

# Coordinating Programs to Support Marginalized Workers: Lessons from Los Angeles County

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## Today's Presentation

- How we evaluated one county's approach to coordinating workforce development across agencies
- What do we know about **best practices** in workforce development?
- What do the **practical challenges** to effective workforce development tell us about policy and administration?
- How does the **COVID-19** economy affect the context and focus of our workforce development strategies?



## Scope of evaluation

- Study done for Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, Economic Development Policy Committee
- Evaluate progress on an “alignment” plan adopted by the Board on July 14, 2017 and reaffirmed through 2019
- Develop and propose recommendations for achieving workforce development alignment in LA County
- Report on best practices in workforce development, with emphasis on Targeted Workers

## Methods

- 30 interviews completed with 17 agencies, including workforce development board members, social enterprise partners, and high road training partnerships
- Visited—observing and interviewing people—American Job Centers of California (AJCCs) and Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) offices in LA County
- Reviewed documents: cataloging policy documents, MOUs, training manuals, reports, data systems

# Workforce Development Success Factors

- Move beyond job search assistance
- Adopt sectoral strategies
- Tie training to employment
- High road training partnerships
- Integrate comprehensive services

### **County Entities**

Workforce Development Aging and Community Services  
(WDACS) (*AJCCs*)

Chief Information Office (CIO)

Probation

Department of Consumer & Business Affairs

Department of Human Resources (DHR)

LA County Development Authority (LACDA)

LA County Sheriff

LA County Office of Education (LACOE)

### **Countywide Agencies**

Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) (*GAIN & GROW  
offices*)

Department of Health Services (DHS)

Office of Diversion and Reentry (ODR)

Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)

Department of Rehabilitation (DOR)

Military and Veterans Affairs (MVA)

Department of Mental Health (DMH)

### **Cross-cutting Entities**

Homeless Initiative

Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA)

Local school districts

Employment Development Department (EDD) (*AJCCs*)

Community Colleges

| LA County Targeted worker category                               | WIOA priority population           |
|--|------------------------------------|
| Documented annual income at or below 100% of FPL                 | Low Income                         |
| No high school diploma or GED                                    | Basic skills deficient             |
| History of involvement with criminal justice system              | Offender                           |
| Protracted unemployment  | Long-term unemployed               |
| Current recipient of government cash or food assistance benefits | General Relief, CalFresh, CalWORKS |
| Homeless now or within the past year                             | Homeless                           |
| Custodial single parent  |                                    |
| Former foster youth  | Foster Care                        |
| Veteran or eligible spouse                                       | Veteran                            |

# Evaluation areas

1. Development of common performance measures and tracking mechanisms
2. Establishment of agreements for sharing client data
3. Alignment and integration of services at job centers (AJCCs)
4. Progress toward comprehensive assessment of workforce development programs
5. Population-specific strategies as implemented across County departments

# Challenges to a comprehensive workforce development approach

- Complex bureaucracies with often rigid rules
- Fragmentation and operational siloes with little incentive for cooperation
- No clear vision for what “alignment” could mean
- No trusted leader of alignment

# What we recommended

- A. Build a leadership structure for workforce development in the County
- B. Adopt a shared vision for alignment at each level of the workforce development system: meet people where they are
- C. Invest in sector-based training approaches that offer pathways to stable employment: we know what works
- D. Facilitate integrated service delivery: from physical space to data sharing
- E. Measure real performance: good data and meaningful metrics

|                      | COMMON PERFORMANCE MEASURE      | DEFINITION  | WIOA PERFORMANCE MEASURE   |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|---|--|
| TRAINING             | Credential attainment           | Percentage of participants who obtain a recognized credential or diploma or are enrolled in a credential program.   | Credential rate  |
|                      | Measurable skill gains          | Number enrolled in a program and achieving documented academic, technical, occupational, or other forms of progress | In-program skills gain   |
| EMPLOYMENT           | Placement                       | Placement in unsubsidized employment  | Entered employment   |
|                      | Retention                       | Percentage of participants in unsubsidized employment at 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> quarter                | Employment rate 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> quarter after program exit |
|                      | Median earnings                 | Midpoint of wages in the second quarter after exit  | Median earnings  |
| SERVICES TO BUSINESS | Effectiveness serving employers | Share of exited, placed clients who were with the same employer in 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> quarters       | Retention rate with same employer  |
|                      |                                 | Share of employers served that year   | Employer (market) penetration rate   |
|                      |                                 | Share of in-year business customers who received a service in the past  | Repeat business customers rate   |

# Possible evaluation metrics

- Completion of program (training or internship)
- Job referral
- Employment or permanent employment
- Unsubsidized employment
- School enrollment
- Supportive service completion
- Participation // completion for each program
- Employment placements by industry and cluster
- Average hourly wages for each industry
- Number of job interviews and job offers
- Number of employer partners
- Percent of employer partners offering jobs to clients
- Number of repeat hires by employer partners
- Employee wage gains above 20% over 12 months / 2 years
- Employee wages and retention by industry sector
- Reliance on public assistance (e.g. enrollment in CalFresh or GAIN) after 12 months / 2 years
- Number and percent of clients in same job after 12-18 months of placement / still working after 12 months
- Average hourly wage; average hours worked
- Number and percent of clients receiving health care benefits through employer
- Number and percent of clients who attain economic stability within 12 months / 2 years of training completion

# COVID-19 landscape

- High unemployment, some long-term unemployment
- Very divergent impacts: people of color, women, low-wage workers
- Higher demand for support services
- Closures of service sector
- Challenges delivering in-person programs
- Community college enrollment drop
- Broad attention to challenges administering UI
- Renewed debate on the importance of basic income supports

# Questions and comments

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