹ Credit is earned after successful completion of the course with a passing GPA.

The PACE partnership was successful in achieving significantly improved relations between employers and the CBOs involved in the partnership. Employers describe a sense of doors being opened to them through their PACE involvement. Evidence of this can be seen in employers becoming involved in other workforce programs run by community organizations or looking to the CBOs to help fill other positions in their organizations.

There are also a few employer outcomes that have been partially achieved by PACE. These include improvements in performance or productivity, improved access to entry-level workers, and reducing employers' hiring costs. The partial nature of the achievements is due to the fact that such a limited number of PACE graduates have been placed with employer partners—only 24 over three years among four different partners. The scale of these placements is so small that it is difficult to believe that they made a significant impact on internal workplace measures.

- *Improvements in performance or productivity:* Employer partners report that PACE new hires typically “get up to speed” and reach full productivity faster than individuals hired without similar training. Companies save money because PACE new hires need less in-house training than off-the-street hires, which results in employers not having to pay for training time and not losing production while employees are in training.
- *Improved access to entry-level workers:* Partner employers speak highly of the graduates they have hired, describing them as more mature and more interested in careers in the automotive industry than individuals hired off of the street. As one employer stated, “For some sites (those close to Boston), PACE provides us with better access because we are handed a pool of people to choose from. We know what they have been trained on, and we can get very detailed info about their abilities and attitude. They also want to be working in the field, so they have the drive and passion we are looking for.”
- *Reduced hiring costs:* In the recent cost benefit analysis completed by PACE, employers documented that they realize a cost savings of about \$2400 when hiring graduates from PACE. The savings come primarily through reduced supervisor orientation time and reduced introductory training (team orientation, safety).

Finally, there were two employer outcomes that have not been achieved to date by the PACE partnership—improving employers' ability to fill critical occupational positions and reducing employee turnover. The small scale of placements and significant skill gap between entry-level technicians being trained by PACE and the critical occupation of Master Technician is too great to have seen much immediate change in employers' ability to fill critical positions. Nonetheless, PACE has succeed in putting entry-level technicians on a path that may address staffing needs over an extended time horizon. Related to employee turnover, in PACE's cost-benefit analysis, employers reported that PACE turnover is similar to the average turnover rate reported for non-PACE employees. Employer opinions are mixed on whether PACE graduates are more stable employees than their co-workers or perhaps more attractive to other automotive establishments.

System Change Outcomes

While systems change outcomes tend to be broad and overlapping, three overarching indicators have been identified and are being examined in this report: enhanced service provider capacity, changes in employer practices, and impacts related to public policy.

Enhanced Capacity of Service Providers

The primary service provider in the PACE partnership is AACA and the PACE program staff. There have been several significant changes at AACA as a result of its leadership and participation in the partnership over the last year. First and foremost is the fact that AACA has developed deeper capacity to lead sector-based projects. Through the PACE experience, it has grappled with identifying elements that are most critical to achieving a successful comprehensive workforce development model. Two elements have risen to the fore: post-placement retention services and employer advisory committees. PACE has added these components to its other workforce development initiatives.

Other areas of increased capacity within the PACE program include:

- *Improving data management capabilities:* In 2007, PACE began developing an integrated data management system, using the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund database, and creating recruitment and placement reports for internal management. These incremental changes are helping to increase the reporting capabilities of PACE staff.
- *Sustainable program funding:* PACE was awarded a Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund Grant in 2007. The grant is a 3-year, \$500,000 grant which will be used to pay for a second career coach, staffing to support the Workforce Communication II class and ESOL tutoring/distance learning for ESOL, and the mentoring program. In future years, the WCTF resources will counterbalance the loss of SkillWorks funding for administrative costs.
- *Improved screening capabilities:* Significant improvements were seen in the conversion of PACE applicants into enrollees and from enrollees into Module 1 completers. The driver of this improvement was staff's improved ability to assess and screen individuals to meet the program requirements and challenges. Seventy-seven percent of applicants interviewed were selected for the 3-week orientation prior to enrollment in Module 1, up substantially from previous years. Additionally, the improved capabilities are also evident in the rate of enrollment after orientation for the spring 2007 class (58 percent) compared to fall 2007 class (87 percent) and in the Module 1 completion rate for spring 2007 (67 percent) as compared to fall 2007 (85 percent).

Changes in Employer Practices

PACE's involvement with employer partners has resulted in one significant change in employer practices in 2007. Employers have become more engaged in workplace ESOL issues. Employers have made requests for training and referrals to ESOL courses for staff. This is a new awareness on the part of employers. The fact that they are taking proactive action to assist employees is a promising development for low-skilled employees' advancement potential.

Impacts Related to Public Policy

There were no direct public policy outcomes as a result of PACE's program or policy efforts. PACE staff were able to build awareness, though, of the program and the need for similar interventions through numerous articles, including one in the *Boston Herald* and one in the *Boston Globe*, as well as meetings with key state and federal representatives such as State Senator Jack Hart, Governor Patrick's Director of Policy and Cabinet Affairs, Richard Chacon, and Secretary of State

Representative Marie St. Fleur; all meetings were facilitated and coordinated by SkillWorks staff and the SkillWorks public policy grantee, Workforce Solutions Group.

Key Learnings/Implications for Partnership Selection in Phase 2

Successful Partnerships Will Clearly Understand Existing Supply and Demand before Designing Programs

Lesson Learned: The partnership planning process must include an in-depth study of existing training resources in the target industry, an examination of CBO and educational partners that employers have used for past recruitment, and employer hiring patterns.

PACE Experience: In Year 3, PACE's sustainability study examined automotive training programs throughout the greater Boston region; program providers included community colleges, proprietary schools, and other nonprofit organizations. The study showed that PACE trainings were out of sync with the types of coursework provided in the auto training market. Modules 1 and 2 provide either significantly more or significantly less, in terms of auto instruction and hands-on experience than competing training providers. This places PACE in a difficult market position facing hard decisions about whether and how to revamp the training. Looking ahead, partnerships would ideally conduct this type of in-depth analysis of supply-side resources prior to program design. The analysis should answer: who else is in the industry training market (both public and private); what are they offering for training (e.g., length, cost, skills, certification); if most programs are designed similarly, why the programs are designed as they are; and whether there is a particular niche that is unfulfilled. If the partnership decides to diverge from the predominant model(s) in the industry, partner employers should be consulted and asked to offer critical feedback on the proposed approach.

In terms of existing demand, during the design phase and throughout implementation PACE did reach out to employers and seek their input on hiring and training needs. Despite this effort, PACE has realized over the last three years that employer hiring practices and training needs are much more nuanced than originally understood. One factor contributing to this disconnect is the fact that many of the employers had not participated in a career advancement sector partnership previously. The employers were unaware of the kinds of information needed by the partnership to be successful in planning appropriately. The lessons that have been learned would ideally be learned during the planning process of any future partnerships. Particular insights that PACE has gained since beginning implementation include: the skill levels needed to enter and advance, HR resources that the program could be designed to tap into, and more realistic estimates of employer demand, taking into consideration geographic limitations and shop sizes. PACE has also learned the depth to which these items vary across employer types. An awareness of the nuanced answers to these questions will help partnerships better understand how the supply of graduates from existing training programs stacks up against demand from employers, taking into consideration employers' locational demands, hiring cycles, and shop sizes.

Unique Dynamics of Industry Need to Inform Outcome Goals and Funder Expectations

Lesson Learned: If the partnership has a deep understanding of industry culture for hiring, compensation, and advancement at the outset, outcomes to be measured and goals for each outcome can be tailored to account for unique industry practices.

PACE Experience: The goals that PACE established at the outset of the partnership were seen to be unreasonable once the industry was better understood. For example, PACE staff now know that the hiring demands of the industry are contingent upon the weather, and generally follow a cyclical pattern. They also know that there is constant demand for employees at the upper end of the skill continuum, but that demand fluctuates to a more considerable degree at the entry level. Another industry characteristic that affects the ability to achieve outcomes is the industry practice of actively luring employees from other tire and lube shops for small pay increases, and/or dealerships poaching the best candidates from tire and lube shops. This practice results in lower than expected retention rates, even though pre-employment placements may in fact still be working successfully in the auto industry.

A deeper knowledge of industry practices will allow flexibility in the data points to be tracked in order to understand whether target outcomes have actually been achieved. If PACE were now deciding how it would measure wage increases, an additional measure that it would like to collect from employers is whether participants had advanced from an hourly rate to a flat rate at a given location. To better measure retention, PACE might now ask participants who left their original placements whether they left to take a position at a competitor and/or whether the participant stayed in the industry.

Diversifying a Partnership’s Target Population and/or Target Employers to Increase Program Scale May Be Detrimental to Overall Partnership Success

Lesson Learned: Concerted efforts to increase the scale and scope of the partnership may actually encounter obstacles due to increased project complexity.

PACE Experience: PACE is a project steeped in diversity, starting with the three CBO organizations that partnered together to form the foundation of the partnership. AACA, Urban League, and La Alianza Hispana serve very different constituencies. One can assume that these organizations partnered together to expand the participant base they drew upon, hoping to bring the program to scale. While this likely helped initial recruitment, the result has been that each class is filled with participants with varying degrees of readiness/preparedness to pursue an entry-level training in the automotive industry (e.g., recent immigrants who struggle with English; low-skilled, chronically poor and unemployed; etc.).

The partnership growth strategy also included engaging two distinct groups of employers, tire and lube shops and dealerships, in order to create more placement opportunities for graduates. While this was a successful strategy, it further added to the partnership complexity because each employer group had unique hiring needs, hiring styles, and advancement strategies.

Both of these elements of diversity complicate how courses are designed and taught. Instructors have to adjust for English limitations, teach basic job readiness information, motivate students to believe they can be successful, and much more, all while teaching fundamental automotive skills, and accounting for the differing demand of dealerships and tire and lube shops. The instruction may potentially under-prepare all enrollees because it is trying to be too much to too many people. It can also leave employers dissatisfied because participants are not graduating with the core competencies they expect. The situation is not impossible but it is complex and may overly tax available teaching and coaching resources.

Chapter 7: Community Health Worker Initiative of Boston—(Round 3 Grantee)

Initiative Background

The Community Health Worker Initiative of Boston (the CHW Initiative) is a three-year workforce partnership and policy initiative, funded by SkillWorks through grants from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Jessie B. Cox Charitable Trust, to develop career pathways for provide low-income individuals with improved opportunities to earn family-sustaining wages and to meet employers' needs for a talented and stable workforce. The initiative received an implementation grant in April 2007 after successfully completing a 10-month planning period in 2006. The target population for this initiative is community health workers who provide low-income, culturally diverse communities with information about health issues and access to healthcare and services and the health centers, community-based organizations, public health agencies, and other healthcare providers that employ community health workers.

As part of its effort to serve these individuals, the CHW Initiative addresses both training and education needs as well as policy and administrative changes that will help community health workers advance. Over the three years of SkillWorks funding, the initiative plans to define the community health worker field more clearly, to advocate for increased recognition of this field as a distinct discipline, to identify and pursue innovative funding streams for community health work, to delineate pathways for advancement within the field, and to specify what kinds of training and other resources are necessary for individuals to advance. The CHW Initiative expects that those increases, coupled with the increased professionalization of the field, will result in improved health care services and education for residents of low-income communities.

Accordingly, the CHW Initiative has the following main goals:

1. Support and advance low-income individuals working as community health workers (CHWs) by:
 - Creating a brand for this sector of the workforce—community health workers—in such a way that employers, educators and workers have a shared understanding of what it means to be a community health worker
 - Determining clear advancement pathways for entry-level CHWs within the field
 - Determining what kinds of educational requirements workers must complete to advance
 - Establishing educational programs to allow workers to meet these requirements
 - Facilitating advancement for a select number of individuals (70 per year for three years).
2. Meet employers' needs for skilled community health workers by:
 - Increasing the skill levels of community health workers in the field
 - Establishing consistent, reimbursable, funding streams
 - Reducing turnover in targeted positions
 - Facilitating increased salaries for community health workers.
3. Improve healthcare services in underserved communities by:
 - Professionalizing the CHW field and
 - Compensating workers at levels that accurately reflect the value of their services.

Year 1 Approach to Implementation

Year 1 of the CHW Initiative was focused on staff recruitment, the development of relationships with employer partners, initial implementation of participant services, and solidifying a coalition to address the Initiative's public policy goals.

Partnership Changes that Occurred in Year 1

Staffing

In the first year of implementation (April 2007–March 2008), the CHW Initiative filled two coaching positions: a career coach and an academic coach. The positions are designed to provide primary interaction with and guidance to CHW participants. The initial career coach was hired during the first quarter of implementation and the academic coach was hired in the second quarter. The CHW Initiative staff delayed hiring an academic coach until they found an individual with both coaching experience and knowledge of the CHW field. Unfortunately, after about three months of having a fully staffed coaching team, the career coach announced that he was leaving his position at the end of November 2007. The CHW Initiative began a new job search in January 2008 and hired a second career coach in late March. This new coach is knowledgeable about human services work, has worked as an employment specialist, and understands the realities of the participants she is working with, having herself succeeded as an adult learner.

Employer Partners

The CHW Initiative began the year with 11 employer partners.²² The employer partners represent some of the major employers of Boston's Community Health Workers, including community health centers, nonprofit organizations, and government entities. During the year, CHW Initiative staff continued their outreach efforts in the hopes of adding additional employers as partners to increase CHWs access to coaching and training and to increase the depth of employer support for the public policy activities. Their efforts resulted in the addition of two new employer partners—Dimock Center Head Start and the Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence. Both are community-based organizations that employ community health workers in various capacities, including prenatal educators, family educators, advocates, direct services coordinators, and outreach coordinators.

Two additional employers have expressed interest in partnering with the Initiative—Joseph Smith Community Center and Children's Hospital—and are currently working with staff to determine whether full partnership is feasible.

The Initiative had hoped to add a larger number of employers (ten) to the Partnership in Year 1 than the two that joined. The push for expansion was driven by the expectation that more employer partners would result in larger numbers of CHWs being able to access the Initiative's career coaching

²² Clinical employers (based on their self-categorization in a recent employer survey) include Asian Taskforce Against Domestic Violence, DotWell (Codman Square Community Health Center and Dorchester House Multi-Service Center), East Boston Neighborhood Health Center, and Whittier Street Health Center. Non-clinical employers include ABCD Health Services, the Boston Housing Authority, Dimock Center Head Start, the Latin American Health Institute, the PACT Project, the Refugee and Immigrant Health Program (organized by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health), and the Vietnamese American Civic Association.

services and provide greater strength to the CHW Initiative's public policy efforts. Employers contacted about participating who decided not to join cited the following reasons for their decision:

- The employer was not willing to comply with the CHW Initiative request that partner employers offer a \$500 incentive/stipend/raise to CHW participants upon completion of the Advanced COEC course.
- There is a union at the employers' location and employers do not want to get into a fight with the union.
- The employer was facing layoffs due to cost constraints so its priority was not development of existing staff.
- The employer fears its organization's board might cut CHWs out of the organization altogether if staff were to ask board directors to increase the cost of employing them, either through training release time or the promise of wage increases based on training completion or career pathways.

CHW Initiative staff hope to combat employers' resistance to joining the partnership by demonstrating the value of the CHW Initiative for existing employer partners, through either improved staff performance of coached CHWs or policy reforms such as increased reimbursement for services.

At present, the 13 employer partners that are currently participating in the Initiative represent many of the major CHW employers in the city of Boston and form a representative voice in the CHW public policy arena, demonstrated by the fact that about half of the CHW Initiative's partners are represented on the board of the Massachusetts Association of Community Health Workers (MACHW) or the Department of Public Health's Advisory Council.

Policy Partners

The CHW Initiative also has non-employer partners specifically involved to help achieve the Initiative's public policy goals. During the first year of implementation, the Initiative added another 2 policy partners, the Cambridge Healthcare Alliance and Health Care for All, to its existing slate of 33 partners. With the addition of these partners, most, if not all, of the key players in the Boston CHW/public health field are participating in the Initiative at some level.

The Cambridge Healthcare Alliance (CHA) is a nonprofit clinic and public health employer. CHA staff initially sought to partner with the Initiative to gain access to career coaching for their employees. An employer partnership is not possible, though, because it is located outside of Boston. Instead, the Alliance decided to become a policy partner to lend its support to the Initiative. As a well-respected and connected player in the CHW movement, CHA is an asset to the CHW Initiative's policy change work.

Health Care for All is a nonprofit involved in the health reform movement. This partnership is mutually beneficial for both organizations because the organization's and the Initiative's missions are aligned and they have a mutual desire to reform the healthcare system.

Services Provided to Participants

CHW Initiative coaches provided one-on-one career coaching to participating community health workers, including referrals to support services and educational opportunities. Unlike other

SkillWorks models, the CHW Initiative has designed its program to focus on coaching and facilitating access to training and services, rather than acting as a provider of training and job development services directly. The slight exception to this is the development of the Advanced COEC (Community Outreach Educator Certificate) training for experienced CHWs.²³ The CHW Initiative was instrumental in developing the curriculum for the course and providing funding for its offering; the course is being offered by the Boston Public Health Commission's Community Health Education Center (CHEC). Additional information about the training is provided below under *System Change Activities*.

During coaching interactions, coaches meet on-site with participants to help them complete career plans, determine resources needed to achieve career plans, make referrals to needed services, and provide a place of support and accountability.

System Change Activities

An equally significant part of the Initiative's activities focus on system change. The CHW Initiative has worked on system change goals related to changing employer practices, increasing the training and educational opportunities available to CHWs, and implementing policies at the state level to increase funding available to employers employing CHWs. Each of these activities is critical to creating an environment that allows, encourages, and rewards CHWs for seeking career advancement as well as provides employers with dependable funding streams to support their CHW activities. Currently, without these changes, CHWs have limited advancement opportunities that result in increased wages and increased job stability, and employers consistently face shifting funding priorities and dissatisfied workers.

Employer Practices

Encouraging partner employers to adopt career ladders for CHWs was the primary employer practice that the Initiative was hoping to implement in Year 1. Experience has shown that career ladders give employees a better sense of how they might advance and what would be required to do so. Additionally, career ladders provide a transparent way for employers to implement accountability standards for specific CHW positions.

The original plan was to hold an employer forum in Year 1, where the concept and content of specific career ladders would be introduced by the CHW Initiative. Initiative staff decided to postpone the forum until Year 2, based on feedback from employers that a proven track record of effective coaching services was needed and that planning sessions to determine the forum's content should be held with front-line supervisors and program managers at partner employers. These two steps were expected to build employer engagement at the front-line level, which could then translate into greater participation by upper-level management in the Employer Forum.

The planning sessions were held in the fourth quarter and employer participation was high; all employers were represented at at least one of the three sessions, except one. The Employer Forum is now planned for June 2008.

²³ To enroll in Advanced COEC, participants had to have worked as a CHW for five years or have completed the COEC class.

Education and Training

The Initiative's Education and Training Committee was active in Year 1, working on two system change activities—designing and implementing the Advanced COEC training and developing certificates and associates degrees at two local community colleges. Each of these efforts is part of a continuum of educational opportunities for CHWs, beginning with the Advanced COEC Training and progressing to a formal bachelor's degree program. By providing more educational opportunities, the CHW Initiative is expecting to formalize the skills needed to perform community health work, provide an educational structure that can align with the career pathways being developed, and ultimately improve the quality of work performed by CHWs.

Advanced COEC: Prior to the CHW Initiative, CHEC offered a COEC course and certificate to CHWs working in the field. The course focused on increasing participants' community outreach skills. Through the Initiative's efforts, CHEC now offers a second COEC course, Advanced COEC. The advanced course includes approximately 54 hours of instruction and focuses on employee to employer/grantor communication skills. Emphasis is placed on professional communication skills, particularly written communication such as monthly reports and caseload documentation. Advanced COEC graduates receive a certificate and will be able to use their certificate to earn college credit.²⁴

CHW Certificate at Colleges/Associate's Degree: Through partnership agreements with Bunker Hill and MassBay Community Colleges, the CHW Initiative is spurring the development of CHW certificates and associates degree programs at the college level by providing modest subcontracts to cover some of the expenses related to establishing the curriculum and framework. Over the last year and a half, both colleges have followed their own internal protocols related to establishing new courses and degree options. Though there have been challenges along the way, each college has been able to maintain its timelines and is poised to launch its new program in September 2008. In September, both schools will offer community health concentrations within the existing Certificate and Associate's Degree in Human Services programs. The value of the certificate will be primarily for the student, helping him or her recognize that he or she has completed half of an associate's degree.

Additionally, the Education and Training Committee worked with college representatives to refine the core competencies needed by successful CHWs. These competencies have been completed, distributed, and now serve as the foundation for the concentrations' curriculum.

Policy Changes

The most time-consuming, and potentially fruitful, policy activity in Year 1 was participation in the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) CHW Advisory Council (the Council). Many of the CHW Initiative partners played key leadership roles in this newly formed Council. The Council was created under the mandate of Section 110 of Chapter 158 of the Acts of 2006. The purpose of the Council was to "assist in developing (an) investigation (related to using and funding CHWs by public and private entities in the commonwealth, increasing access to healthcare, and eliminating health

²⁴ Participants hoping to earn college credit using a CHEC certificate must submit a portfolio that they created based on their CHEC training to the educational institution where they are seeking credit. For example, at Bunker Hill Community College (BHCC), participants would submit their portfolio to the college under the Prior Learning Assessment Program. An agreement is being put in place between CHEC and BHCC to ensure that this process is not cumbersome for the students. CHW Initiative coaches can assist enrolled CHWs with the completion of their portfolio.

disparities), interpreting its results, and developing recommendations.” Since most of the Council’s objectives are consistent with CHW Initiative policy objectives, and the Council had already convened all major stakeholders, including insurance companies and major employers/funders, the Initiative decided to coordinate policy activities rather than create a separate policy initiative. Through CHW Initiative partners’ participation on the Council, the final Council report is expected to reflect most of the CHW Initiative policy objectives, including a recommendation for a statewide CHW credential and specific funding strategies to increase CHW compensation.

Additionally, in support of desired policy changes, the Initiative commissioned research to identify and review previous published and unpublished studies that document the “value added” by CHWs. Massachusetts Public Health Association (MPHA) coordinated the study, which examines articles and reports that contain evidence of CHW effectiveness, provides examples of CHW policy initiatives, and documents best practices in CHW workforce development. From the gathered information, MPHA documented ways to link research evidence to the CHW Initiative’s emerging policy recommendations for financing and workforce development. The CHW Initiative provided an annotated draft outline of the research evidence to the DPH Advisory Council for its report during the council’s planning process.

Insights from the research process include²⁵:

- The general argument for CHW inclusion in healthcare settings will be cast in CHW “value added” terms, rather than cost savings; the argument is to be positive about the need for skills and qualities that CHWs bring to the current health system.
- The argument will emphasize the challenges of making a success of health policy reform, including making sure that people who have a history of being uninsured, and those who face extra challenges with the increased complexity of the system, receive the help they need to take advantage of the new possibilities that the system may present.
- Nonetheless, the business case will also include evidence of CHW cost- effectiveness, particularly in the current environment of increasing concern about the affordability of the more extended access to health insurance.
- Different fact sheets and “pitches” will be required for different policy audiences— employers, CHWs, legislators, and healthcare funders.

Finally, the Initiative facilitated Massachusetts Association of Community Health Workers’ (MACHW) development of a CHW-sponsored recommendation on credentialing, working to promote the term “CHW” and the visibility of CHWs in general.

The need for a formal recommendation on credentialing grew out of a requirement in Section 110 of the Health Care Reform Law of 2006 that mandates the Department of Public Health to provide recommendations to the legislature about a CHW certification program. Rather than be on the defensive once a formal recommendation was made by the advisory council, the CHW Initiative encouraged MACHW to take a proactive position and develop a formal recommendation, based on CHW insight.

²⁵ CHW Initiative of Boston, Quarterly Report, Quarter 4, p. 2.

In early 2008, MACHW produced two policy briefs, one published solely by MACHW, the other in partnership with the CHW Initiative, on the credentialing issue. These briefs were then used as discussion guides at seven CHW “town meetings” throughout the state. Based on CHW insight, MACHW will be developing a third brief in the first quarter of Year 2, outlining the formal recommendation developed based on CHW feedback. The release of this document will be closely coordinated with release of the DPH Advisory Council report. Since MACHW and the CHW Initiative played strong roles in the development of the Council recommendations, there is anticipated synergy between the two documents. The expectation is that MACHW’s formal position will be able to be used to lobby for implementation of the Council’s recommendations.

To promote the “CHW” term and occupational role, CHW Initiative staff presented about the Initiative and CHWs at national and state public health conferences, lobbied public officials to use the CHW term, and developed a button campaign that provided CHWs with “I’m a CHW” buttons they can wear to increase CHWs’ association with the CHW term.

Outcomes

Incumbent Participant Outcomes

The following section summarizes the activities undertaken by the Initiative to engage and support CHW participants in establishing and pursuing their career goals. The section also documents participants’ initial outcomes.

Enrollment

Recruitment began in June 2007. The Initiative conducted outreach to CHWs working at employer partners—informing managers and supervisors about the Initiative and holding informational sessions during CHW staff meetings. After a short period of time, the CHW Initiative decided to allow CHWs working for non-partner employers to also enroll. This decision was driven by the fact that CHWs from non-partner employers were requesting services and the Initiative did not want to penalize them for the fact that their employers were choosing not to participate.

In Year 1, 61 participants were enrolled, 42 of whom work for partner employers (70 percent). This number is considerably below the target enrollment number of 100. The low enrollment figures were not necessarily due to a lack of outreach. As was mentioned, CHW coaches met with partner employers (managers and supervisors) to discuss the Initiative, and then attended staff meetings at the same workplaces to introduce employees to the Initiative. For CHWs working outside of the partner network, career coaches conducted information sessions for interested individuals. Additionally, CHEC sent out a 1,250-piece mailing of the CHW Initiative brochure with an introductory letter to their mailing list of Boston-based CHWs, supervisors, and program directors, in addition to an email to 650 supervisors about the CHW Initiative. The career coach also attended the monthly CHEC networking luncheons and briefly introduced the CHW Initiative services.²⁶

In seeking to improve enrollment, the Initiative staff met with all 13 employer partners to understand how to better reach and attract their CHWs. From these meetings, the staff gained a better

²⁶ In its Year 2 refunding application, the CHW Initiative chose to reduce the enrollment goals for Years 2 and 3 to 70 participants each year. They believe this is a more realistic target, given the number of CHWs in the market and the demands on CHWs’ time.

understanding of CHWs’ barriers to enrollment (from the employer perspective) and will use the information to inform marketing and recruitment. The first lesson learned was that the Initiative needed to do a better job explaining who would be best suited to participate. Many CHWs chose not to participate because they perceived the program to be targeted toward those who wanted to return to school and they did not fit this category. In the future, coaches will more clearly communicate the non-academic services that they can provide to CHWs (e.g., updating resumes, considering long-term career progression, and planning difficult conversations with supervisors or co-workers).

The second lesson is complementary to the first: CHWs will need to better understand the role of the coach and the resources that become available through the coaching process before they commit their time to the process. Many employers believed that workers did not necessarily understand *what* career coaching was and therefore they were not sure what the role of the coach would be—whether the coach would be their advocate or the employer’s advocate. Clearer examples of how coaching works and what the expectations are for the coach and the coachee will be critical for future success.

Finally, employees (and supervisors) do not yet necessarily understand and/or identify with the term CHW and the overarching concept of a job category called CHW.²⁷ In fact, it has happened that when the employees are brought together for the CHW Initiative introduction, it is the first time they have been brought together in such a way, across job types and job areas. The first hurdle to engagement is helping CHW employees see the similarities in the work that they and their colleagues do, and then to continue to use CHW term so that they feel more connected to the field/program.

Participant Characteristics

The participants who enrolled in the CHW Initiative have higher educational levels than participants in the other SkillWorks partnerships; 74 percent of the participants have at least some post-secondary education. CHW participants also have higher incomes, though given their education levels, their incomes appear particularly low—88 percent earn less than \$40,000 and 42 percent earn less than \$25,000.

Table 7.1a: Incumbent Demographic Data (Year 1)		
	#	%
<i>Enrollment</i>		
Total Number Enrolled	61	
<i>Primary Language</i>		
English	35	57%
Not English	26	43%
Total	61	100%
Missing	0	
<i>Boston Residency</i>		
Yes, Boston resident	41	67%
No, not Boston resident	20	33%
Total	61	100%
Missing	0	

Table 7.1b: Incumbent Demographic Data (Year 1)		
	#	%
<i>Highest Educational Level and Certification at Enrollment</i>		
Neither GED or High School Diploma	3	5%
GED certificate or High School Diploma	12	21%
Some Post-Secondary Course Work	24	41%
Received Post-Secondary Degree	19	33%
Total	58	100%
Missing	3	
<i>Annual Household Income</i>		
Under \$10,000	16	26%
Between \$10,000 and \$24,999	10	16%
Between \$25,000 and 39,999	28	46%
Over \$40,000	7	11%
Total	61	100%
Missing	0	

Of the participants, 67 percent are Boston residents, although 100 percent work at Boston employers.

²⁷ While the CHW term has been in use for the last 10 to 15 years, it is not commonly used by employers as a job title. CHWs are commonly employed as outreach specialists, case managers, peer support counselors, youth workers, and patient navigators, as well as many other job classifications.

Employment Retention

Eighty-seven percent of enrolled participants were retained in the CHW field at the end of Year 1 (one additional participant was employed but had taken a job in another field). It is too early to gauge whether the CHW

Total participants enrolled	61
Participants employed	52
Percentage of participants with known employment status that are still employed in 3/08	87%

Initiative and the services it provided is a contributor to the increased retention, particularly because the average retention rate expected by the Initiative is 3.5 years. Of those who were no longer employed, three were laid off from the same employer when a grant ended and four who were originally employed as Resident Health Advocate interns with the Boston Housing Authority are now unemployed at the end of their internship.

Employment Advancement

CHW advancement is measured in three ways: through wage increases, promotions or new jobs, and increases in employment benefits.

Wage Gains: Eight CHW participants received wage increases during Year 1. The average wage increase was \$1.11 per hour. One of the eight participants received an increase in working hours rather than an actual wage increase but the net result was an increase in income.

N=54	#	% of Still-Employed Incumbents	Goal: % of participants
Wage increase	8	14.8%	50%
Promotion/Started new job	1*	1.9%	25%
Increase in benefits	3	5.6%	-

* Two additional participants started new part time jobs, on top of existing full-time CHW positions.

In order to understand whether participants' wages may have increased beyond what they would have in the absence of the program, we examined whether participants were actively engaged in coaching, as illustrated by the participant accomplishing a career goal. A sample of participant goals include: "working more hours with current jobs," "completing Advanced COEC training," and "applying to Boston University's School of Public Health." Three of the eight participants who received wage increases also achieved one or more career goals. While this evidence is largely anecdotal, it is reasonable to assume that the CHW Initiative, and career coaching in particular, played a partial role in helping these three participants advance at some level.

Promotions/Started New Jobs: No participants were promoted during Year 1; one person started a new job that would be considered an advancement into a more permanent position. This participant moved from a non-CHW part-time position and CHW internship into a full-time CHW position. Two additional individuals started new CHW part-time positions, in addition to existing full-time CHW jobs. These two individuals now work 45 and 52 hours, respectively. While these jobs provide additional income for the participants, they do not technically constitute advancements because the goal of the Initiative is to increase CHW wages enough so that one 40-hour/week job will provide sufficient income for the participants.

Benefit Gains: Three participating CHWs received increased benefits during Year 1. Two individuals went from receiving no employer benefits to having access to health, dental, and life insurance and paid vacation. The third individual gained access to an employer 401K program.

Again using career goals as a measure of whether participants would have earned the advancement in the absence of the CHW Initiative, two of the three individual receiving benefits achieved a career goal during Year 1.

Skill Enhancement Outcomes

Skill enhancements, such as completing the COEC training or enrolling in college, are being measured for participating CHW employees from the initial development of career plans to the ultimate completion of educational goals. While these encompass varying degrees of accomplishment, experience with sector initiatives has shown that even immediate short-term outcomes are meaningful, particularly in terms of maintaining participant engagement in Initiative activities. Table 7.4 details the enrollment and completion accomplishments of participants as well as the target goals established at the beginning of Year 1 implementation.

The Initiative fell short of a number of its goals. The goals were missed due to a combination of factors including fewer enrollees than expected, the short time period between enrollment and the end of the year, underestimation of the barriers that would face participants upon enrollment in training programs (such as limited time availability and financial constraints), and the challenge of tracking participants’ enrollment in sector-specific trainings that are not necessarily coordinated through the Initiative.

Table 7.4: Incumbent Skill Enhancement Outcomes (Year 1)		
	Number of Incumbent Participants Who Have Realized Skill Enhancement Outcomes	Goal: Number of Participants [^]
<i>Enrollment</i>		
Enrolled in ABE/ESOL	1	} 41
Enrolled in College Prep	6	
Entered college	3	-
Enrolled in credentialed Program*	13	20
Enrolled in sector-specific training**	5	19
<i>Completion</i>		
Completed career goal	23	55
Graduated from ABE/ESOL	0	} 21
Graduated from College Prep	0	
Graduated from college	0	-
Received industry-recognized credential*	7	15
Completed sector-specific training**	4	10
[^] Goals for numbers of participants were recalculated based on the number of actual enrollees (61) rather than the expected number of enrollees (100). * Includes Advanced COEC Training **Includes COEC Training		

Career Plans: All CHW Initiative enrollees have a career plan. At the end of Year 1, about two-thirds of enrolled participants were actively engaged in implementing their plans. Some of the most common goals included in the plans are:

- Paying off debt (in order to enroll in school)
- Receiving a bachelor’s degree
- Receiving an associate’s degree
- Completing training (completing Advanced COEC was a common goal)
- Finding an internship
- Finding a second job
- Revising their resume

Achieving Career Goals: About 38 percent of participants were able to achieve a career goal in Year 1.²⁸ This is a positive accomplishment, though well below the goal of 90 percent. A few of the most commonly accomplished career goals include receiving an industry-recognized credential (7) and completing a sector-specific training (4). There were also two individuals who accomplished significant progress since enrolling in the program. One has completed two trainings and applied for financial aid. Another has accomplished two of her four goals, completing the Advanced COEC training and enrolling in a BA program.

Enrolled in Education: Educational enrollments are a key focus of the SkillWorks Initiative. The CHW Initiative has seen success in helping individuals access educational opportunities ranging from developmental courses to sector-specific training to college enrollment.

The primary developmental course in which CHWs enrolled is College Prep; six participants enrolled in Year 1. Five participants enrolled in sector-specific training ranging from HIV Counseling and Testing to Harm Reduction training. Three participants enrolled in college after enrolling in the Initiative and five more continued in college, having enrolled in college prior to beginning to participate in the Initiative. The CHW coaches worked with those who had enrolled in college prior to CHW program to assist them in addressing barriers that might keep them from staying in school.

Employer Outcomes

CHW Initiative employer partners have engaged with the Initiative for a variety of reasons, driving the outcomes they expect to experience. The following section describes both employer goals for participation and short-term outcomes that resulted from their participation.

Goals for Participation

Understanding partner employers' goals for participating in the Initiative is critical to interpreting whether employer partners are satisfied with its performance and whether they feel their needs are being met.

According to the Employer Survey, the primary reason all employers are participating in the Initiative is to provide educational opportunities for their current CHW employees. After this, there are three key motivating factors that were listed by at least half of the employer partners:

- Securing additional funding streams to support CHW work
- Learning from/sharing with peer organizations
- Improving the quality of care provided by CHW employees

Noticeably absent from this list is reducing turnover in CHW positions (received only two votes). Employers may not be expecting this outcome from the Initiative because they understand that turnover is more often driven by layoffs due to grants ending than employees moving between jobs.

²⁸ The CHW Initiative coaches allowed participants to set their own goals, most of which were long-term goals. It was not feasible for participants to achieve these goals within the first year of participation. In Year 2, coaches are focusing on tracking interim as well as long-term goals in order to better track progress toward goal completion.

The results are complicated by the fact that the employer goals tend to vary, depending on whether the question is asked of senior management or supervisors. In employer interviews, senior management tended to be more interested in the overall policy objectives of the Initiative and saw the participant services as an added benefit. The opposite tended to be true among supervisors. They were not necessarily aware of the overall policy goals and work being done by the Initiative, but they were more mindful of the program's potential to provide participants with a meaningful, quality work experience. Neither group seemed to think that the services provided by the CHW Initiative to CHWs would affect the organizations' bottom line.

In general, there is limited alignment between the reasons employers are participating in the Initiative (which can translate into their expected outcomes) and the employer outcomes that the CHW Initiative intends to foster. The Initiative's four main metrics are reducing turnover, reducing costs associated with turnover, improving the quality of care provided by CHWs, and increasing the cultural competency of CHWs. Only one of these four metrics is an outcome that employers are expecting the CHW Initiative to influence—the quality of care provided. Therefore, as is the case for other SkillWorks partnerships, the actual goals motivating employer participation are not directly aligned with the employer outcomes the Initiative is trying to achieve and measure.

In a subsequent section on *System Change Outcomes*, we report on the CHW Initiative priority outcomes.²⁹ After the first year of implementation, limited employer outcomes have been achieved. This is to be expected since most employer outcomes are either long-term or require a certain level of scale to make an impact on the overall organization. Because no employer had more than twelve participants and most had between two and four, the scale of influence on employers is limited.³⁰

Reduced Turnover

A total of nine employers reported CHW turnover rates for the CHW Initiative's first year of implementation. The reported turnover rate among CHW employers varies dramatically. Three employers reported that their organization's community health workers have no turnover, while one employer reported that its CHWs are hired for a nine-month internship resulting in 100 percent annual turnover. The remaining six employers reported CHW turnover rates ranging from 9 to 33 percent. Omitting the case where the employer reported 100 percent annual turnover, the average CHW turnover rate was 13.1 percent. It is too soon to assess whether CHW Initiative activities affected participants' rate of turnover, particularly given the fact that many participants were enrolled in the program for six months or less.

When baseline turnover rates are compared with turnover rates reported at the end of Year 1, the turnover rate increased for three organizations, decreased for two organizations, and stayed the same for four organizations.³¹ Regardless of the direction of change, though, no employer interviewed said it had noticed lower turnover in 2007 among participants relative to non-participants. This provides

²⁹ In future years, the CHW Initiative staff, SkillWorks staff, and the evaluation team may want to consider collecting data to measure a sample of employer expected outcomes.

³⁰ The proportion of an employer's CHW workforce participating in the Initiative averaged at 20 percent; the actual totals ranged from zero to 69 percent.

³¹ One organization did not report a turnover rate at baseline and another did not report a rate at the end of Year 1.

the clearest evidence that to date, the CHW Initiative has not yet had a marked effect on turnover rates, which it had hoped to reduce by 10 percent.

Better Job Performance

Through an employer survey, employers were asked to describe improvements they noticed in the job performance of CHW participants as an indicator of quality of care provided.³² The established goal was that 75 percent of participants would demonstrate improvements in their job performance as a result of their participation.

On the employer survey, five of eight employers with participating employees said that they had seen either small or moderate improvements in participating CHWs' ability to support, advocate, and coordinate care for their clients. Additionally, during the employer interviews, three of the five employers interviewed described concrete improvements they have seen in participating employees. One employer noted that its two participating employees are more committed to the position and are less likely to cancel their biweekly supervisory appointments. Another employer said that employees are more engaged with their work and more thoughtful about their career goals, and have a better understanding of their personal limitations (e.g., cannot attend college while kids are young).

Another measure of improved job performance, though less related to quality of care provided, is professional communication. Six of eight employer partners with participating employees said that their participating CHWs had either moderate or significant improvements in communicating with their supervisors and in showing an interest in career opportunities.

System Change Outcomes

System change activities described earlier in the chapter are expected to produce a number of outcomes that are being tracked. Some of these are short-term outcomes where progress has already been achieved. Other outcomes are interim or long-term where progress will be more protracted. The following section documents key expected outcomes for both employers and changes in policy and the Initiative's progress to date.

Employers

Interim Outcome—Employers' support for employees' access to education programs: Employers have demonstrated concrete ways in which they are increasing their support for CHWs' participation in education. Two employers are providing release time for training as a new benefit being offered as a result of the Initiative. Another employer is offering tuition reimbursement for the first time as a result of the Initiative. Finally, one employer changed the schedule of workers to allow five-day work weeks instead of seven and added a role for position coverage in order to open up time for workers to participate in outside trainings.

These changes are substantial and meaningful to CHWs' work experience. However, it is important to note that there are still significant obstacles to employees' participation that employers are still struggling to address. The primary challenge mentioned by participants and employers during informant interviews was the fact that, while employers provide release time for coaching and training, CHWs' caseloads do not diminish. Those with flexible schedules can try to "juggle" their

³² The intended metric was changes in performance reviews received by CHWs, but this information is not readily available.

caseload to fit in coaching. However, office positions, which tend to be clinical, and field positions with set schedules (e.g., CHWs tasked with observing AIDS patients take antiretroviral drugs at the same time each day) have limited flexibility to access the coaching and/or training due to the “on-call” nature of their jobs. For those without meaningful access to release time, participation in the Initiative has been limited.

Interim Outcome—Employers’ adoption of career ladders: One employer adopted a career ladder in Year 1.³³ Because employer adoption of career ladders is a goal for Years 2 and 3 of the Initiative, it was not expected that a significant number of employers would have adopted career ladders in Year 1.

Policy

Short-Term Outcome—Recognition of the CHW term: There is initial evidence that the CHW term is being used more consistently. The DPH definition is consistently referred to by policy and employer partners as the standard definition. In terms of its usage, anecdotally, two of the three participants interviewed said they now use the term and that they did not use it before participating in the Initiative.

In addition to CHW affiliation with the term, employers are beginning to more thoughtfully consider exactly who within their organizations technically falls under the definition. For example, Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD) staff used the recent CHW survey to determine which staff members should be classified as CHWs. They conducted a thorough review of every job description in the organization and identified over 70 staff beyond the Health Services Department who fit under the umbrella term of CHW. As a result of this effort, ABCD staff are now advertising and enrolling these CHWs in coaching in a formal manner through upper management’s invitations.

The progress that has been made tends to illuminate additional work that needs to be done. Just as ABCD has walked through the CHW identification process, other organizations likely need to follow a similar process. Additionally, stakeholders both internal and external to the Initiative continue to debate exactly which job classifications are included under the DPH definition and which are not. Often the debate revolves around whether the CHW term defines a skill set that applies to many occupations or whether it is an occupational heading under which fall many specific jobs. Work on this outcome will continue for the foreseeable future.

Short-Term Outcome—Creation of a standardized career ladder: The Initiative has created a model career ladder and has informally made it available to employers. The Initiative expects the model to evolve, however. After the planned employer forum, where the ladder will be formally released, the Initiative plans to hold peer meetings to provide employers with a forum in which to discuss the intricacies and logistics of adopting a career ladder approach to employee advancement.

Short-Term Outcome—Development of CHW education tracks at community colleges: Both community college tracks will be in place for Fall 2008. In terms of developing the bachelor’s degree, the CHW Initiative does not yet have a Memorandum of Agreement with the University of Massachusetts, Boston, but hopes to sign one in Year 2. The College of Public and Community Service currently offers a Human Services Degree. The design of a CHW curriculum is currently

³³ Another employer also adopted a career ladder but it was for front-line workers rather than CHWs.

being debated within the college. The Initiative's Education and Training committee will work with UMass faculty as appropriate to ensure the Initiative is in support of the program developed.

Interim Outcome—Establishment of a statewide credentialing system: As described earlier, this is in the active planning stage, through work with the DPH Advisory Council and MACHW's development of its policy briefs. Once the DPH report is released and MACHW's policy brief is circulated, the CHW Initiative hopes to formally endorse MACHW's policy position and begin lobbying for implementation.

Long-Term Outcome—Establishment of methods to increase employee compensation: No tangible outcomes have been achieved in terms of increasing employee compensation. The Initiative's policy committee's current actions are focused on isolating the methods deemed to have the greatest potential for adoption for increasing employer revenue, and ultimately for increasing CHW wages. Two methods that are under consideration, based on the research conducted and the experiences of similar organizations nationally, are negotiating with insurers to reimburse for CHW services and to have DPH and other grantors require a minimum wage for CHWs in all proposals and grants.

A constraint to these efforts is the fact that the overwhelming success of enrollment into the new insurance products (as a result of the Healthcare Reform Bill of 2006) has placed considerable strain on the healthcare system and is exacerbated by a shortage of primary care providers. This strain requires healthcare providers to reassess resource allocation, sometimes resulting in eliminated CHW positions. While this presents a serious barrier to CHW funding, the Initiative continues to look for innovative strategies to support CHW activities as part of primary care teams in public health and other roles. Areas under review include: pay for performance mechanisms, incentives for providers who hire CHWs, Community Benefit funding and Determination of Need linkage projects.³⁴

Long-Term Outcome—Changes in the percentage of CHW positions not grant-based: No progress has or will be made on this outcome until the funding strategies for CHW positions are expanded. The distribution of CHWs between permanent and temporary positions is largely due to existing funding and past organization practices. For example, at ABCD and DotWell, all CHWs are temporary employees; there are also employers with permanent CHW positions. In general, regardless of employment status, CHW positions are funded through grant resources, meaning that they are particularly vulnerable. The main exception to this is PACT, where CHWs are funded with permanent resources.

The CHW Initiative's goal is to migrate as many CHW positions as possible to full-time, permanent, not-grant funded status.

Key Learnings/Implications for Partnership Selection in Phase 2

System Change Outcomes vs. Participant Outcomes

Lesson Learned: If a partnership's system change work is critical to the success of increasing employee outcomes, there may be limited participant outcomes accomplished in initial years of implementation.

³⁴ CHW Initiative of Boston, Quarterly Report, Quarter 4, p. 5.

CHW Initiative Experience: The Community Health Worker Initiative is one of the only SkillWorks partnerships with substantial and critical system change goals equal in importance to the participant activities. The successful achievement of these system change goals will mean significant transformation of the working environments of all CHWs, not just those enrolled in the Initiative. The downside to the comprehensive and far-reaching nature of the Initiative's goals is that individual outcomes accomplished will likely be limited until system change goals are accomplished.

One concrete example of this is the system change goal of creating an identity around the CHW term. During the first year of implementation, the Initiative has faced setbacks in enrollment because partner employers cannot readily identify who are the CHWs within their employment job categories. This was apparent when employers were asked by the Initiative to list their CHW job categories and then later to fill out a survey about the CHWs they employed. The results of these two data collection efforts were widely inconsistent, with employers reporting different numbers of CHW employees in each effort. Another setback was that once a decision was made by management about who were the CHWs, and therefore would be eligible for Initiative services, the employees themselves often lacked an association with the term. As a result, Initiative staff had to convince employees that the Initiative's services were relevant to them.

Intra-Employer Stakeholder Groups

Lesson Learned: Multi-dimensional initiatives (foci on participants, employers, and system change) may create multiple constituencies within a single employer that require unique, yet coordinated messages about the Initiative's services, goals, and employer expectations.

CHW Initiative Experience: Unique, but coordinated messages to management and supervisors within individual employers is critical. The CHW Initiative experience has shown that these groups often have different understandings of the Initiative's activities and goals. It has also shown that management buy-in to employee involvement in the Initiative does not necessarily translate into supervisors proactively referring individuals to the program and assisting their participation through flexible scheduling.

After two rounds of employer interviews (for the Initial Implementation report and Year 1 report), it is evident that there are two distinct employer perspectives within most organizations, those of upper management and line supervisors, about why employers are participating and what they hope to accomplish through their participation. While the reasons across employers are not necessarily consistent, senior management and supervisors do consistently communicate different information. In some instances, senior management decided to participate in the Initiative in hopes of effecting policy changes resulting in new revenue sources, with the employee-focused activities of secondary importance. Supervisors, on the other hand, have minimal awareness of the Initiative's policy activities and are focused on what they might gain through improved participant job satisfaction or increased skills. These differences result in varying assessments of the Initiative's effectiveness and value to the employer.

The CHW Initiative has experienced a disconnect between management and supervisor buy-in throughout the first year of the Initiative. A direct indication of this was that participant recruitment was much harder than expected, given the amount of management support expressed for career coaching activities. It was not that supervisors were against employees participating in the Initiative

but rather that they were not always completely informed about its services or committed to supporting participation when it required significant modification of schedules or staffing. The Initiative realized that they needed to customize communication directly for supervisors, in addition to management, in order to increase supervisor understanding of the benefits of the coaching services and overall buy-in to the process.

Barriers to Participant Enrollment

Lesson Learned: Employers and participants may strongly support partnership programs and yet enrollment may be limited.

CHW Initiative Experience: For participants, the benefit of participation is not always obvious. Employees agree that they want their situation to change through more stable employment, increased wages, and better working conditions, but they do not necessarily believe that coaching and education will help. Even when employees agree with the concept of needing a coach, there are many barriers to participation. Some of the common barriers faced by non-participant CHWs at partner employers are that their children need them at home, they are working too many hours to find time to meet with a coach, they are too close to the end of their career to benefit, or they cannot afford the education.

Partner employers were supportive of employee participation but this did not result in high levels of employee participation. One challenge was that the verbal support was not accompanied by concrete changes to support participation (e.g., increasing staffing or providing flexibility so that clinical/office staff can participate).

Chapter 8: SkillWorks Public Policy Component

Introduction

In its application for funding for Year 4 of its SkillWorks grant, the Workforce Solution Group (WSG) reported that its priorities for the year would be to work on the following:

- 1) The implementation of the Workforce Solutions Act (WSA)
- 2) Continued advocacy for workforce priorities in the budget
- 3) The engagement of the new governor, Deval Patrick, and his administration
- 4) The expansion of employer engagement in workforce development
- 5) Laying the groundwork for systems reform in Year 5

The evaluation found that WSG has been very successful in achieving much of its Year 4 agenda.

In addition to these priority areas, during Year 4 WSG spent considerable time working to develop a more specific agenda for public policy reform related to workforce development. It also took advantage of some specific opportunities that arose, most notably working to have training funds included as part of the governor's life science legislation. In general, over its fourth year of operation, WSG has been consolidating and building on its early victories and advancing a broader policy agenda.

During Year 4, the SkillWorks staff director, Loh-Sze Leung, as well as Judy Meredith of the Public Policy Institute, also worked on the public policy agenda. In addition, Loh-Sze helped to facilitate the involvement of other funders and partnerships in public policy outreach and advocacy. This work often supported or complemented the activities of WSG. Loh-Sze was actively engaged in implementation activities related to some of the programs created through the WSA, played an important role in managing the communication around public policy issues within all groups involved in the SkillWorks Initiative, and brought some learning from national workforce development policy groups to the table.

Changes in Partnership and Approach

Changes in the WSG Executive Team and Partners Group

Workforce Solutions Group has benefited from the consistency in its staffing over the four years of the SkillWorks Initiative. During this time period the director, Dan Kobayashi, has continued to direct the activities and has grown as leader of WSG. The stability of the staff has been very important given the continued transition in the key leadership of the WSG Executive Team over the past four years.

The Executive Team went through some continued changes during Year 4. One of the key partners, the WEIU, went through a change of leadership and merger with the Crittenton Hastings House during Year 3. For the first part of Year 4, the leadership of the new organization, the Crittenton Women's Union (CWU), was focused on the organizational challenges resulting from the merger. Alison Staton, the staff person assigned to WSG, left and Ruthie Liberman from the Crittenton

Women's Union was assigned to represent the organization on the WSG Executive Team. While she attended Executive Team meetings in the spring and summer of 2007, she did not become fully engaged and play a major role until October 2007. Beth Babcock, the president and CEO of the Crittenton Women's Union, also became more engaged as the year progressed, particularly in representing WSG at larger state meetings.

Representation from the AFL-CIO has also gone through a number of changes over the course of the SkillWorks Initiative. In Year 3 of the project, Jeff Soth was assigned to represent the AFL-CIO on the Executive Team. Jeff had extensive experience with workforce development outside of Massachusetts and brought important new expertise and perspective to the Executive Team. During Year 4, Jeff left the AFL-CIO. He has been replaced by Tim Sullivan. However, Sue Parsons, who has been involved with WSG over the years, has also continued to play a role representing the AFL-CIO on the WSG Executive Team.

WSG's broader Partners Group continued to engage a wide set of workforce development actors in the WSG public policy activities. WSG tried to have this group meet on a quarterly basis. The Partners Group was expanded to include the directors of each of the SkillWorks partnerships, the Massachusetts Business Roundtable, SEIU 1199, and the Massachusetts Association of CDCs.

Role of SkillWorks Staff, Funders, and Partnerships

During Year 3 of the SkillWorks public policy work, the SkillWorks funders and staff became more engaged in the public policy work, partially in concert with WSG and partially as an independent voice in the public policy arena. As a result of this shift, SkillWorks Director Loh-Sze Leung started to play a much more active role in the public policy work. While not as actively involved during Year 4, due to a leave of absence and a focus on SkillWorks Phase II planning, Loh-Sze has continued to help shape the public policy agenda, has participated in the implementation activities related to the Workforce Solutions Act, and has brought in and engaged outside expertise on public policy issues as part of the Phase II planning process. In addition, Judy Meredith of the Public Policy Institute has continued to have a contractual relationship with SkillWorks during this timeframe.

The SkillWorks funders and partnerships played a visible role at the state level, voicing their support for continued and expanded workforce development funding in budget hearings and meetings with elected officials. Additionally, The Boston Foundation, with its slightly different organizational structure, identified areas where overlap existed between its own public policy agenda and that of SkillWorks. In these overlapping areas, TBF staff aligned lobbying efforts to play a key role in furthering SkillWorks workforce development agenda.

Year 4 Activities and Progress

Continued Advocacy for Workforce Development Budget and Building the Workforce Development Constituency

During Year 4 of its activities, WSG continued to build and engage its constituency. Its activities have included:

- Communication through the Workforce Solutions Group eUpdate, which keeps interested parties up to date about WSG's involvement in a wide range of activities. This includes

updates on implementation activities as well as ongoing legislative and budgetary issues. Currently, there are approximately 800 individuals on the email list.

- Communication through action alert emails to inform its constituency about important advocacy activities including hearings and letter writing campaigns to key policymakers. These alerts also suggest specific actions that can be taken, with detailed and clear directions about how to provide input to policymakers.
- Continued regional meetings throughout the state over the course of Year 4. This included meetings in early 2007 and the fall of 2007. The number of regions has also been expanded from 8 to 10. The main focus of these meetings is on legislative action.

The policy issue that became the focus of Year 4 was making the Workforce Competitive Trust Fund (WCTF) a permanent line item in the budget. While WSG continued to advocate for a range of budgetary issues related to workforce development, including sustaining the funding levels for Adult Basic Education (ABE) and supporting increased funding for the One-Stops, it chose to put most of its effort into trying to get increased and more sustainable funding for the WCTF.

In the spring of 2007, WSG asked its constituency to call or write their legislators to push for making the WCTF a permanent line item. WSG organized its constituency to attend legislative hearings in the late summer and early fall of 2007. Members wore stickers identifying their association with WSG and were highly visible. They then met with the governor and his staff and with legislative leadership. By all accounts, this advocacy activity was a very important element in getting both the governor's and the House leadership's support for transferring an additional \$7 million in funding for the WCTF.

Implementation Activities Related to the WSA

While in previous years most of the WSG staff time was spent on budget and advocacy issues, during Year 4 WSG staff and the Executive Team became very involved in efforts to effectively implement some of the programs and initiatives that came out of the successful passage of the Workforce Solutions Act.

➤ *Food Stamp Employment and Training*

Among the provisions included in the 2006 Economic Stimulus Package as a result of WSG's legislative advocacy was state authorization of the Food Stamp Employment and Training program (FSET). FSET is a component of the federal Food Stamp program that offers 50 percent federal reimbursement for qualifying job training activities provided to food stamp recipients who are not receiving cash assistance under Transitional Assistance to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC), Massachusetts's version of the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. States must enact legislation opting into the program and are required to establish a structure for administering the program in order to be eligible for federal reimbursement. Training providers eligible for reimbursement include state and local agencies, community colleges, and nonprofit organizations.

While FSET was being accessed prior to the involvement of WSG, WSG helped to develop the new legislative language that was needed to broaden the pool of eligible users. WSG also worked with the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA), the agency charged with implementing FSET, during Year 3 and continued this work in Year 4. Loh-Sze Leung, the director of SkillWorks, was also involved in these meetings. UMass Medical School, which DTA contracted to operate the program, also joined these meetings. The meetings initially focused on standards and procedures for

administering the program. Then, in early 2007, the parties agreed to launch a pilot program. At WSG's urging, the decision was made to focus the pilot primarily on nonprofits.

In order to recruit participants into the pilot program and more generally educate the workforce development community about FSET, WSG organized a series of regional meetings in the spring and summer of 2007. In most cases, a DTA representative or UMass Medical School's FSET program director also attended these meetings to brief attendees on the program and to answer questions.

Several organizations applied to participate in the pilot and seven were selected, representing a range of organizational types and sizes, including CBOs, other nonprofits, a local government agency, and a community college. The pilot program began in 2007, and in late 2007 participating organizations submitted requests for reimbursement totaling \$1,578,761 for expenses incurred during the federal 2007 fiscal year. After review, DTA determined that total allowable expenses were \$476,725, generating a 50 percent reimbursement of \$238,363. Expenditures were generally disallowed for one of three reasons: the participant was receiving TAFDC, exceeded the 120-hour limit, or was not listed in the DTA database as a food stamp recipient.

While it is generally agreed that initial implementation of the program went smoothly, a number of factors reduced the financial benefits of the program below what was originally anticipated.

One key restriction is the federal "120 hour rule," which makes money spent on food stamp recipients who work or receive training for more than 120 hours per month ineligible for reimbursement. This particularly disadvantages organizations serving incumbent workers. In an effort to reverse this rule, WSG worked on federal advocacy efforts in partnership with The Workforce Alliance (TWA), a national workforce development advocacy group. TWA, with WSG's support, lobbied successfully to get a provision into the Senate Farm Bill that would eliminate this restriction. As of March 2008, the provision was not in the House version and was being discussed in conference committee. Another federal rule reducing the financial benefits of FSET is the ineligibility of state ABE funds. These are considered a pass-through of federal funds, and are thus deemed ineligible for reimbursement. No efforts to reverse this rule are currently underway.

At the local level, the decision by the City of Boston to recapture City dollars distributed to nonprofits for job training activities and later reimbursed through FSET is a challenge to FSET participation for some nonprofits that receive City funding. The City wants to utilize these funds to replenish its Neighborhood Jobs Trust in order to make additional workforce-related grants. However, some Boston organizations are concerned about the amount of time and resources that they need in order to document expenditures on eligible clients without receiving any reimbursement for these costs. The director of one nonprofit noted that it was difficult for his organization to participate in this program under such circumstances. On the other hand, another organization in the city noted that while a tedious and time consuming process, working with the program is now "pretty automatic" and has been a great help to the organization. A possible solution may be for the City to pass along enough funding to cover administrative expenses

While WSG has focused on promoting CBO participation in FSET, less has been done to engage some of the larger training providers in the program, including community colleges. Participation by these organizations could significantly increase the revenues being generated by the program to support additional job training activities.

Despite these drawbacks, the program is now expanding beyond the pilot. According to Anthony Owumi, the administrator of the FSET program for UMass Medical School, it plans to add five organizations in 2008, and has developed an outreach program to recruit new participants. While all agree that the initial expectation that FSET would bring tens of millions of federal training dollars into Massachusetts was highly unrealistic, expanding FSET use does have the potential to increase the resources available for workforce training and sector partnerships in the state.

➤ ***The implementation of the Educational Rewards Grant Program***

WSA included funding for a new program aimed at providing part-time students with grants for college as well as support for nonacademic needs like childcare and transportation. The new program—the Education Rewards Grant Program—was to be jointly managed by the Board of Higher Education and the Department of Workforce Development. In the Year 3 evaluation, the consulting team reported that the implementation of the Educational Rewards Grant Program was seriously stalled by largely bureaucratic issues involving the two state agencies assigned to its implementation.

Very little progress was made on implementation during Year 4. WSG continued to work with key stakeholders at the Board of Higher Education to push through the program. WSG members helped to draft the guidelines for the program. After continued internal bureaucratic problems, the application for the Educational Rewards Grant Program was finally released in July 2007.

WSG remains very disappointed and frustrated with the outcomes to date of this program. WSG thought that the initial appropriation from the WSA would be used up and it could focus on increasing funding for the FY 08 budget. However, by the spring of 2008, almost a year after the program was officially announced, only approximately \$200,000 in grants had been provided. The general consensus is that there has been little to no outreach related to the program and that the current office assigned to implement the grant program is understaffed. An additional problem is that the program shares a name with the Educational Reward Loan Program, which was poorly regarded in the workforce development community. Poor branding may have contributed to underuse.

In January 2008, the SkillWorks director, WSG staff, and WSG members from the Crittenton Women’s Union met with the Board of Higher Education staff to review progress on the program, to discuss outreach strategies and other challenges in the program (such as income requirements), and to think about a strategy for the 2009 budget. Clearly, SkillWorks remains committed to seeing this program fully implemented and is playing a key role in efforts to improve the effectiveness of the program.

➤ ***Implementing the Performance Standards and Accountability Task Force (Accountability Task Force)***

The overall environment that led to the creation of the Accountability Task Force shifted during Year 4 of the SkillWorks Initiative. Basically, for the past 16 years, with a few exceptions (most notably the short administration of Governor Swift), there was limited leadership or interest at the executive level in reforming the workforce development system. The Massachusetts Workforce Investment Board (MWIB) was a largely dormant organization. The creation of the Accountability Task Force by the legislature was in many ways a response to the lack of leadership at the executive level. With a new administration, which understood the importance of workforce development, there were new opportunities for achieving some of the goals of the Accountability Task Force as set out in the WSA.

The change in administrations led to a significant delay between the time that the WSA was passed in 2006 and the actual convening of the Workforce Accountability Task Force in the summer of 2007. There was an intentional delay in the appointment of members until the new administration was in office. With the transition to the new administration, there was a further delay in the appointing of members.

The Task Force, chaired by Representative David Torrisi and Senator Jack Hart, was finally convened during the summer of 2007. The Task Force had 26 members, including 6 from the legislature, 8 from the executive, 2 from labor, 4 from business, and 5 from community-based organizations and the Workforce Investment Association of Massachusetts. WSG was well-represented on the Task Force with the Crittenton Women's Union, the AFL-CIO, and representatives of the Workforce Investment Board Association included. In addition, the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development provided leadership and staff support for the Task Force.

When the Task Force was finally convened, it had about six months left to fulfill the requirements of the WSA for issuing a report on the workforce development system in the Commonwealth. The focus of the Task Force's work was on measuring outcomes and collecting the data needed to better understand the performance of the entire workforce system in the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth Corporation was tasked with collecting and analyzing the data on the system and preparing a report for the Task Force by the end of 2007.

While the Task Force was meeting, the new administration was simultaneously rebuilding the Massachusetts Workforce Investment Board (MWIB) under new leadership. The administration believed that a stronger MWIB would be the most effective path for achieving some of the specific system reform ideas that were to be explored through the Task Force.

Once WSG became aware of the administration's interest in supporting a revitalized MWIB and the legislature's support for the idea, rather than advocating for the continuation of the Task Force, staff and members of WSG met with the new administration to ensure that if the Task Force was dissolved, some of their WSG concerns would remain a priority of the MWIB. Moreover, they wanted to ensure that WSG members, as well as others affiliated with SkillWorks, would remain involved with these issues under the MWIB. While put in a somewhat awkward position of having to support the dissolution of the Task Force that they had helped to create, WSG and SkillWorks staff concluded that a strengthened and more engaged MWIB, with their involvement, would serve the same purpose. Moreover, a number of individuals reported that by the fall of 2007, the legislative leadership involved in the Task Force had become distracted and was no longer playing a strong leadership role in the Accountability Task Force.

In October 2007, the Commonwealth Corporation completed a report for the Task Force that compiled performance measures on all programs in the Commonwealth that had received state or federal workforce funding. This report also included data on projects related to workforce development that had received special earmarks from the legislature.

At the end of December 2007, the Task Force issued its report and was disbanded. Over its six months, the Task Force completed the following tasks:

- Reviewed and modified core performance measures
- Reviewed wage records uses and limitations

- Reviewed two state models for performance accountability systems
- Developed and submitted the Annual Performance Report
- Identified key research questions and research design for analysis of governance and coordination (to be completed by the MWIB)

The final report recommended that the MWIB provide the oversight, vision, and policies for performance management for the Commonwealth’s workforce development system.³⁵ This report also charged the Commonwealth Corporation with conducting a qualitative research study “to identify the governance and coordination issues associated with the workforce development system’s capacity to meet the needs of key user groups.”

While the recommendations of the Task Force are now being implemented through the MWIB, there are some who feel that although everyone has pushed for more accountability and improved performance measures, few have actually spent time analyzing the data and work completed by the Task Force. In general, there is recognition of the need for more data and analysis, but limited use of this data and analysis in terms of the implications for reforming the workforce system.

WSG and SkillWorks continue to play an important role in the three subcommittees established under the revitalized MWIB. Sue Parsons from the AFL-CIO is on the Sector Subcommittee, Don Gillis is involved in the ABE Subcommittee, and Dan Kobayashi attends the Governance Subcommittee.

➤ ***Implementation of the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund***

As noted in the Year 3 evaluation, SkillWorks staff, its partnerships, funders, and WSG all played a role in providing advice on how the new \$11 million in funds for the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund should be used. SkillWorks staff organized and hosted a planning session on the use of the Trust Fund. A list of recommendations, based on the learnings from SkillWorks, was also presented to the staff of the Commonwealth Corporation, the entity assigned to oversee the RFP process. In addition, both the director of SkillWorks and two members of the WSG Executive Team were appointed to the advisory committee involved in the design of the RFPs for funding through the Trust Fund. SkillWorks public funders, the City of Boston, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts were also involved with the advisory committee.

The RFP for the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund (WCTF) projects was issued in early 2007, with proposals due in April 2007. This RFP awarded \$7.5 million in grants of up to \$500,000 for sector partnerships. In addition, there was a separate \$500,000 pot of funding for a statewide grant focused on older workers and an RFP for five \$25,000 planning grants. Close to \$2 million in funding was held back for successful planning grantees.

The first round of funding was awarded to 15 implementation grants and five planning grants. Two of the SkillWorks partnerships received support through the WCTF. Jewish Vocational Services (JVS), in conjunction with the International Institute, established the Hospitality Career Institute, a project that expands the activity of the existing SkillWorks partnership. In addition, the Asian American Civic Association (AACA) received funding for Partnership for Automotive Career Education (PACE).

³⁵ *Report of the Performance Standards and Workforce Accountability Task Force*, December 31, 2007.

A second round of funding through the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund was announced in December 2007. This round divided a total of \$5.7 in funding among seven state regions, with the greater Boston area allocated approximately \$2 million. Responses to the RFP for the second round were due in March 2008.

Research Activities

WSG did not have a separate budget for research during Year 4. However, it did receive a grant from the Capacity Building Committee to complete two research projects focused on employer engagement. The first project, undertaken by Ann Donner, focused on the employers already engaged in sector partnership projects, both in SkillWorks and as part of earlier state sector programs. The second study, undertaken by Peter DaBoul, was to focus on a more random sample of employers, some of whom were engaged with the workforce system and some of whom were not. The purpose of this research was to better inform WSG about what motivated employers to become engaged in workforce development activities, as well as the barriers that they faced. WSG hoped to use this research to undertake a road show at chambers of commerce across the Commonwealth. The road show would focus on workforce-related public policy issues and their relevance to employers.

A draft of the Ann Donner research was completed in July 2007, but the research effort by Peter DaBoul was not completed by the end of Year 4. While a draft of this research was submitted in February 2008, the results have not yet been released. As a result, WSG never developed the more strategic approach to employer engagement that it had hoped to achieve in Year 4.

Responding to New Opportunities

WSG is adept at seizing opportunities, responding effectively to workforce and economic development issues that arise. During Year 4 they have been particularly effective at engaging in legislative and policy issues related to workforce that developed. These include:

➤ *Life sciences legislation*

When the governor announced in the spring of 2007 his interest in submitting a bill to promote the state's life sciences industry, WSG responded with an effort to make sure that workforce development funding would be included in the effort. It was Judy Meredith of the Public Policy Institute who first raised the possibility of getting workforce funds included in the legislation. Working under contract to provide support to the SkillWorks director, Judy Meredith arranged a meeting with Bob Coughlin, the then undersecretary of business development, WSG, SkillWorks leadership and Jim Rooney, Director of Public Affairs at the Boston Foundation, who provided support to WSG in the follow-up strategy. Following this meeting, WSG submitted a memo making the case that Massachusetts needs to invest in training low-income workers for the life sciences if the state is going to capture the full economic benefits associated with the cluster. WSG staff also met with Representative Dan Bosley to ensure that workforce training funds would be added to the bill. Once the bill was released by the governor and the House, there was between \$55 million in workforce training included. WSG clearly had a role in helping to create a new mindset that any new economic development initiative should include workforce-related funding.

In follow-up to this work, WSG is currently tracking legislation related to green jobs. There is a new awareness by legislators drafting this bill that they should include workforce funding as part of it.

➤ ***Involvement in the ABE-ESOL Subcommittee of the MWIB***

As noted, under the new governor and the leadership of Secretary Suzanne Bump, the MWIB has taken on a new leadership role in reforming the state's workforce development system. Members of WSG have been engaged in a number of the MWIB committees that were established late in 2007. Of particular note, WSG members have been part of the ABE-ESOL Subcommittee that is charged with exploring "how the Commonwealth could more effectively use its resources and provide services to help low-literate adults achieve better labor market and economic success."

The involvement of WSG members in this subcommittee is very important given that the issue of workplace-based ABE has been a high policy priority for the group for many years. The hope is that through their involvement in this subcommittee they will be able to impact how the state spends its resources for adult education.

Development of a SkillWorks Public Policy Agenda

As noted, the SkillWorks director played a much more active role in the public policy component since Year 3. Much of this work focused on increasing the visibility and awareness of SkillWorks amongst the political leadership in the Commonwealth and in articulating a clearer public policy agenda for the initiative overall. Loh-Sze pushed to ensure that the WSG developed a more specific set of public policy goals during Year 4.

During Year 4, WSG, with active involvement of the SkillWorks director, did develop a white paper that articulated a new vision of an "aligned, effective, and strategic workforce system that supports both workers and employers." The purpose of this white paper was initially to provide the WSG position to the Accountability Task Force. The paper was developed with considerable input from many involved in SkillWorks. Loh-Sze played a key role in ensuring that both the funders and the partnership were able to review and provide input into the policy direction. While still lacking in specific details, this white paper was the first time that WSG had developed a more clearly articulated approach to reforming the workforce system in the Commonwealth.

Progress in Achieving Outcomes

In its Year 4 application, WSG identified the following outcomes that it hoped to achieve:

- Rapid dissemination of WCTF grants
- Issuance of Workforce Accountability Task Force report in time for FY 2008 budget
- Full implementation of FSET
- Secure additional funds for FY 2007 budget
- Engage employer champions
- Make workforce development a priority for the next governor

As the previous section illustrated, WSG has been very successful in achieving most of these outcomes. The most notable outcomes included:

➤ ***Securing more funding for the system***

WSG was not successful in maintaining or increasing many of its workforce funding priorities in the last fiscal year. However, it did meet with success in its advocacy for more sustainable funding for the

WCTF. The most important success related to the Year 4 activities was the transfer of an additional \$7 million into the WCTF in accordance with the WSA. While the WCTF was not included in the FY 2008 budget, the governor, Secretary Bump, and the state comptroller had this funding transferred into the WCTF, thus allowing for an additional round of WCTF grants in the fall of 2007.

Of even greater potential long-term importance, in the FY 2009 budget the governor included the WCTF as a line item for the first time. He provided for up to \$15 million in WCTF funding at the end of each year based upon the budget surplus. Having this included in the final FY 2009 budget is a very high priority of WSG in Year 5.

WSG's efforts to secure these resources were supported by testimony provided by SkillWorks Director and TBF public policy staff to the Governor's transition team and by key funders meeting with legislators in the lead up to the Governor's House I budget.

➤ ***Raising the profile of workforce development as a public policy issue***

Over Year 4, with a new administration that is more supportive of the overall workforce development objectives of WSG, the WSG team has achieved increased credibility as a statewide actor in defining the workforce development agenda. WSG, with the support of SkillWorks funders and staff, have made deep inroads with the administration, meeting with the new Secretary of Workforce Development early in her tenure, and continuing to meet with her and her staff around the broad range of issues of concern to WSG.

➤ ***Making workforce development a major priority of the new administration***

WSG was very successful in making quick and strategic contacts with key staff in the administration of the new governor. There was a greater receptivity on the part of the new administration and a greater alignment of interests. Once the new Secretary of Workforce Development, Suzanne Bump, was appointed, WSG members, SkillWorks staff, and TBF public policy staff set up very early meetings. They had a series of meetings in which they gave her the full history of the WSA and a briefing on the legislative priorities of WSG. WSG also organized a wide range of advocates to testify on behalf of WCTF and other workforce priorities in the early days of the administration, including at the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development's first hearing. All involved report that WSG developed very positive working relationships with the state's workforce development staff.

➤ ***Increasing the flow of available funds to meet workforce needs through outreach activity related to FSET and Educational Rewards***

SkillWorks and WSG have also played a role in helping to promote the use of both FSET and the Educational Rewards Grant Program. One of the SkillWorks partnership directors noted, "I never heard about FSET and Educational Rewards except through WSG. WSG is the only group telling people that money is available." Although these programs have yet to reach their full potential, it is unlikely that they would have been used at all without the active involvement and outreach activities of WSG and the SkillWorks staff.

Progress in Addressing Challenges

Over the past three years, the evaluation has noted a number of challenges associated with SkillWorks’s approach to public policy advocacy and workforce system reform. The following section reviews the progress or any changes related to these challenges that resulted over Year 4.

➤ *Building relationships with the SkillWorks partnerships*

There has been some improvement in the overall relationship between the partnership component of SkillWorks and the public policy component. However, there is still room for further improvement.

The partnerships are now all part of the broader WSG Partner Group and are invited to all of the Boston organizing events. However, the level of involvement by the partnerships in these meetings is mixed. Some of the partnerships attend these meetings, while others have not been active. At the Boston meetings, there may be two or three of the partnerships represented. For those that do attend, the sense is that it is more an opportunity for them to get updated on WSG activities than it is an opportunity for WSG to learn about specific policy issues that are impacting the partnerships. In terms of involvement:

- International Institute of Boston (IIB) has been involved with some of the meetings with legislators and has attended some of the public policy meetings.
- Staff from PACE have regularly attended the Boston meetings and the Partner Group.
- PCWD staff usually attend all of the meetings, but have had limited involvement in the public policy work beyond this.
- Staff from the Healthcare and Research Training Institute have attended the Partner Group and have been engaged in some of the public policy activities.
- BSCPP’s executive director has been actively involved with WSG. Given its service population, BSCPP has been particularly involved on the policy agenda related to workplace English, responding to issues related to English Works and English for New Bostonians.
- Staff from the Community Health Worker Initiative have attended all of the regional Boston meetings and have responded to WSG requests—sending letters and writing to legislators.

In addition, the CHW Initiatives’ staff have alerted its parent organization, ABCD, to these efforts. As a result, ABCD’s government affairs staff is more aware of specific workforce-related legislative and budget priorities. Finally, staff have received significant technical help from Dan Kobayashi. As they embark on their own public policy agenda, specific to their industry, they have been able to use Dan’s knowledge of the budget process and contacts with the legislature. Dan has attended some of their policy planning meetings.

The partnerships do value the role that WSG plays. Over the past years, many of the partnership directors did report that they feel more comfortable with WSG and are more aware of the WSG activities. Dan Kobayashi calls on them when he needs their assistance in terms of lobbying activity. Some of the partnerships also noted that they learned about other programs that are available to them (i.e., FSET and Educational Rewards) as a result of their involvement with WSG. They also more generally appreciate the media attention and public visibility that both WSG and the SkillWorks

policy work in general are able to generate. Each individual partnership would be unable to accomplish this on its own.

The one partnership that has a major interest in public policy is the Community Health Worker Initiative. There are many significant policy issues affecting its work that are specific to this industry. As a result, the Community Health Worker Initiative has established a very active public policy committee as part of its partnership. While it has benefited somewhat from WSG's knowledge of the budget and legislative process, it believes there could be significantly more help and collaboration around public policy between the partnership and WSG.

In general, while there has been increased interaction between WSG and the partnerships over Year 4, the learning and activities of the partnerships are still not really being used to guide the public policy agenda, with the exception of the implementation of and continued advocacy for the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund, in which Loh-Sze, Dan Kobayashi and other members of WSG consistently brought forth learnings from the SkillWorks partnerships and initiative.

➤ ***Developing improved relationships with other statewide workforce and educational advocacy groups***

Over the past four years there has been significant improvement in WSG's relationships with many other workforce-related organizations in the state. WSG has developed more effective working relationships with some of the adult education groups, with organizations such as the Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations and Mass. Workforce Alliance, and with other policy groups such as MassINC.

➤ ***Managing the leadership transition in WSG's Executive Team***

By all accounts, WSG's Executive Team has been able to adjust and stabilize to the numerous changes in staff assigned by its member organizations. As noted by one member, "The Team is very impressive. While there is heated debate, the spirit is one of challenging each other, openness in terms of expressing opinions, and a continued commitment to still working together cooperatively."

The Executive Team has developed a different set of skills and orientation as it has evolved. Most notably, the Crittenton Women's Union has a greater human services perspective and does not have the political visibility and clout that it had had under its previous leadership. The new CWU does bring a greater sensitivity to the needs of its low-income constituency, particularly around their basic literacy needs. Moreover, with the loss of some of the earlier Executive Team members, Mary Lassen, Sheelah Feinburg, Harneen Chernow and Jeff Soth, the broader workforce development policy expertise has been reduced.

➤ ***Keeping the coalition together as WSG develops a more specific policy agenda***

As WSG gets more specific and detailed in its policy recommendations, it may face challenges in keeping its coalition together. The areas of greatest potential concern involve Adult Basic Education, a longstanding contentious issue in the state.³⁶ However, to date WSG has been able to skillfully address the ABE issue without tearing the broader coalition apart.

³⁶ The contentiousness of the issue revolves around differing opinions about who should be providing the training – CBOs or community colleges; whether training should be provided in community locations or in the workplace; and whether the primary goal for ABE is job readiness/success or ESOL and ABE for its own sake.

➤ ***Balancing the individual interests of members of the Executive Team and WSG as a whole***

The ability of the WSG Executive Team to jointly develop a white paper on system reform is a positive indication of its ability to keep the coalition together. Over the past year, there were some minor issues related to job quality standards and how to deal with ABE that were resolved within the Executive Team. More potentially divisive issues, such as the possibility of consolidating the number of WIBs in the state, have not been taken up by WSG. Those types of system reform issues that directly impact one of the partner organizations would be difficult to take on.

➤ ***Tension between the city of Boston focus of the partnerships and the statewide focus of policy work***

While not as heated as in previous years, there is an ongoing tension between the Boston focus of the SkillWorks partnerships and many of the funders and the statewide scope of WSG. Some of these tensions emerged over the composition of the Accountability Task Force, with concerns by the City that it did not have any representation. There is also some concern that specific policy issues that may have a great impact on the city of Boston are not being addressed through SkillWorks or WSG.

➤ ***Deepening the engagement of employers***

This is the area that continues to present the greatest challenge to the entire public policy effort of the SkillWorks Initiative. To date, there has been very limited employer involvement in any of the public policy activities supported through SkillWorks. WSG has clearly recognized that as a major problem and saw the completion of the research activity as the first step in its effort to try to involve more employers in its public policy activities. Because of the delay in completing the research report, the entire effort to engage employers took a back seat to other activities during Year 4.

➤ ***Linkage between the policy agenda work of WSG and its research***

As noted, WSG received a separate capacity building grant to fund its research project on employer engagement. As in other years, there is limited connection between the research work and the public policy activities of WSG. The previous research products, which focused on job vacancies and critical sectors and occupations, helped WSG make the case for increased investments in workforce development. However, it had little relevance to developing a policy agenda.

➤ ***The role of public sector SkillWorks partners in the policy development agenda***

The public sector partners in SkillWorks, both the City of Boston and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, continue to believe that the lack of their involvement in WSG activities as well as in the public policy committee work of SkillWorks is a design flaw in the initiative. As noted in the Year 3 evaluation, the representative from the Commonwealth believes that some of the bureaucratic barriers that have affected the ability to get the Education Rewards Grant Program implemented could have been avoided if they had been consulted in the design of the initial WSA legislation. From the point of view of the City, there are some issues that WSG has been involved in that do not fully represent the City's position nor benefit the city. The City also feels that its involvement in the public policy agenda would have been beneficial. The SkillWorks funders are well aware of these issues and have focused attention on how to improve relations in the future. Clearly, going into Phase II, the role of the public sector partners in the public policy work needs to be reconsidered.

➤ ***Developing the specific workforce development change agenda***

WSG, working closely with the SkillWorks director, made significant progress in setting out more specific public policy goals during Year 4. However, there remains a need for an even more specific

and nuanced approach to developing further public policy priorities. Some of the most difficult system reform issues, such as the structure of the WIB and One-Stop system in the state, the multiple silos of agencies involved in workforce development, the effectiveness of the community colleges in meeting the workforce needs of nontraditional students, the relationship between the K-12 system and the higher education system, and how adult basic education services are delivered in the state, remain areas in which more thought and specificity are needed.

➤ ***Addressing the role of community colleges in the system***

While the issue of the role of community colleges in the workforce system has emerged throughout the history of SkillWorks, by the end of Year 4 very little attention was given to this issue. A deliberate decision was made by SkillWorks that given the complexities of the workforce system it would be difficult to also tackle some of the system issues related to the state's community colleges, which are overseen by the Department of Higher Education. However, the community colleges do see themselves as an important part of the state's workforce system. An individual from one of the state's community colleges who has attended WSG meetings noted, "I would have liked to see them advocate for the main workforce development providers in the state—the community colleges, but we have not been considered in their advocacy work."

The role of community colleges is, however, being seriously considered as part of the Phase II public policy agenda of SkillWorks. In 2007, the Boston Foundation released its own study of the challenges facing the State's community college system, and SkillWorks commissioned a separate research effort through Jobs for the Future to examine the role of community colleges in the SkillWorks partnerships and to look at models from other states for how to further engage community colleges in the SkillWorks agenda. WSG has also made the community colleges a key focus of its future policy agenda.

Conclusion

As SkillWorks moves into the second phase of its public policy work there are some important learnings from the first four years of operation that should be considered:

1. Defining the scope of the public policy agenda and responsibilities within SkillWorks.

As noted in earlier evaluations, SkillWorks has never been entirely clear about what it meant by "public policy." Over its first three years of operations, WSG had clearly defined the "public policy" agenda to be primarily focused on state legislation and budgetary issues related to workforce services for low-income adults. With increased involvement of the SkillWorks director over the past two years, and WSG's focus on implementation during Year 4, there has been increased attention to policies and issues related to how state agencies interpret and implement legislation. However, there are still a broad set of public policy issues that, to date, have received limited attention. These include federal policy issues (such as WIA reauthorization), local Boston policy issues (such as the City's approach to FSET), and state policy issues (including the role of community colleges in addressing the workforce needs of residents and businesses).

A related issue is who within the SkillWorks stakeholders could and should be involved in the various components of the policy agenda. Further thought needs to be given to the role of the SkillWorks staff vis-à-vis WSG. Moreover, a more specific process for working out who is driving the specific policy agenda needs to be developed. Is the role of WSG to continue to build the constituency and advocate

for a policy agenda developed by SkillWorks? Or, should WSG be developing its own independent policy agenda that may, in fact, conflict at times with some of the SkillWorks partnerships or funders?

2. Relationship amongst the three components of SkillWorks

Throughout the history of SkillWorks, there has been a struggle to better integrate the three components: partnerships, public policy, and capacity building. While progress has been made, the relationship between the public policy work and the partnerships remains limited. WSG and the public policy work of SkillWorks have provided benefits for the partnerships (e.g., access to information about new funding pools and media attention to their work). And, the partnerships have provided some benefits to WSG (e.g., examples to use in their advocacy work, letters and support in their legislative campaigns). However, what is still not at all clear is whether the actual learnings from the partnership experience with operating sector projects are being used to shape the public policy agenda of SkillWorks.

3. Developing a new approach to engaging employers

WSG's struggles to fully engage employers in its activities may be more fundamental to who WSG is (i.e., the composition of the Executive Team) than a lack of information on how to engage employers. In other words, it is not at all clear that WSG is the appropriate group to be doing a chamber of commerce road show. SkillWorks funders may need to reconsider how to engage the employer community in their broader policy agenda.

Chapter 9: Key Learnings

The following chapter is an effort to summarize what the evaluation team has gleaned from the six partnerships and the public policy activities of the SkillWorks Initiative. The chapter includes highlights of the accomplishments as well as a summary of some of the challenges faced in implementation. Also included are key learnings that can be used by funders in their process of selecting and cultivating workforce partnerships in Phase Two of the SkillWorks Initiative.

The learnings in this chapter complement those included at the end of each of the previous chapters. The chapter learnings focus exclusively on the experience of a given partnership or implementation component. The learnings presented in this chapter draw upon the diverse experiences across all elements and begin to draw out themes from across the Initiative.

The Initiative learnings are supported by anecdotal insight as well as preliminary quantitative evidence when available. In Year 5 of the evaluation, the evaluation team will be further investigating these findings, seeking to document them more conclusively and gain more nuanced insights into the factors that shape their broader applicability.

Pre-Employment Learnings

➤ ***Learning #1: It is critical to customize applicant screening and participant skill assessments based on understanding of employer needs.***

Over the four years of SkillWorks funding, partnerships have realized how critical it is to understand employer needs and expectations and then translate these into screening protocols, skill assessments, and program design. Designing around employer needs has helped to minimize the number of enrolled participants who drop out of the training before graduation, and increase the likelihood of partner employers choosing to hire graduates.

An effective example of incorporating employer needs into program design can be seen in HCRTI's Year 4 experience. HCRTI designed a new approach to its pre-employment program after realizing that its screening process did not adequately examine the nexus between employer needs and potential participants' interests. The result was that participants either dropped out of the program before graduation or decided not to stay in the health care industry after their internship. HCRTI implemented a series of tracks in Year 4 aimed at increasing the transparency of the courses, helping participants understand the specific skills to be taught in the courses, the jobs they would be trained for upon graduation, and employer expectations. As a result of the increased focus on the match between participants' skills and interest and employer needs, the graduation rate increased to 84 percent and 69 percent of graduates were placed. While this placement rate is still rather low, it is higher than in the past.

Another example is PCWD's experience with increasing the entry-level skill requirements. In the initial years of implementation, PCWD found that pre-employment graduates were not sufficiently skilled to be hired in the Partners network. To ensure successful placements, PCWD decided to increase the training entry requirements and to place additional emphasis on the internship phase of the training. The result was more successful internships and placements. The internships served a dual purpose: to allow employers to observe the workers' skills and attitudes, and to allow participants to try out positions and ensure a good fit.

➤ ***Learning #2: A more deliberate transition strategy is required to engage placed pre-employment participants in further training and career development activities.***

Many of the jobs in which pre-employment participants are placed can be broadly characterized as low-skilled and low-wage. The jobs allow for work experience, reliable income and benefits but are not usually positions in which participants wish to stay long-term. SkillWorks's initial expectation was that participants would be placed in these jobs and then would enter the incumbent training pipeline to advance along a career ladder into higher paying, more highly skilled jobs at their placement employers. Partnership experience has shown that this path is atypical. PACE, HCC, HCRTI, and PCWD all had pre-employment and incumbent programs that were designed to work together to support participants on a long-term career trajectory. In very few cases, though, did pre-employment participants actually engage in incumbent services. There were many reasons for this: at PACE, employees must be on the job for a year before they can take ASE certification courses, the primary incumbent service provided through PACE; at HCC, many of the pre-employment placements actually had higher level of English skills than workers being trained in the incumbent courses; in the hospitals, the disconnect seemed to be related to the wide gap between participants' skill levels and the minimum requirements for the next step in the career path.

Generalizing these specific examples, partnerships found that most pre-employment participants were placed into entry level jobs and participants generally had to work for awhile to accumulate the experience needed to advance or even to take advantage of training opportunities. Second, many workers were not be able to participate right away in further training due to employer policies. Finally, in many partnerships, the number of pre-employment participants placed at employer partners was not large enough to result in a significant number of participants transitioning to further training or advancement opportunities.

Of those who stayed at their initial placement, some have advanced on their own, using the skills they learned in the pre-employment training and their own drive to meet with success. At PCWD, a set of participants who started in the pre-employment program have continued to take classes and meet with their coach and are making progress in terms of career advancement. However, most of the pre-employment participants in the partnerships have continued in their initial placement position or have left the employer.

The experiences of those who left their placement employers are valuable sources of insight into the career paths taken by those who have moved on subsequent to their pre-employment training and placement experience. Anecdotal evidence from career coaches indicates that some of these participants left their initial placement to take better jobs at different employers or to attend college. Unfortunately, tracking the outcomes of these individuals is currently outside the scope of the evaluation. In Year 5, it may be possible to re-connect with some of these participants to understand the paths they have taken and whether or not career growth and advancement is being achieved outside the network of employer partners.

Incumbent Learnings

- ***Learning #1: The intensity of incumbent services delivered was highly variable and overall, less integrated than had been anticipated, which may have affected the career development outcomes of the participants.***

One challenge faced by the evaluation is the need to assess the overall effect of the SkillWorks Initiative, understanding what elements led to participant success and the accomplishment of employer goals, while acknowledging that each of the partnerships implemented incumbent services in very distinct ways. Most notably, the intensity and level of integration of services provided to incumbent participants varied considerably across the partnerships. In particular, there was wide variation in both the types and number of classes offered and the intensity of the coaching.

In terms of classes, only IIB offered intensive training to the participants on an ongoing basis that was clearly tied to career advancement within the hospitality sector. PCWD, HCRTI, and BSCPP primarily provided remedial, pre-college, and ESOL classes to the incumbent employees. The level of engagement for a large number of incumbent participants was limited to taking either a pre-college or ESOL class. The three examples of higher level occupational training courses were the HVAC training program of BSCPP, the nursing and surgical tech courses facilitated by HCRTI, and the ASE Test Preparation course at PACE. Given that such a large number of the incumbent participants were taking general ABE and ESOL type classes, it is not surprising that there was not greater skill advancement realized.

The level of intensity of coaching also varied significantly. Some partnerships (IIB and the CHW Initiative) have very intensive programs that work one on one with participants on an ongoing basis around career advancement, advocating for them with their supervisors as needed. Other partnerships (HCRTI and PCWD) provided more limited coaching services. In these programs the coaches were more like case managers, helping participants enroll in courses and address barriers that might keep them from completing a given course for which they had enrolled. The coaches did not generally help participants assess their long-term career plans, next steps along their career paths, or options for meeting their goals.

The remaining partnerships, BSCPP and PACE, had the lowest intensity incumbent program. For example, the PACE coaching model was designed to engage participants around long-term career goals, but it was not able to successfully engage a large number of participants because of critical staffing challenges. The result was that the coaches tended to function more as case managers. However, unlike other programs, PACE does not offer a large number of courses to incumbent employees. Their incumbent services are on-site ASE Test Preparation courses (subsidized by PACE) and ESL tutoring and distance learning. Individuals who participate only in these services, without first completing Module 1 or 2 of the Automotive training course, do not receive coaching support for advancement.

The Building Services Career Pathways Project had isolated programs that offered occupational training and/or career coaching but the integration between the different elements was limited. The lack of integration hindered participants' ability to successfully transition between programs such as ESOL and Building Maintenance or HVAC. Skill enhancement was viable for participants but pathway advancement was more difficult to conceive and implement.

The different coaching models, as well as the variation in the type and number of classes offered, challenge the evaluation team to make meaningful comparisons across the partnerships. One consistent finding, though, is that most of the partnerships implemented a less integrated approach to incumbent worker training and coaching than was envisioned in the SkillWorks “theory.” Without the integration, the intensity of services was highly variable and may have limited participant outcomes. Further examination of participant level service and outcome data could help to illuminate the effects of program design on outcomes.

➤ ***Learning #2: Viable and meaningful career pathways are critical to participant engagement.***

One of the goals of the SkillWorks Initiative was to foster the articulation and/or creation of career pathways that participants could access to increase their wages. In a few partnerships, such as PACE, HCRTI and PCWD, viable and concrete pathways were in existence prior to the SkillWorks Initiative. For these partnerships, the work was articulating the pathways so that coaches could help participants understand them, identify barriers to achieving their next steps, and measure participant progress. In other partnerships, such as CHW the Initiative, HCC, and BSCPP, pathways were not in existence and significant system change was required to bring about meaningful pathways. BSCPP’s effort in Year 2 to train entry maintenance workers was hampered by the lack of a defined pathway and corresponding wage increases. BSCPP’s more recent efforts in the skilled trades such as HVAC are an attempt to provide training in a portion of the sector with more clearly defined pathways. HCC has completed four years of program implementation with the same employer. In the properties with which HCC has partnered, the needed system changes have occurred to allow for promotions and participant engagement. The existing career ladders, from housekeeping to housekeeping supervisor for example, have been augmented by career paths that cross many different hotel positions throughout different departments. Management has gained a flexibility to think creatively about how to promote employees from the most entry-level positions into positions of greater responsibility. This change has resulted in the highest percentage of promotions across all partnerships (23 percent).

The CHW Initiative faces a similar challenge in that currently community health workers have few advancement options other than moving into a supervisory role, of which there are few. The CHW Initiative has only undertaken one year of implementation and therefore has not completed its system change work. Without the system changes, though, the Initiative is facing the challenge of recruiting and engaging participants.

While this is only preliminary evidence, it does suggest that clear career pathways are critical to participant engagement and success in advancement.

➤ ***Learning #3: The intensity of career coaching affects participant outcomes, particularly in complex settings.***

As was already mentioned, each partnership chose to allocate its grant resources in different ways. Some chose to invest heavily in coaching and others invested more heavily in course offerings. Additionally, the model of coaching affected the total number of participants that could be enrolled in a given year. If intensive coaching was expected, as with the CHW Initiative or IIB, a smaller number of individuals could be enrolled annually. If coaching was a way of keeping participants engaged and enrolled in classes, as was the case with HCRTI and BSCPP, then the number of enrolled participants could go up and more resources could be dedicated to courses.

Initial evidence shows that intensive coaching positively affects advancement. For purposes of this discussion, “intensive” coaching includes for instance understanding participant goals, evaluating

pathways, establishing short/long-term career goals, and developing viable action steps. HCC's success, as described earlier, is built upon a model that tracks educational progress of participants, including their pre and post assessment scores, coaches who understand feasible career moves and opportunities at partner employers, creative thinking about training options for participants, and working with employer human resources to dialogue back and forth about participants' skill development needs and viable goals and opportunities for advancement

In other partnerships, such as HCRTI and PACE, the role of the coaches has been limited and participants have experienced very little advancement. Additional research is needed to determine whether these preliminary trends can be more broadly substantiated. Additional investigation could examine whether individuals who engaged in intense career coaching, regardless of the site, did better than those who did not access coaching.

One piece of evidence that this is the case is the fact that both PCWD and HCRTI employers have decided to invest in internal career coaches. PCWD has recognized that while many incumbent workers had only sporadic need for the advice of a coach, such as when they wanted to start thinking about their career goals, coaches were beneficial. Despite limited overall advancements at both of these partnerships, employers still saw something worth investing in, possibly because those individuals who were able to advance had engaged with coaches.

Program Development Learnings

➤ ***Learning #1: Core system-wide metrics should be supplemented and/or refined to better reflect industry structure and unique participant mix.***

As the sector partnerships have evolved, it has become clear to partnership directors and the evaluation team that meaningful outcome metrics must take into consideration unique characteristics of each partnership's target industry. For example, at BSCPP, wage gain is not a meaningful measure of progress, given the fact that all participants work in a unionized environment. Instead, a more meaningful measure of progress related to the program's actual intervention might be an ESOL student's advancement on English proficiency through intermediate benchmarks such as BEST Plus scores for oral and REEP for written proficiency, or an HVAC trainee's progress toward reaching the required 6000 hours for certification.

At PACE, a similar situation has arisen, where individual hourly increases are measured but a participant's achievement of "flat rate" status is not formally documented. The achievement of "flat rate" status is an equally (if not more) important indicator of career progress and earning potential.

None of these additional metrics can replace the importance of consistent definitions for key indicators that are collected across all partnerships. However, neither can key indicators replace the more nuanced ways of understanding and measuring outcomes in each particular sector or industry.

➤ ***Learning #2: Participant skill levels should be anticipated when determining the feasibility of implementing targeted career pathways.***

Compared with sector initiatives across the country, SkillWorks partnerships have chosen primarily to focus on helping participants verbalize and work toward their career goals in a given industry. In other initiatives, the emphasis has been on assisting individuals along a previously identified target pathway. Targeted pathways are generally selected based on known employer needs, and participants

are recruited to learn a given skill that ultimately results in a cohort of individuals ready to fill a specific job (e.g., radiology technician or biotech lab assistant).

The SkillWorks approach potentially allows for a larger number of people to be served, because the number served is not limited by the number of openings projected by an employer in a given occupation. It also is not limited to only those individuals interested in a specific job opportunity. While there are exceptions - BSCPP's HVAC, Building Maintenance, and Clean Room trainings, HCRTI's facilitated Surg Tech and Nursing cohorts, and PACE's Master Technician goal—the volume of students enrolled in these occupational trainings is proportionally much smaller than the number enrolled in ESOL, ABE, and pre-college courses. PACE is the exception to this general rule, focusing most of its energy on enrolling participants into courses that serve as a foundation for eventually achieving Master Technician status.

It is unclear from existing information whether the emphasis on broad participation and foundation-level courses over specific occupational trainings was a conscious strategic decision by SkillWorks funders or whether low participant skill levels drove the focus indirectly. SkillWorks funders did direct partnerships to focus on the very low-skilled. In so doing, they may have indirectly biased the partnerships toward offering basic trainings and referring participants out to more specific occupational trainings because there would not generally be a critical mass of participants with a skill level sufficient to fill an entire course. Engaging participants in specific sector/occupational trainings, particularly if they require college admission, is difficult if participants do not already have needed prerequisite skills. PCWD, understanding this challenge, sought to set up courses to help workers gain needed prerequisites (pre-college math/ pre-college language), and even after the courses workers struggled to pass eligibility requirements for higher level allied health degrees.

If funders truly want to meet employers' needs for critical occupations and to move participants along career pathways, the target population may need to have a base level of skills that allow them to fully take advantage of opportunities being offered.

Employer Engagement Learnings

➤ ***Learning #1: There is an inherent challenge in employers functioning as both partners and customers.***

It is common in workforce programs to talk about employers being partners. It is also common to hear employers described as one of the core customers of dual-customer initiatives. What is not discussed is the fact that there are competing priorities between these two roles, specifically what an employer can expect as a customer vs. what is expected of an employer as a partner.

In interviews leading up to this Year 4 report, HCRTI employers talked about their experience as partners and customers. As customers, they wanted access to high-quality job applicants and information about their incumbent employees' progress in HCRTI classes and coaching. As a partner, they expected to weigh in on strategy and help bear the cost of the initiative. They did not expect to be pressured to hire participants who were not appropriate or sufficiently qualified for their positions, though the employers felt that HCRTI held this expectation of them. This is a common conflict and one that is not easily avoided.

As partners, SkillWorks employers have participated in guiding partnership enrollment and training strategies. Employers generally engage in partnership work in order help meet common long-term industry goals or because they feel a social obligation to help disadvantaged residents or employees. As a partner, employers might serve on an advisory committee, help design curriculum, engage with participants, etc.

As customers, employers are focused on meeting their actual staffing needs. They want to fill vacancies and reduce the cost of worker turnover. They will send participants to training if it makes business sense, they will hire participants if they are well-trained and knowledgeable about the job and the industry, they will reform business practices if there is a direct connection with improving operating costs or reducing turnover.

The SkillWorks partnerships have witnessed a variety of employer engagement models. PACE employer partners are strategic advisors, participating in curriculum design, mock interviews, and preferential interviewing, but they seem to have limited goals for themselves as customers. There have only been 24 placements over three years between four partners. As partners, their commitment seems to be to making a contribution to the training field and a movement to equip the disadvantaged with a tangible skill, but they do not feel obligated to hire participants who are not the best candidates.

HCC and CHW Initiative partners seem to vacillate between functioning as strategic partners and business partners with business goals. For HCC, the property managers and supervisors expect improved performance, productivity and advancement, while being willing to make HR changes and to engage in the planning process. CHW Initiative partners have business goals, particularly around the CHW Initiative's public policy agenda, and are strong contributors to the partnership. When you talk to partner employers for both HCC and CHW Initiative, particularly at the upper management level, they speak with a tone of ownership when they describe the partnerships' activities.

The final group of employer partners is those whose main objective is business. HCRTI's current structure as the Healthcare Training Institute with JVS is a business customer model with little role for employers to function as strategic partners. The employers are happy with this arrangement and it simplifies issues for the partnership to a certain degree.

BSCPP employers are becoming more involved as both partners and customers. To this point, the employers and building owners were only peripherally involved in the program, with the union taking the primary lead in program design and the focus being on improving participant skills. With the most recent labor contract, employers and building owners are becoming more engaged in the process, having a more vested stake in the increased amount of resources they are contributing to training.

Additional research is needed to determine whether one model of employer engagement is better for low-skilled, low-income workers than another. Overall, what is clear is that employers desire transparency in what is expected of them and what they can expect in return. Too often, in the hope of keeping employers engaged, partnerships are not up-front about what they hope employers will do for the partnership and for participants. Employers are asking for greater clarity.

➤ ***Learning #2: Simultaneously meeting the needs of employers and low skilled participants can be an elusive challenge with short lived success***

At the outset of the SkillWorks partnerships, there were stronger business reasons for employers to participate in the partnerships. The economy was tight and employers were seeking skilled entry-level workers, institutions were expanding and were seeking city and neighborhood support for their expansions, and policy changes were desired that the partnership and employers could rally together around.

As the years passed the economy slowed, partnerships were not able to deliver the level of skill employers were seeking, institutions were built, and public support was no longer as critical. The shift in these external factors has definitely altered the working environment of partnerships like PACE and HCRTI's pre-employment program. Through no fault of their own, the demand for their services shifted and made placements much more challenging. HCC faced a different challenge in sustaining its value proposition with employers. Specifically, it had to face the reality that participants did not want to take advantage of available advancement opportunities because they were comfortable in their current positions at their current locations. While this was not the result of HCC's program design or implementation, it did affect HCC's ability to meet employers' needs.

External factors in the marketplace shift rapidly. Most partnerships struggled to adapt quickly to these changes and continue to balance employer needs with participant skills. The one exception to this was BSCPP, which offered a variety of program options as opportunities arose. It does have the advantage of serving a diverse population with a variety of skill levels. As BSCPP implements new program ideas, there are generally individuals with the appropriate skill levels in the union who can take advantage of the opportunity and meet employers' needs.

➤ ***Learning #3: The motivation for participation will affect an employer's willingness to implement system changes.***

As has been described, employers engage with partnerships for a variety of reasons. When the reasons are not directly related to the job performance of those being trained, it will be more challenging to implement the type of system changes necessary to engage participants and help improve their educational experience or work environment.

The most profound example of this is the CHW Initiative. In the CHW Initiative, the biggest motivation for employer engagement is working together to reform the CHW employment environment. Desired changes included increased funding to hire and pay CHWs, increased credibility and formality of the position, and professionalizing the field. Simultaneously, the CHW Initiative is working to further its policy goals while implementing a coaching and training program for current CHWs. In employer interviews, there is a disconnect between these two interventions. Employers are passionate about the policy work, knowing that it will allow for more meaningful implementation of the training program in the future. As it is, employers' reasons for allowing employees to participate in the coaching and training focus on the benefit to the employees, rather than any perceived significant business advantage. This reality means that the CHW Initiative must work hard to convince employers of the value of any system changes (e.g., career ladders) because they do not see the immediate benefit to their bottom line.

System Change

At its inception the Skillworks Initiative established ambitious longer-term changes and reforms that it hoped to achieve. These included:

- ***Transforming the effectiveness of workforce service providers by:***
 - Providing longer-term engagement with low-wage workers.
 - Better linking low-income residents to specific jobs with specific employers
 - Training people with marketable credentials.
 - Having enhanced flexibility and responsiveness in their efforts to increase the ease of working adults’ access to training and services.
 - Providing a continuum of services—literacy, basic skill development, and increasing occupational skill development—that is linked to a career ladder.
- ***A large number of employers adopting changes in their human resources, hiring, training, retention,*** and promotion practices that support career development and advancement of their workforce; increasing their overall investment in workforce development and training for lower-skilled workers.
- ***Creating strong partnerships that would become institutionalized and supported in the workforce development system.*** These partnerships would involve employers, community-based organizations and other service providers, and educational institutions. Ideally, providers would be linked in a way that each would perform the role(s) where it has comparative advantage.
- ***Improving the workforce development system through:***
 - Increased and sustainable public investment in workforce development.
 - The use of the FESS standard as a key performance metric throughout the system.
 - Simplified access to workforce development services for low-income individuals by having an adequate supply of services and training, by making it easier for individuals to enroll in a progression of skill development training over a period of time, and by making training and services more physically accessible.
 - Institutionalizing the support of industry- and occupation-based partnerships within the system.
 - Reducing “silo”-oriented funding within the system and increasing the use of blended funding.
 - Making public institutions such as community colleges more effective at meeting the workforce development needs of working adults and local employers.

While the scope and pace of system reform may have fallen short of early expectations, key elements of this agenda have been advanced in the areas of partnership development, employer practices, and refinements to the workforce development system.

Workforce Service Providers

A substantial amount of progress has been made by the Initiative related to its system change goals. Considering the workforce service providers first, capacity of the partnership lead agencies has been increased through SkillWorks capacity building resources and the funders’ approach to partnership management. Specifically, through resources invested in targeted technical assistance, strategic planning, communication (project director meetings), and data integration, organizations are better

positioned to deliver workforce services than they were at the beginning of the Initiative. Another strong contributor to the partnerships' progress was the funders' patience in allowing the partnerships to figure out how to effectively manage and implement sector strategies.

Most of the providers have added internal capacity related to understanding the importance of employer expectations, the linkages between ABE and WFD, and refining approaches to career pathways. Project Hope, a member of the PCWD partnership, changed its overall approach to workforce development by developing two new programs: the Community Partners in Health Professions Program (pre pre-college) and a program to provide Brigham and Women's Hospital with outreach, recruitment, and screening for identifying entry-level workers to staff its new facility. IIB was able to crystallize its focus on workforce issues and experiment with incumbent worker training. More IIB staff are now familiar with workforce development, which has allowed for greater integration between IIB education courses and its workforce efforts. One result of this integration is that education staff are now asking new enrollees where they work to see if they work at one of the partner properties. If they do, the staff are telling the participants about any relevant on-site courses and gathering any participant data that might be missing in the system.

Employers

Partner employers have made modest improvements in their human resource practices to increase their employees' ability to advance. A couple of the most substantial changes include PCWD and BSCPP's activities.

Through a combination of PCWD's own activities and the activities funded through SkillWorks, PCWD has become a more integral part of the human resource approach of the entire Partners system. Within Partners, a number of senior staff from the human resources department and the director of compensation are now involved directly in the workforce development activity. Partners has also created a new position in the human resource department, Partners Workforce Development Manager. Finally, at the individual hospitals that are part of the Partners system, there is evidence of a greater commitment to employee advancement. This is particularly true at Brigham and Women's Hospital. The commitment is found in the promotion of Beverly Sobers, manager of workforce development at the Brigham, to a more senior management position within the hospital, the opening of its storefront workforce office, and its commitment to hiring from within for staffing the new Cardiovascular Center.

BSCPP and its union sponsor worked together to achieve a groundbreaking bargaining agreement in 2007 that resulted in commercial employers agreeing to fund a joint union-management training fund supported by an hourly contribution that will provide ongoing support for educational activities for building services employees. This agreement illustrated an enhanced commitment to training and education on the part of union members and property owners.

Workforce System

Since the SkillWorks Initiative began in 2003, the workforce system has evolved in positive ways. There has been an infusion of resources into the system through the Economic Stimulus Bill, the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund, the Food Stamp Employment and Training program (FSET), the Educational Rewards Grant Program, and the inclusion of resources for workforce training in life sciences legislation.. While there were many actors working in support of the passage of each of these

funding streams, SkillWorks, WSG, and funder The Boston Foundation, through their aligned workforce policy agenda, were critical actors in the process.

While there is now more money in the workforce system, for the most part the structure of the system has not changed substantially since SkillWorks's inception. While the state's support for sectoral partnerships pre-dated SkillWorks, its commitment to sectoral partnerships has become more institutionalized in the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund. SkillWorks staff have actively worked to ensure that the Fund is aware of the lessons that have been learned through the SkillWorks implementation process. The staff also organized and hosted a planning session on the use of the Trust Fund and developed a list of recommendations, based on learnings from SkillWorks, that was presented to program administrators. SkillWorks representatives were appointed to a Trust Fund advisory committee involved in the design of the RFP and grantee selection. Additionally, system changes have also occurred such as the creation of the Accountability Task Force, the reinvigoration of the Massachusetts' Workforce Development Board, and the addition of "workforce development" to the title of the Office of Labor and Workforce Development for the first time. Again, none of which can be directly attributed to SkillWorks but all of which were supported and championed by SkillWorks funders and stakeholders.

Conclusion

At the end of Year 4, the SkillWorks Initiative has made progress toward accomplishing its goals, both at the level of the individual participant and employer and at the level of system change.

At the partnership level, there are two partnerships, BSCPP and CHW Initiative, that have begun to act as forces of integration in their sectors. These partnerships provide important evidence of more in-depth progress and the potential role that partnerships can play in the pursuit of systems change. By nature BSCPP's focus is on all employers and occupations that relate to building services. The breadth of its focus can be seen by looking at the programs it has implemented (e.g., HVAC, building maintenance, ESOL). Despite its major accomplishment of having achieved the substantial goal of increasing workers' wages and creating consistent access to training, it has had limited impact on the occupational structure of the building services industry or the way that advancement occurs. What remains to be seen is whether participants begin to actively pursue the training opportunities made available through the bargaining agreement and whether this in turn results in advancements, both within the industry and out of building services into parallel fields.

The CHW Initiative is also more broadly focused, with its efforts focused on the community health worker field. Of all of the partnerships, it functions most like an intermediary, convening partners around policy and system change objectives, as well as participant and employer training needs. At the end of its first year of implementation, the CHW Initiative has not experienced significant changes in the CHW field or the public health industry. However, employers, educators, funders, and policy advocates are all talking about common issues and debating solutions to the agreed upon barriers to expanding the importance and depth of the CHW field. Time will tell whether the CHW Initiative model of integrated workforce service, training and public policy efforts will result in more substantial outcomes than partnerships more exclusive focused on participant and employer needs.

Beyond these examples, the general structure of partnerships has resulted in their focus on the specific employers that are partners in the Initiative. The partnerships have not generally been sector-

focused, in terms of larger goals beyond meeting individual employer needs, which has limited their ability to effect system reform.

Related to the workforce system as a whole, the overall goal of achieving changes on a scale that transforms the workforce system has not been achieved. An integrated system is still a distant vision. The training and service delivery system continues to be characterized by overlapping initiatives, siloed funding, and proprietary interests of employers and service providers that too often preclude the search for common interests.

Fragmentation continues in the structure of the WIB and One-Stop system in the state, multiple silos of agencies involved in workforce development, relationships between the K–12 system and the higher education system, and how adult basic education services are delivered in the state, including the lack of integration between community-based providers and the community college system. Employers are making modest investments in training their entry-level workers but not at a level that is transforming the lives of low-skilled workers.

SkillWorks public policy efforts are moving toward a more clearly articulated vision of an “aligned, effective, and strategic workforce system that supports both workers and employers” but the vision is still not very specific. The efforts have also struggled to find a way to meaningfully engage employers and coordinate between advocates.

Specific to SkillWorks, WSG has continued to be hindered by a lack of application of lessons learned by SkillWorks-funded partnerships in the SkillWorks policy efforts. The partnerships have benefited from WSG’s activities, learning about available resources such as FSET, Education Rewards and benefiting from their advocacy for workforce funding. And WSG has benefitted from the partnerships’ lobbying support. Unfortunately, WSG has not yet figured out how to use the lessons learned by the partnerships to help shape SkillWorks’s policy agenda—the original intention behind the integration of partnerships and policy in one initiative.

In summary, results of SkillWorks efforts to date have been meaningful, yet isolated; focused on meeting the needs of specific employers rather than the market, sector, or industry. Policy efforts have focused substantially on “increasing the pie” but have had limited success in creating significant changes in policies or institutions involved in workforce development or elevating the debate about how the “pie” is allocated.

Abt Associates Inc.

Solving problems, guiding decisions – worldwide

Abt Associates applies rigorous research and consulting techniques and technical assistance expertise to a wide range of issues in social and economic policy, international health and economic development, business research and consulting, and clinical trials and registries. Clients include U.S. federal, state, and local governments; foreign governments; international organizations; foundations; nonprofit associations and institutions; and business and industry. Founded in 1965, Abt Associates has worked in more than 100 countries and currently has projects in more than 40 countries and over 25 foreign project offices.

Corporate Offices

Cambridge, Massachusetts

55 Wheeler Street
Cambridge, MA 02138-1168
617.492.7100

www.abtassociates.com

Bethesda, Maryland

Bethesda One
4800 Montgomery Lane
Suite 600
Bethesda, MD 20814-3460
301.913.0500

Bethesda Two
4550 Montgomery Avenue
Suite 800 North
Bethesda, MD 20814-3343
301.634.1700

Chicago, Illinois

640 North LaSalle Street
Suite 400
Chicago, IL 60610-3781
312.867.4000

Hadley, Massachusetts

Mass Venture Center
100 Venture Way
Suite 100
Hadley, MA 01035-9462
413.586.8635

Lexington, Massachusetts

181 Spring Street
Lexington, MA 02421-8030
781.372.6500

Durham, North Carolina

4620 Creekstone Drive
Maplewood Building
Suite 190
Durham, NC 27703-8062
919.294.7700



Abt Associates Inc.